

Chair's Report for AGM 2018

of

Nailsworth Festival

2018 was a very positive year for the Festival overall. Despite the attempted sabotage by the Royal Family who decided that our Festival Saturday would make an excellent date for a Royal Wedding the week got off to an enjoyable start. Both the entertainment and the Market went smoothly with very positive feedback – “all fabulous, great job one and all”. The weather helped attendance although this inevitably dropped off during the wedding broadcast and the whole committee worked very effectively in support of Allison (entertainment) and Stephen (Market) to deliver an enjoyable and safe community event. The Organ Recital in the Church was also popular during the afternoon and brought people from outside of the immediate area.

During the week we presented ten evening events, three exhibitions, harp workshops and two very popular wine tours (by one of our sponsors WVV). Ticket sales were much improved on 2017 with 5 of the evening events selling over 100 and it was a privilege to welcome someone with the international profile of Sir Richard Eyre. Temperance 7 sold well and gave us a very entertaining evening but we knew that the cost would mean that we would need to subsidize this. Once again we struggled to promote sales for the second Saturday evening (Latina Festivale) but everything else at least “broke even” which is our aim. In total 675 tickets were sold by the Festival which excludes sales at Ruskin Mill (Folk Concert). Everyone agreed that Withering Looks, presented on the Friday, was brilliantly funny.

There were a lot of children at the Saturday entertainment with the Punch and Judy being especially enjoyed but once again the specific children's events struggled to attract support. The Youth Club are keen to continue their partnership with us but the committee agreed that we need to rethink the content of their Sunday sports event in the hope of attracting broader participation. Funky Munky for under-fives was of very high quality and much enjoyed by the little ones attending but could easily have accommodated twice the number.

Aspects of ticket sales were updated this year with on-line sales being acknowledged by email rather than tickets sent out. This was more efficient overall and presented no “box office” difficulties. It is clear from the breakdown of sales that we benefit hugely from having the “local” sales outlet in the Town Information Centre and I am sure the committee will want to join me in extending our thanks to the volunteers there. Once again Tim led our media strategy and there was very positive coverage in local media. Brochures were clear and informative and were widely available locally with most shops again displaying the support signs.

Over the year John Bethell has worked hard to update the format of our website so that it is viewable on all on-line devices. Our thanks go to John for this important element of our presentation. The revised format also enables him to provide us with a range of statistics about access and usage of the site and related social media. Most access continues to be via search engines rather than social media at the current time. Jo took on the responsibility for twitter posting and did an excellent job

making regular posts available to users. This is clearly an area that we would hope to continue to develop and extend. Thanks also to Caroline for taking on responsibility for “Friends” of the Festival. It has been an opportunity to consider how we might engage and grow/manage this group in the future.

Our treasurer will present the formal financial report but the programming, costings and level of support enabled us to come out this year adding to reserves rather than dipping into them which is our aim. Sponsorship gained is also key to this outcome and we are fortunate that John is able to focus on this. The local engagement with sponsors also allows us to enhance the “community” ethos of the Festival as do the regular and “one-off” partnership events

For the Festival to be a strong presence in the community it is particularly important that we continue to engage with and build upon our links with the Town Council. I was able to attend a meeting and present to them information about our financial model and the elements of the Festival that their grant supports. We are most grateful for their continuing financial and moral support, especially in such a difficult financial climate.

During the year the committee developed and published a Privacy Policy for the organisation in response to recent GDPR legislation. Thanks go to Jane for the work on this. No accidents or incidents were reported to the committee at any Festival events.

In conclusion I would like to extend my personal thanks to **all** members of the committee for their individual contributions and commitment. The whole organisation and delivery of the festival feels very much like a team effort and allows us to deliver a worthwhile event for the Town with good humour and enthusiasm.

Mary Saunders, Festival Co-ordinator
October 2018