

Creative
Royston

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



Original artwork created by Stacey Leigh-Ross (ByLeigh)

Festival Premier Partner: **Johnson Matthey**

Annual Report 2021

ROYSTON ARTS FESTIVAL & EVENTS

Contents

Management Committee & Contact Details	p.3
Chairperson's Statement	pp. 4-5
Volunteers & Contributors to the Festival	p.6
Creative Royston Window Walk	p.7
Creative Writing Competition	p.8
Cover Art Competition	p.9
2021 Festival Programme	p.10
Attendance figures	p.11
Feedback	p.12
Marketing & Promotion	p.13-14
Financial Statement	p.15
Draft Income & Expenditure Account	p.16
Looking Ahead	p.17

Management Committee 2021

Carl Filby, Chair and Websites Administrator

Christin Bauer, Community Liaison & Volunteer Coordinator

Hannah Theobald, Vice-Chair

Ruth Brown

Marguerite Phillips, Town Council Representative

Vacancies for the roles of Secretary, Treasurer, Marketing & Press.

Contact details

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	Vice-Chair	vice-chair@creativeroyston.org
	Secretary:	secretary@creativeroyston.org
	Treasurer:	treasurer@creativeroyston.org
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	Press:	press@creativeroyston.org
	Volunteers:	volunteers@creativeroyston.org
	Website admin:	webadmin@creativeroyston.org

Phone: Festival Helpline: 07907 880 355 (during September only)

Address: Creative Royston, c/o The Town Hall, Melbourn Street, Royston, SG8 7DA

Web: www.createroyston.org & www.roystonmusicfest.uk

Facebook: /roystonartsfestival

Twitter: @royartsfest

Instagram: @creativeroyston

Once again in 2021 the arts festival has suffered greatly from the effects of Covid and all the uncertainty made planning very difficult. It was not until June that the possibility of holding a live Finale Concert was ruled out owing to uncertainties about the venue. Even then, after the decision was taken not to hold a live concert the situation changed again and it might have been possible after all.

However, we would have faced some difficulties anyway given the small number on our committee and we just did not have enough people to cover all the bases with the offices of Secretary and Treasurer remaining unfilled throughout 2021. If you know anyone who might be interested in becoming a committee member, please ask them to email me in the first instance using chair@creativeroyston.org and I will be happy to have an informal chat about what that might entail.

Despite these difficulties, we started the year well enough by acting on the suggestion of Siona Lamble, a then recent arrival in Royston who had been impressed with a staging of Window Wanderland in the town of Bromley. We had seen something similar earlier in the Covid pandemic in 2020 when first 'Royston Goes On A Bear Hunt' and then 'Pumpkin Parade' encouraged many people to dress their windows with a huge variety of displays. Our version, the Creative Royston Window Walk, took place over the winter half-term in February and we had some good support from Tesco and Kooky Nohmad who helped distribute art packs to local schoolchildren and Tesco additionally put on their own Window Walk display. We had over 100 households take part in the Window Walk and lots of people seemed to enjoy the diversion that it provided.

We usually run an event or two during the first part of the year prior to the festival itself, typically this is an event for children around Easter, often in conjunction with Royston Museum, and in 2018 and 2019 there were concerts in July. Neither was possible in 2021 but at the end of August we supported Royston Folk Club with the staging of their 'Shindig' at the Old Bull Inn by splitting the cost of artist fees for an afternoon and evening of music which was free to the public. Festival banners were displayed at the event which was seen as an opportunity to raise public awareness of the festival and to distribute promotional material in the form of flyers.

The 2021 festival theme of 'Renewal' was chosen in the hope that we would be 'starting again' where necessary, 'continuing' where we left off, or better still 'improving' our lives from lessons learned during the Covid pandemic, but it didn't work out quite as we hoped.

Eventually it became clear that we would end up with something of a hybrid festival but with mainly live events and only a couple still online rather than everything, as was the case in 2020. As well as taking the decision to make our Finale Concert an online event we again found it impossible to stage our Community Event in Priory Gardens. However, there was still plenty on offer with contributions from most of our supportive local arts groups and a few new ones for all of which I am very grateful. I was also particularly pleased that once again we were able to include a major event staged in one of the 'villages' in the Royston area in the form of the very first Barkway Literary Festival. I do feel that it is important to include the villages and not just focus on Royston itself as I believe it helps to foster a wider sense of community in the area.

