

Entries were good across all genres. Since we were one of the few Festivals going ahead, we attracted entries from schools who had not previously attended our Cheltenham Festival. As a result, some entries were refused because we were oversubscribed for the time we had available.

The report explained how everything ran smoothly with a one-way system, face masks and a socially-distanced audience.

‘It was absolutely wonderful and greatly appreciated by everyone. We learned a lot about how we can adapt and be flexible in the way we run our Festival, and I am certain these skills will be with us this year, too.’

Carol’s report concluded with sincere thanks to everyone who contributed to the success of the Festival.

4.3 The Music report was delivered by David Terry who recorded the flexibility, cooperation and improvisation that had allowed the Festival to go ahead, despite the Covid menace.

‘Covid meant we were limited to holding classes in just Junior and Open piano, Junior vocals, and Strings. However the musicians and singers who entered really appreciated the chance to perform again after months of lockdown. Even though we couldn’t have duets, trios, ensembles or choirs a lot of splendid music was made.’

‘Volunteers on Reception, Announcers, Door Stewards and those in the Back Office worked under difficult conditions wearing masks or visors all day, and wielding hand gel - but they made everything run happily and seamlessly. On behalf of the music team I’d like to thank them all hugely.’

David concluded his report by looking forward to the coming May Festival ‘back in the Town Hall’, with entries nearly back to their pre-Covid level. He also mentioned the forthcoming Nutland Young Musician competition and invited all to attend.

4.4 In Rebecca Vines’ absence, the Drama report was read by Janice Keen.

When almost no other festival was daring to go ‘face-to-face’, the excitement of our young competitors was most tangible as they delivered their performances. The power of live theatre energised and moved us! Although group classes and duo classes were not offered – due to Covid – we were thrilled that we were able to mount as many classes as we did, and to such a high standard.’

Three adjudicators were welcomed back to Cheltenham and one was new to our Festival. All four were absolutely charming and helped our competitors believe in themselves.. The Pump Room venue worked beautifully and, after missing the Festival in 2020, the seeds of recovery were apparent both from old faces and new friends.

‘As always, significant thanks go to all the administrative team, Frances and her wonderful stewards, but mostly, to the fabulously robust teachers, parents and performers who refuse to quit.’

4.5 In her Stewards' Co-ordinator's report Frances Watson recorded how more than 30 stewards felt able to volunteer for stewarding at the Pump Rooms. She also mentioned how several committee members had helped with the stewarding to make the Festival a success.

Frances explained that the new on-line booking system had been used for the first time. It had worked well and enabled stewards to book themselves into their preferred duties and classes.

'I can report that the Festival at the Pump Rooms in 2021 was a triumph. As ever, my heartfelt thanks go out to all the stewards for their invaluable contribution to the success of the Festival. I am optimistic that many more of our volunteer stewards will feel confident enough to return for the Festival in 2022.'

There were no questions from the meeting about any of the reports.

5. Treasurer's Report (Full report held on file)

The Treasurer, Allan Gillespie, explained that a financial comparison with previous years would be pointless, on account of the reduced revenues caused by restricted entry numbers, the lack of admission money, no printed programme or advertisement sales.

'Despite all of the above, we came out of it in reasonable shape, recording a loss for the years of £6.5K. Moreover, a large donation (£5K) just about negated this loss.'

The Festival had benefitted from a £20K Community Grant from Cheltenham Borough Council, which helped to offset the costs associated with the hire of the Pump Room. The Festival Fund stands at a healthy £123K.

Gillie concluded by informing the meeting that, after 10 years as Treasurer, he has decided to stand down at the end of the financial year (June 2022). He expressed confidence that Duncan Hooper, who has agreed to take on the Treasurer's role, will be a most capable successor.

The 2020-21 Accounts were unanimously accepted by the meeting and the Chairman thanked Gillie for the sterling work that he has carried out for the Festival over the last ten years. A vote of thanks was passed unanimously by the meeting and followed by a round of applause.

6. Appointment of the Independent Examiner

The meeting was asked to vote on the Executive Committee proposal: '*Should Matthew Bennet be appointed as the Independent Examiner?*' The proposal was unanimously passed.

7. Appointment of Trustees

It was explained that, in accordance with the Constitution, two trustees, David Terry and Brian Harding, who have been the longest in office since their last appointment, must down at this AGM. Both have indicated their willingness to be re-elected and the meeting unanimously agreed that both be re-appointed as trustees.

8. Presentations

The Chairman informed the meeting that, this year, no presentations have been planned for the AGM.

9. Festival 2022

The Chairman opened the discussion by asking Brian Harding for a status report on the 2022 May Festival. Brian informed the meeting that preparations are well in hand: the Town Hall and the adjudicators are all booked.

The entry system had been opened as planned in December and well over 2000 entries have been received. In comparison to pre-Covid levels, entries in Dance were at 100%, but entries in Music and Speech & Drama were about 10% down. Alex Chalk asked why the number of entries were lower, this year, in Music and Drama and Brian surmised that, unlike the Dance schools, which had been largely unaffected by Covid, when term-time started in January, schools had 'a lot on their plate' and less time than normal to prepare their students for Festival performances.

Just under 100 cups and trophies were in safe storage and emails would soon be sent requesting all cups to be returned ready for 2022. The detailed Festival timetable is currently being finalised and the Programme is being prepared for the printers. Discussions will soon be taking place with the authorities at Gloucester County Council to prepare for the procedures associated with child licensing.

10. AOB

There being no other business the Chairman thanked everyone for attending and the meeting. He also thanked all the committee members and supporters for their work and support. The meeting closed at 8:45 pm.

In Attendance

Garth Barnes
Alex Chalk
Julia Davies
Allan Gillespie
Karen Gillespie
Brian Harding
Jean Harding
Janice Keen
Diggory Seacome
David Terry
Frances Watson
Duncan Hooper
Mary Hemming
Ailsa Howarth
George Howarth

Apologies Received for Absence

Carol McDowall	Corrairie Collins
Helen McNaught	Rachel Cottell
Heather Pannett	Miranda Davies
John Pannett	Sally-Anne Davies
Philippa Phillips	Adele Denley
John Rawson	Mary Di Mambro
Margaret Richards	Martyn Fry
Caroline Sparkes	Sylvia Fry
Bernard Stradling	Tim Ingold
Rosalyn Terry	Judy Kelly
Karen Townsend	Ian Marshall
Rebecca Vines	Janet Marshall
Valerie Walsh	Kath Bodley
Bunty Wilson	Vicki Beauregard
Robert Wilson	Patricia Amphlett