

City of Plymouth Festival Association

Trustees' Report and Accounts

For the year ended

31 December 2024

Charity Number 1040360

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The City of Plymouth Festival Association

Annual Report of the Trustees for the Year Ending 31 December 2024

Reference and Administrative Information

The City of Plymouth Festival Association is a registered charity No: 1040360. The principal address of the Charity is: 2 Forth Gardens, Deer Park, PL3 6SH

Trustees

The Trustees who served during the year were:

Mrs Amy Clarke	
Mrs Sue Cook	General Secretary and Dance secretary
Mrs Carolyn Chamberlain	Appointed April 2024
Mrs Michelle Beer	Appointed April 2024
Mrs Linda Curtain	
Mrs Jill Straw	Treasurer and MS&D Secretary
Ms Zoe Marie Vigus	
Mrs Simara Winter	Chairman
Miss Lara Cook	

Structure, Governance and Management

The City of Plymouth Festival Association is a charity constituted to promote the performing arts, principally in the South West region, and in particular, in the Plymouth area. It is affiliated to the British and International Federation of Festivals of Music, Dance, Speech and Drama.

The constitution was reviewed and amended prior the 2016 AGM, and was adopted by the festival members at the AGM held on 24 April 2016.

The Trustees confirm that they have identified the major risks to which the charity is exposed and have systems established to mitigate any risks.

The recruitment and appointment of new trustees is by application and recommendation from existing committee members.

Public Benefit

The Trustees have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in applying our future activities.

Objectives and Activities

The Charity operates in Plymouth and draws support principally from Devon and Cornwall, holding three festivals annually.

The objective of the charity is to promote artistic and literacy appreciation and the education of the public in the Arts. In particular the performing arts of Music, Dance, Speech and Drama.

The main activity of the Charity is to hold three annual competitive festivals that enable amateur performers of all ages to demonstrate their talents in the performing Arts of Music, Dance, Speech and Drama.

Each festival promotes a positive experience where every participant is given constructive verbal and written feedback from a professional adjudicator. We believe the competitors lie at the heart of our festival. We aim to ensure every participant enjoys a happy festival, has a memorable experience, learn from their performance and can't wait to return to perform next year.

Annual Report of the Trustees for the Year Ending 31 December 2024

2024 saw the resignation of our Chairman Kevin Cunningham who had been with us for nine years as our present Chairman and before that a committee member. We would like to thank Kevin for all his dedication and leadership especially during Covid we will miss him. We are now pleased to have Simara Winter at the helm as chairman.

Our Dance Festival took place in July 2024. Music, Vocal and Speech entries took place in November 2024

City of Plymouth Dance Festival 2024

The dance festival is very dependent on the number of volunteers who offer their support.

All helpers are willing 'cogs' who work together across the festival. Roles include various responsibilities including being responsible for the theatre door, managing medals and cups, the presentation of awards, announcing the classes, music for entries, a space for holding performers before their performance time, the festival office, completing certificates and reports, running messages and reports, tea maker, and lunch provider. With a shortage of volunteers the festival becomes very difficult to manage.

Indeed, health and safety across the festival could be compromised and it becomes increasingly difficult to hold the festival.

Health and Safety

Each year every dance festival has a written rota which is carefully made and shows the volunteers named to cover specific responsibilities during each of the 3 sessions of each festival day.

If it is to be effective a rota needs to be fully completed. It was very difficult for our 2024 dance festivals rota to be fully completed and on most days, there were sessions without a named volunteer to take on the responsibility and support needed to ensure the safety of our performers.

The wellbeing of entries can also be compromised by a shortage of volunteers. It is an aim of our festival to ensure every participant enjoys a happy festival, has a memorable experience, grows in confidence, learns from the experience, and cannot wait to return to perform again next year.

The side of stage can be a bit scary for new dancers performing their first dance. We recognise this and friendly and approachable adults need to be on the side of stage to offer reassurance and support for any performers who might be worried.

Jill Straw Plymouth Festival Speech and Drama Secretary

City of Plymouth Dance Festival 2024

The Plymouth Dance Festival has grown into a vibrant celebration of dance, showcasing the talent of young dancers from the local area and beyond. Here are some additional details about the festival and its highlights:

1. **Diverse Participation:** The festival attracts a wide range of participants, from beginners to experienced dancers, across various dance styles, including ballet, contemporary, jazz, and more. This inclusivity fosters a supportive environment where dancers can learn and grow.
2. **Repertoire Section Success:** The introduction of the repertoire section this year allowed dancers to perform pieces they had studied and rehearsed, providing them with a platform to showcase their skills. The positive feedback indicates that this addition will likely become a staple in future festivals.
3. **Challenges and Adaptations:** With the All England Dance Festival coinciding with our event, we faced challenges in scheduling. However, our careful planning and communication with local dance schools and studios helped mitigate potential conflicts, ensuring a smooth experience for all.