Royston Arts Society (RAS) once again faced a dilemma regarding whether or not to proceed with their Autumn Exhibition in the Town Hall. As for most festival events, forward planning was very difficult with all the uncertainties around Covid. Even though it might have been possible to hold an exhibition which complied with Covid regulations by the time that became clear it was evident that insufficient numbers of volunteers amongst a relatively old membership could be found to make it happen. Also, the success of previous online exhibitions held by RAS made it a relatively straightforward decision to hold another one.

By contrast the Royston Photographic Society Exhibition in the Upper Town Hall was able to go ahead, partly because the number of exhibits was much smaller and also because they were able to find enough volunteers to allow the event to take place. I sympathise entirely with Royston Arts Society in their decision to hold an online exhibition having felt it necessary to make a similar decision to hold our Finale Concert as an online event. However, I am especially grateful to those groups and individuals that were able to stage live events for the public to attend in person.

As well as the aforementioned participants, Corvus Amateur Dramatic Society (CADS), Royston Town Band, the Limitless Academy of Performing Arts, Royston Picture Palace and Royston Folk Club all staged performances as part of the festival as did Royston MusicFest. I am also grateful to Royston Library, Royston Town Twinning Association and WomenSing for all their efforts in staging events.

Thanks again to Vice-Chair Hannah Theobald we were again able to stage an online version of our traditional Finale Concert. I am very grateful to all those who performed and kindly donated their musical services: Pianist Madalina Rusu, Jeremy Harmer & The Ad Hoc Strings, Reed Choir, Royston Street Singers, Royston Town Band, and bands and musicians from Royston's Twin towns of Großalmerode in Germany and Villanueva de la Cañada in Spain. It was nice once again to be able to add an international flavour to the Finale Concert which is one benefit of an online event. You can still find the event on YouTube if you wish to watch it: click [HERE](#).

For the third year running we have made this report available in electronic form only as we continue to pursue environmentally-friendly policies and practices wherever possible.

Carl Filby

Chairperson, January 2022

Creative Royston events could not happen without the hard work of our volunteers and we are always keen to hear from people who would like to help out at events. Just a couple of hours during the festival spent on a ticket desk or stewarding visitors can be a great help. If you're interested or would just like to know more, please email us on volunteers@creativeroyston.org.

Those who participated in the 2021 festival (virtually or otherwise) include: À Fin; Amanda Brittany; Bernard Hoskin; Bill Tarran; Black Scarr; BlueSky Acoustic Duo; Boxwood Chessmen; Corvus Amateur Dramatic Society (CADS) and all their members backstage & front; Hannah Long; Jeremy Harmer; Joe Hillman; John Meed; Kaszak & Afifi; Kelly & Woolley; Kelvin Davies & Gary Jones; Knuckles & Nails; Linda Bance with WomenSing & also with Royston Street Choir and Louise Atkins; Madalina Rusu; Reed Choir; Rotary Club of Royston; Royston Arts Society; Royston Folk Club; Royston Photographic Society; Royston Picture Palace; Royston Town Band; Royston Town Twinning Association plus the bands and musicians from Royston's Twin towns - Musikzug from Großalmerode in Germany and Escuela Municipal De Musica Y Danza from Villanueva de la Cañada in Spain; Stacey Leigh-Ross (Mixed-Media Artist); Sheri Kershaw Band; Sky West and Thursday's Band.

Businesses, local authorities, charities and other organisations which contributed financially or in-kind in 2021: We did not seek funding in 2021 in recognition of the fact that we had ample funds in the bank to cover what was always likely to be a reduced format festival. However, we would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation of past and continuing support from the Brian Leslie Racher Trust; Johnson Matthey plc; The Listing; Royston Library; Royston Rotary Club, and Royston Town Council.

Thank you also to everyone who contributed to our publicity efforts by putting up posters in their windows, helping distribute flyers and sharing posts etc. on social media.

