

Chair's Report 2022-2023

The disruption wrought by Covid-19 seems a long way behind us, but its effects on the Suffolk Festival and the Arts, in particular, are still with us.

Speech and Drama managed a festival in a day thanks to the herculean efforts of Cheryl and Gwyneth to motivate their own and other students. There were some outstanding performances and members of the audience were extremely appreciative, with one teacher promising to put the festival in his school calendar for next year.

The two Dance weekends were a huge success and attracted hundreds of students to the two venues. Despite some big problems along the way, such as having to replace the adjudicator at short notice and having to complete the paperwork for a licence, Sarah organised the two weekends with good humour and a huge amount of work. The teams of volunteers from the dance schools worked cheerfully and efficiently and the events ran very smoothly.

Sadly, there were no Music classes as the appetite for these seems to have dwindled.

Sarah's work to complete the paperwork for the child licensing has shown us that it is possible and after Tracey's visit we are much clearer in terms of what we need to achieve to keep the festival running in a safe way.

Income continues to be a cause for concern, although being able to charge at the door has made a considerable difference. Lanyards were sold for the first time this year and proved to be very popular. We received some generous sponsorship from Zarkeys and Alec Baker made his usual donation, although we must endeavour to reinstate the music classes to continue to attract this gift.

Despite Rachel Sloane's lovely article there have been no outside offers of help for the committee or volunteers, although Sarah has encouraged some friends and colleagues to take on roles. More about that later.

The Festival committee seems determined that we should try to provide opportunities for performance and for this I am immensely grateful. All members of the committee have pulled together to create exceptional opportunities for the young people of Suffolk, and I hope that we can re-build the festival after the last few difficult years.