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4. **Adjudicator's Impact:** Vicki Durning's role as an adjudicator brought a wealth of experience and insight to the festival. Her constructive feedback and encouragement were instrumental in inspiring the young dancers, helping them to not only perform but also to understand the artistry behind their craft.
5. **Volunteer Contributions:** The success of the festival hinges on the hard work of volunteers who assist with everything from organizing performances to managing logistics. Their dedication creates a welcoming atmosphere and ensures that the festival runs smoothly.
6. **Future Considerations:** As we look ahead, we are committed to finding ways to balance the growing interest in the festival with the need to maintain a high-quality experience for participants. This may involve refining entry processes or exploring new ways to engage the community.

The Plymouth Dance Festival continues to be a highlight of the local arts calendar, providing a platform for young dancers to shine and a celebration of the joy of dance. As we plan for next year, we remain excited about the possibilities and eager to build on this year's successes.

City of Plymouth Speech and Drama Festival November 2024

The Speech festival took place at the Future Inn from the 10 to the 15 November 2024

We were really pleased that the numbers were well up on the previous year which meant we had to use an extra day. Our adjudicator was Rebecca Thompson

Feedback was very positive with many people saying what a friendly Festival we have. Again, two new Teachers joined us and assured me that they will be back again in 2025 with more entries. The Future Inn is very popular venue with teachers, entrants and parents.

As with all our Festivals we do need more stewards but I am thankful to those who did help.

I would also like to say an enormous thank you to our cup Secretary Michelle Beer who worked tirelessly getting cups back, cleaning and getting them ready for each class. This is a thankless task.

Jill Straw Plymouth Festival Speech and Drama Secretary

The City of Plymouth Music Festival 2024

Instrumental Section 8 and 9 November 2024

This year's Instrumental festival was held on the 8 and 9 of November 2024 at Sherwell Church. Our Adjudicator was Angela Zanders. We had a very enjoyable two days and number of entrants were slightly up from the previous year. We had one new Teacher entering their pupils join us and I have hopes of another new teacher and her pupils joining us in 2025.

The Adjudicator, performers and all who entered and watched the performances told me what a lovely friendly Plymouth Festival is. Entrants, Teachers all said they would be back next year. The venue we used at Sherwell was remarked on many times during the Festival as being very welcoming and friendly.

Vocal Section 15th and 16th November 2024

Our Vocal Festival also took place at Sherwell Church on the 15th and 16th of November 2024. Our Adjudicator was Ben Costello. The number of entries were about the same as last year but we did have 2 extra choirs who enjoyed it and promised to be back in 2025. Again, feedback was very positive and we welcomed 2 new Teachers last year.

Jill Straw Plymouth Music Festival Secretary

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Cup Report 2024

Arranging the trophies for the new syllabus last year was a challenge at times, however I think overall it was a great success. A few hiccups, not helped by my absence due to my mother's ill health. I am sure this year will run more smoothly and I am grateful to everyone that stepped in to support me. We do seem to have a large number of surplus that remain in my spare room. I hope we can organise somewhere else to store them in the future. I appreciate that trophies can create their own problems but am really keen that continue to bring such joy to the competitors.

Return of cups for the music and vocal section of the festival has been difficult in both 24 and 25. Only 50% of cups were returned by due date. Teachers for these sections were contacted several times. We still have several cups that have not been returned.

All Speech cups were returned by festival date. There are many cups that are now beyond repair after having repairs last year. It is costly for cups that are damaged or broken. Due to the ongoing and increasing costs of maintaining the cups, many of which have deteriorated due to their age, the trustees are discussing whether the continuing expense can be justified with the charity's limited resources. With the trustees deciding whether to retire the cups and replace them with a more cost effective solution for future years.

New Website

There was a significant investment in the year into an updated website for the charity. This new site has significant advantages over the previous website. Firstly the charity has now got the capability to take PayPal payments for the entry fees, with us getting feedback from parents that this is an improvement and easier than the previous system and as the entries can now be made on the website, it has also reduced the amount of administrative time from the trustees as previously these were processed manually.

The new website also allows the trustees to update the site themselves, which will hopefully reduce the IT costs in future years. This also enables the website to be updated in a more timely fashion especially with the time sensitive information regarding the festivals, which have a direct impact on their success.