Creative Royston Window Walk

This was our first event of the year suggested by Siona Lamble, a then recent arrival in Royston who had



been impressed with a staging of Window Wanderland in her previous home town of Bromley. Earlier in the Covid pandemic in 2020, first 'Royston Goes On A Bear Hunt' and then 'Pumpkin Parade' encouraged many people to dress their windows with a huge variety of displays. Our version, the Creative Royston Window Walk, was deliberately scheduled for the winter half-term in February to provide an activity for children which might also provide some relief to parents seeking to keep their children amused during the break from school. Kooky Nohmad helped distribute art packs to local schoolchildren as did Tesco which additionally put on their own

Window Walk display at the front of their 'Extra' store.

Thank you to both Kooky Nohmad and Tesco, in particular their Community Champion, Mandy Jinkerson, for all their help with this.

Here is one window that entered our Window Walk showing how a relatively simple design displays so effectively both by day and by night.



We had over 100 households take part in the Window Walk and lots of people seemed to enjoy the diversion that it provided.

Thank you once again to Siona for the suggestion and all her hard work during the organisation of the Window Walk to make sure that it was a success.

Creative Writing Competition

We were once again indebted to the Rotary Club of Royston for their support in running a creative writing competition in which they did most of the organising. We were looking for inspiring original short story writing within 3 age groups for young people with a 19+ category to cater for all others.



The poster is for the Creative Writing Competition 2021, part of the Creative Royston and Royston Arts Festival. It features a blue background with a central orange and yellow phoenix logo. The text is arranged in several sections: a top header with logos and the competition title; a central call to action; a list of age groups; a deadline box; a list of themes; a prize description; and a sponsor logo at the bottom.

Creative Royston **Royston Arts Festival** **Creative Writing Competition 2021**

Capture the Arts Festival theme of 'Renewal' or just find your own inspiration to write up to 500 words

A panel of experienced writers will select a winner in each of the following age groups:
7-10, 11-14, 15-18 and 19+

Deadline for entry forms: Saturday 14th August

Renew, Recover, Restore
Revitalise, Rejuvenate

Winners will each receive book vouchers to the value of £50 from David's Bookshop, Letchworth.

Full details, competition rules and entry forms available from creativeroyston.org or roystonrotary.com

Sponsored by **Rotary Club of Royston**

A limit of 500 words was set again and potential writers were invited to utilise the festival theme of 'Renewal' if they wished, though there was no compulsion to do so and again there was no distinction between fiction and non-fiction.

We were very grateful for the assistance of our expert judges - children's author Catherine Rosevear, and journalist and Rotarian David Blundell, and former Creative Royston committee member Chiara Mannalà.

Thank you to all who entered the competition and David's Bookshops of Letchworth, which converted the prize money put up by the Rotary Club into book vouchers of a higher value.

Congratulations to the prize winners. Click on the titles below to read the stories.

