

## **Fife Festival of Music Chairman's Report for AGM, 24 August 2016**

Here we are again, back at the formal stage of an AGM, back reporting on the organisation's activity and success over the past year. Having delivered this address several times now, it has become quite hard to vary it. If you hear things now which you think you've heard before, well, you'll be right!! And, indeed, there are some direct repeats from last year. Many good passages of music have repeat signs attached!

The Committee has met four times in the last year and the Trustees have met once. In addition to those working meetings, there has been a great deal of other work undertaken by groups small and large as well as by individuals and all aimed at and focussed on the activities of FFoM - the main 'A' period events in January and February and the May and November happenings.

The evidence is clear - there is a place for a Music Festival in this area and while that area is lucky to have the opportunity provided, the Festival is fortunate that musicians want to take up the opportunities and platforms offered.

The Festival continues its operation of three sets of activities within a twelve month period. The 'A' period in January and February is the main action period, the longest, the most energetic and the most productive in terms of music making and the efforts needed to support that. FFoM has reinforced different functions and gained success through its 'B' and 'C' period work. One of the main purposes of the November Funday is to raise awareness of FFoM to a different audience and the 'B' period event is available for younger musicians.

For the November 2015 Family Funday, we relocated to Glenrothes using the modern and spacious premises of Auchmuty High School and with their full support. The Funday continues to draw in people of all ages, families, visitors from outwith Fife - all additional clients to the 'A' period. In awareness raising terms, FFoM does a great job here and the Funday continues to be a terrific event.

Everything about the 2016 'A' period was successful. Entry numbers were up a little and the performance level remained as high as ever. Appearing in Cupar, Dunfermline and Kirkcaldy, the Festival was truly Fife-wide.

Following the move in 2015 of the 'B' period May time event to a weekend, the 2016 event took place in Auchmuty High School, this time with a generous partnership arrangement. Forty young string players had a great day out - and not a note of printed music in sight. Based on traditional and Scottish dance music, the players sang, fiddled and danced their way through the day.

The next few sentences are a direct copy and repeat of what I said last year. Continuing to be relevant, I set great store by the support which we receive from schools.

*Attracting participants continues to pose challenges for FFoM. The Festival is about far more than school-based education and music making from that source alone but it is surely essential for our existence and future that we encourage young people to participate. They do so, of course, through the willingness and commitment of teachers and schools and it is only harder year on year for schools to make that commitment. That is not a complaint about people. There are reasons for this situation and this is not the place to discuss the political or financial state of the country. However, at the musical chalk face, FFoM notices the effects. Having said that, there are many, many teachers and schools prepared to provide the*

*wider experiences for their pupils which participation in activities like FFoM provide. FFoM continues, therefore, to be a major part of arts and education in Fife and recognised on a wider platform.*

Key to all this success is the work undertaken by the Committee and staff with the essential addition of an army of volunteers.

Finance, money and fundraising are never far from the minds and work of the Committee and there is a constant undercurrent of concern to provide the necessary financial support for the music making.

The Committee is investigating possibilities of applying to large grant awarding Trusts. As a practical innovation, on-the-night raffles were held during the recent 'A' Festival events.

The Sponsors/Donors/Advertisers information published in our Programme reveals an overwhelming level of support for our work and for this I am and we are very grateful. Several local voluntary clubs support us - Rotary, Inner Wheel, Round Table, Soroptimist, a range of local and national music organisations, individuals and firms and do so through class sponsorship, adverts and donations. There is also commitment and support from schools, local Trust Funds, and Fife Council through community planning budgets, events grant and the Education Service Instrumental Music Service. The Festival shop is an important feature both physically and financially. A major contributor continues to be the Barbara McManus Memorial Fund helping us to target special events. We are blessed with major personal financial support from two of our Friends.

The 120 or so Friends of Fife Festival are a body of supporters who not only provide money but human support with their presence.

Publicity is important to and for the Festival and our website and facebook presences do well to keep up our profile. Local newspapers are also a source of support.

Thanks are always an essential part of an annual report – and it always gives me great pleasure to give these.

We are well supported by Ann Hopkins, our Admin assistant, and by George Nairne with responsibility for the website. Both of these are external to the Committee.

I now offer the thanks of the Fife Festival of Music – and particularly my own – to all who have made up any part of this report and to ensure that I don't miss any vital name in this process, will not use any!

Our committee members are the powerhouse, the workhorses. They draw to them, as already referred, an army of support. Hundreds of people give us money, thousands of people come to the Festival events in a variety of guises.

Fife Festival of Music continues to flourish and remains a vital part of the music making scene in Fife. Its work is secure. I commend the year's activities to you and thank you for your part in them.