Festival Aims for 2025

- To maintain the success of the Dance Festival and the increase in entries for the Music, Speech and Drama classes.
- To work together to secure the return of all outstanding dance cups and trophies before the start of the festival.
- To create a safer festival for everyone by having new festival badges and lanyards for all festival members and volunteers.
- To provide best practice advice in the form of Safe Working Practice and Festival Safeguarding leaflets for all volunteers.
- To ensure the availability of a quiet room where any concerns can be expressed in private.
- To continue to be open to introducing classes suggested by local dance schools that would open the festival to different styles of dance being taught in Plymouth and surrounding areas.
- To continue to promote the Music, Speech and Drama Festivals with the aim of increasing the number of teachers using the festival and therefore the number of entries received.
- To design and produce an information flyer promoting the Music and Speech festivals and distribute them to schools across Plymouth.
- To continue to repair and or replace missing and broken cups and trophies across all festival sections.
- To promote the fact that Plymouth Festival is a charity and the consequences for everyone of what that means.
- To continue to build and develop our team of volunteers.

Annual Report of the Trustees for the Year Ending 31 December 2024

Financial Report

At the 2024 AGM treasurer Jill Straw announced that the accounts show a deficit of £4,259. This year the trustees are disappointed to show another a deficit of £4,420 for the current financial year. This has been largely due to the significant increase in costs repairing the cups in the year as well as the investment in the website in the year. The website costs are a one off with the trustees discussing the future of the cups due to their increasing costs.

The trustees have established a policy maintaining a contingency fund to cover the costs of running the charity for a medium period to assist the viability of future Plymouth festivals. The trustees consider a funds of £20,000 would be sufficient. At the end of the year the fund stands at £16,144 (2023: £20,000)

Jill Straw City of Plymouth Festival Treasurer

Trustees' thanks

The trustees remain grateful to their volunteers for their continued support to the Festival.

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP 2015).

The Trustees have paid due regard to the guidance of the Charity Commission on Public Benefit.

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Mrs S Winter
Chairman

Date:

For and on behalf of the Management Group.

Independent Examiners' Report to the Trustees of the City of Plymouth Festival Association

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 December 2024, which are set out on pages 2 to 9.

Respective responsibilities of the Trustees and the Examiner:

As the charity's trustees, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Basis of the Independent Examiners' Report:

Our examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent Examiners' Statement:

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records; or
3. the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view' which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Mr L A Rowsell ATT

Wills Accountants Ltd
Chartered Certified Accountants
Independent Examiner
2 Endeavour House
Parkway Court
Longbridge Road
Plymouth, PL6 8LR

Date:

The City of Plymouth Festival Association

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT: GENERAL FUND

For the period ended 31 December 2024

	2024 Unrestricted £	2023 Unrestricted £
INCOME RECEIPTS		
Entrance fees:		
Dancing	21,140	22,713
Speech/Drama/Music	5,690	7,413
Door Receipts – Dance	4,169	-
Interest on savings:		
COIF	533	483
Savings account	19	17
TOTAL RECEIPTS	31,551	30,626
EXPENDITURE PAYMENTS		
Accompanist	-	83
Accountancy	540	426
Accommodation – Dance	1,256	18,627
Accommodation – Speech/Drama/Music	710	-
Adjudicators – Dance	3,071	6,656
Adjudicators – Speech/Drama/Music	3,541	-
Venue Hire – Dance	8,165	-
Venue Hire – Speech/Drama/Music	2,425	230
Bursaries	100	700
Insurance	-	-
Printing	1,450	2,048
Storage	1,213	1,635
Subscriptions to British International Federation of Festivals (BIFF)	764	768
Sundry expenses	1,327	721
Trophies and cups	6,183	1,265
Computer cost	5,226	1,726
TOTAL PAYMENTS	35,971	34,885
NET (DEFICIT) / SURPLUS FOR THE YEAR	(4,420)	(4,259)
Balances brought forward	20,565	24,824
TOTAL	16,144	20,565
REPRESENTED BY:		
General Fund	-	565
Designated Fund	16,144	20,000
CASH AND BANK BALANCES AS AT 31 December 2024	16,144	20,565

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

As at 31 December 2024

	2024	2023
	Unrestricted £	Unrestricted £
MONETARY ASSETS		
Bank and cash balances:		
Bank current account	3,630	5,152
Savings account	192	400
COIF Charities Deposit Fund	10,926	10,394
	<hr/> 14,748	<hr/> 15,946
Cash and postage stamps in hand	28	28
	<hr/> 14,776	<hr/> 15,974
OTHER CURRENT ASSETS		
Stock of medals and T-shirts	<hr/> 1,368	<hr/> 4,591
	<hr/> 16,144	<hr/> 20,565

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Mrs S Winter
Chairman

Date:

For and on behalf of the Management Group.