7-10 years

Joint-Winner: Priscilla Tibenderana (9) **New Life**

Joint-Winner: Nathan Tibenderana (7) **Dinos and me**

Runner-up: Freya Johnson (8) **The four heroes**

11-14 years

Winner: Genevieve Eaton-Banks(13) **The Refugee**

15-18 years

Winner: Elizabeth Eaton-Banks (18) **Phoenix**

Runner-up: Jasmine Brett(16) **I'm a Were-What?**

19+

Winner: Justine Blaydon. **In the deep woods'**

Other entries

Amelia Keen (8) **Moving to Italy**

Edward Scales(8) **A new person**

Darcey Brown (8) **The girl who helped the world**

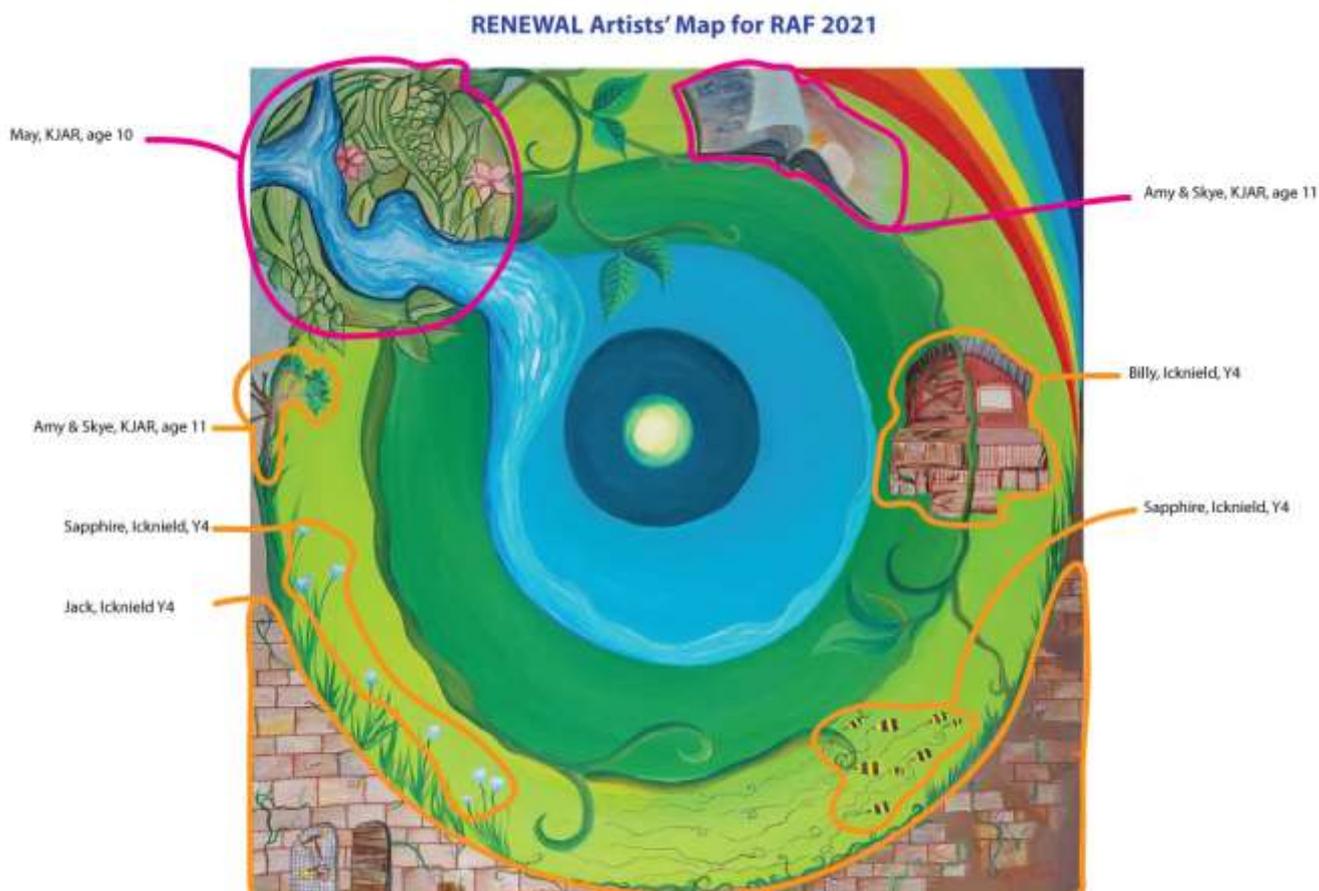
Imogen Clements(11) **The heavens spoke to me**

Cover Art Competition

Once again local artist Stacey Leigh-Ross (ByLeigh) was kind enough to spend some of her valuable time creating an original piece of art to reflect Royston schoolchildren's interpretation of the festival theme.

Unfortunately, some of the schools were clearly overwhelmed by the additional resources required to operate as normally as possible in the midst of a pandemic. Consequently, and quite understandably, they had little time to spread the news or encourage children to participate in the competition in their usual manner.

This meant that Stacey had a much more limited selection of artwork from which to choose the entries which provided an inspiration for her own original artwork. However, she rose to the challenge as always and produced a striking piece of art that is reproduced below together with attributions where the piece was inspired by contributions from the children's entries.



We did not produce a festival programme this year owing to the effect on publication deadlines caused by a large number of entries being finalised at a much later date than usual. Instead, we published the outline festival programme in the September edition of The Listing and proprietor, Cath Boughton, again kindly allowed Stacey's artwork to appear on the front cover.

Royston Arts Festival 2021 Programme

Below is the final programme for the 2021 festival extracted from the contents of a flyer published and distributed from the end of August but corrected to reflect the actual events which took place.

KEY: ART & PHOTOGRAPHY , FAMILY ACTIVITIES, TALKS & LITERATURE, MUSIC, PERFORMANCE & FILM

Sunday 19th September

ROYSTON PICTURE PALACE presents 'I AM BELMAYA' (15)
This inspirational documentary follows a young woman from care home to her new life as a filmmaker – a tale of rebellion, courage and hope in patriarchal Nepal. Followed by a Q&A with director Sue Carpenter. Winner of Best Documentary at the UK Asian Film Festival 2021.
When: 7.30pm **Where:** Picture Palace **Tickets:** see website roystonpicturepalace.org.uk

Thursday 23rd September

ROYSTON LIBRARY host a **TALK, Q&A, BOOK-SIGNING** by popular crime writer Amanda Brittany. Glass of wine included in ticket. **When:** Doors open 7.15 for 7.30pm
Where: Royston Library **Tickets:** £5 in person from Royston Library. hertfordshire.gov.uk/services

Saturday 25th September

ROYSTON ARTS SOCIETY AUTUMN EXHIBITION – see Friday.
When: 24/7 **Where:** rasexhibition.roystonarts.org.uk **FREE**

BARKWAY VILLAGE welcomes everyone to its first **LITERARY FESTIVAL**. Fun for all the family, with children's and adult events, café, David's Bookshop & bar. **When:** 10am-6pm
Where: Venues in Barkway **Tickets:** £5 Children, £7 Adults, some **FREE** see website for full details barkwaylitfest.co.uk

ROYSTON PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY EXHIBITION presents photographic images created by society members with individual interpretations of the festival theme of 'renewal' and open subjects. roystonphotographicsociety.co.uk

When: 10.30am – 4.30pm **Where:** Town Hall **FREE**

ROYSTON & DISTRICT TWINNING ASSOCIATION - PAELLA COOKING DEMO - **FREE** to observe or buy ticket for a portion of paella with complimentary Sangria.

When: 12 noon **Where:** Backstreet Catering, Royston Market

Tickets: £6.50 from info@roystontowntwinning.org or from Backstreet Catering. roystontowntwinning.org

ROYSTON MUSICFEST presents music for everyone. **When:** From 12.30/1.00pm **Where:** Banyers House & The Old Courthouse. roystonmusicfest.uk **FREE**

CORVUS AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY presents **STRANGERS AT A FESTIVAL**– see Friday

ROYSTON TOWN BAND presents **BRASS IN THE PARK** a traditional brass band concert featuring popular tunes from classic brass band music, modern themes, west end musicals and movies. Bring your own picnic, chairs etc.. **FREE** with a retiring collection. **When:** 7pm-9pm **Where:** Priory Gardens roystontownband.org.uk

Friday 24th September

WOMENSING sing songs that don't require reading music, but are uplifting & remind us of how good we feel, when having a **GOOD SING!** **When:** 4-5pm **Where:** Coombes Community Centre **FREE**

CORVUS AMATEUR DRAMATIC SOCIETY (CADS) presents **STRANGERS AT A FESTIVAL** a unique evening of drama and film, the one-act play *Strangers on a Film* imagines meetings between Alfred Hitchcock and Raymond Chandler during the making of *Strangers on a Train* – a Hitchcock classic which will be screened afterwards. Bring your own refreshments and find a table.
When: Doors open 6.30 for 7 pm. Ends 9.45. **Where:** King James Academy Royston, Senior Site **Tickets:** £10 on door (**CASH only**) cadsroyston.org.uk

ROYSTON ARTS SOCIETY will stage its **AUTUMN EXHIBITION** online. View and purchase paintings from local and professional artists in Royston's largest, most diverse art exhibition. **When:** From 7.30pm **Where:** rasexhibition.roystonarts.org.uk **FREE**

ROYSTON FOLK CLUB is back featuring Liz Cotton, Mandy Woods, John Meed, Cut the Mustard, John Drage **When:** 8pm **Where:** Old Bull Inn, Royston **Tickets:** £7 roystonfolk.org

Sunday 26th September

ROYSTON ARTS SOCIETY AUTUMN EXHIBITION – see Friday.
When: 24/7 **Where:** rasexhibition.roystonarts.org.uk **FREE**

ROYSTON PHOTOGRAPHIC SOCIETY EXHIBITION – see Saturday
When: 10.30am – 4.30pm **Where:** Town Hall **FREE**

ROYSTON MUSICFEST presents music for everyone in various venues around town. **When:** From 12.30/1.00pm **Where:** Banyers House, Conservative Club, Royston Golf Club, The Jolly Postie & The Old Bull Inn roystonmusicfest.uk **FREE**

LIMITLESS ACADEMY OF PERFORMING ARTS presents 'PRIVATE PEACEFUL' their award-winning play about three brothers during World War 1. **When:** 7.30pm **Where:** Limitless Academy Studio **Tickets:** limitlessacademyarts.com

CREATIVE ROYSTON presents the '**FINALE**' CONCERT The end of festival concert featuring a variety of amateur and professional performers to round off the festival in the traditional manner.
When: 7.30pm **Where:** online at creativeroyston.org

Tuesday 28th September

ROYSTON PICTURE PALACE present '**ROMEO & JULIET**'

Josh O'Connor (The Crown) and Jessie Buckley (Wild Rose, Judy) star as the passionate couple in this exciting version of Shakespeare's play, filmed at the National Theatre in lockdown. The award-winning cast includes Tamsin Greig, Fisayo Akinade, Adrian Lester, Lucian Msamati, Deborah Findlay. (2021 UK 100 mins) **When:** 7.30pm **Where:** Picture Palace **Tickets:** see website roystonpicturepalace.org.uk

Royston Arts Festival 2021 Attendance Figures

There is no disguising that attendance figures for the 2021 festival were significantly down on previous years but that should hardly come as a surprise.

In 2020 the idea of having an online festival was something of a novelty and people seemed to respond to that in the same way as they did to Covid in general, that is, they made the best of things where they were fortunate enough not to be directly affected by Covid amongst family or friends. In 2021, many people were simply tired by the whole experience of the pandemic and its attendant regulations and restrictions on public activities, whilst at the same time others seem to have adopted a more cautious approach. The second approach is perhaps more like to be adopted by those in older age groups and although we always try to put on a good range of events for all ages, the older age groups always account for the majority of visits to the festival.

The overall attendance for the 2021 festival was estimated to be 2,381 or 3,470 if one includes all the 'views' of the festival website during the festival period of 23rd – 26th September. To be clear, we do not normally include such figures but it seems reasonable to do so for a hybrid festival. The number of 'views' recorded for the 2020 festival was 5,418, though it should be stressed that one visitor may take more than one 'view' of the festival. It seemed reasonable to estimate attendance on 'views' in 2020 as 'visitors' to a live festival would normally be counted twice if they visited more than one event. In 2020, the festival period ran from the opening night on Friday 18th September to the Finale Concert night on Sunday 27th September so we are comparing an online festival which ran for ten days, to a hybrid festival lasting only four, which may not make for a very valid comparison.

One thing is fairly clear, apart from Royston MusicFest which held up pretty well with an attendance of approximately 1,335 spread over 2 days and 31 mini-concerts, the attendance figures of around 2,000 actual visitors to live events does not begin to match even the poorest festival attendance of around 4,400 in recent years. However, as already remarked we are living in unusual times and it seem unlikely that we would learn much by delving any deeper into the attendance figures for individual events.

Feedback

We did not ask for feedback for the 2020 online festival as we had done for all previous festivals in recent years as most of the information we normally collect about events was not relevant or comparable. This year we decided to do something different by having a paperless exercise which was reliant on visitors using QR Codes placed at each venue and completing a very short questionnaire using their mobile phone.

We did not get as many responses as we hoped but if you are interested in looking at the analysis that the feedback report provides you will find it on our website: click [HERE](#)

The following are all the responses we received when we asked the question “What did you enjoy the most about this year's festival?”

- The opportunity to view things online. I have heard about this Festival but don't live nearby so it has been good in the last couple of years to be able to view things online.
- Live Music Also good quality events that didn't clash timewise so could get to attend everything I wanted to
- Great to see live music for free. Banyers was a good venue with outdoor under cover seating!
- Fine weather made watching and walking between venues easy. I have really missed live music so MusicFest was great
- Pat Crilly at the Jolly Postie.
- The music!
- Fantastic music at the Banyar's
- The music!
- The quality of music and atmosphere in banyers on Sunday afternoon
- Music
- Live music in general, and the Boxwood Chessmen and Jeremy Harmer in particular
- Sitting in the sunshine in the Old Bull's garden having a drink and a chat and listening to the music
- Live music in the pub
- The music
- Being there in person
- I like the fact, that the artists have created there own lyrics to many of the songs
- The music at The Postie
- Music festival
- Great to have live music in Royston! Thank you
- Good music
- Seeing the Royston Town Band and Blue Sky Acoustic
- Royston town band
- Womensing, Music at the Golf Club and Paella on the market
- Being back in person after covid
- The music
- Diverse events of high quality
- Amanda's talk was excellent

Marketing and Promotion

As in 2020, we did not have anyone to focus solely on the marketing role and the task again fell largely to the Chairperson. He is still far from being any kind of expert on social media, however, all the committee chipped in wherever possible and pulled together with the distribution of banners, posters and flyers.

Leaving aside the website which we use to provide information in a more general sense, our marketing effort comprised four main areas of activity: the programme; banners, posters and flyers; press and social media; and communication with schools.

The Programme:

As in previous years, the festival programme was distributed by The Listing to 16,500 homes in Royston and 31 surrounding villages in South Cambridgeshire and North Hertfordshire. In 2020 it was decided that was impractical to produce a separate programme owing to the general uncertainty over Covid with a lot of people making an effort to contribute something quite late on, effectively well past what would have been our normal copy deadline in August. Instead, we published a 'broad' programme in the centre pages of the September edition of The Listing magazine, but left the details to be published on our main website as part of the full final programme. In 2021 we decided to follow the same path but instead of publishing a 'broad' programme we aimed to provide as many details as possible of all the scheduled events. Inevitably, later changes meant that the programme was not strictly accurate when it appeared but we knew that we could still publish a 'Final' accurate programme on our website for the start of the festival. By doing so we achieved the same circulation at the same time as reducing our carbon footprint once more and reducing our costs. We believe that the impact of the programme was largely unaffected and possibly improved thanks to The Listing again putting the Cover Art Competition artwork on their front cover.

Banners, posters and flyers:

We lost one of our banner venues in 2021 with Folknoll being the subject of redevelopment as blocks of flats, but vinyl banners were still displayed at Tesco roundabout, Royston Train Station, The Jolly Postie, Royston Town Hall and the Old Bull Inn (during the Folk Club's 'Shindig'). Posters were put up at and programme flyers distributed from Royston Library and several other places in the town centre and also at Tesco, though the major distribution at Royston Kite Festival in August was lost as that event was cancelled again in 2021. Thank you to all those concerned who kindly allowed us to publicise the festival on their premises. Double-sided A5 flyers containing the full details of the festival programme were distributed from the end of August which also compensated to some extent for the absence of a separate festival programme in A5 booklet form as had been the tradition up to and including 2019.

Press and Social Media:

The Listing magazine, as always, was very helpful in providing regular articles and updates on our activities during the year and particularly in the build-up to the festival. In 2021 the Royston Crow's coverage of the

Annual Report 2021

festival greatly improved on the previous year with a front page article and an inside page supplement in the week leading up to the festival for which we are very thankful. The pages are reproduced below.



Despite the lack of a dedicated marketing person social media continued to play an important role in our marketing activity. The festival's social media presence was significantly boosted by a number of local accounts and we'd like to thank everyone who helped to raise awareness by posting, liking and sharing.

We published only 5 Facebook posts during September which reached 4,346 people compared with 6,234 in 2020. The total number of people liking the Creative Royston Facebook page is 615 compared to 545 last year, an increase of 12.8%.

By contrast we under used Twitter to the extent that we sent only 7 Tweets in 2021 compared to 16 Tweets in September 2020 during the run-up to the festival. We now have 1,094 followers down by only 8 on this time last year but we clearly need to make much more use of this branch of social media.

Schools:

We continue to work with schools in Royston and the surrounding villages most obviously through our Cover Art and Creative Writing competitions and thank those schools that helped us to publicise those competitions this year.

We appreciate that it has again been a particularly difficult year for schools and we hope that we can resume and consolidate our previously strong relationship with most of the schools when circumstances allow.

Creative Royston Draft Financial Statements For the year ending 31 December 2021

For approval by the Annual General Meeting on 10th January 2022

Supporting Statement

We are always very grateful for the generous local support and sponsorship from our Premier Partner Johnson Matthey, however, this year we decided not to claim the £5,000 which the company kindly donates to Creative Royston each year. This was mainly owing to early recognition of the fact that we would not be able to stage a full live festival in 2021 and also that we had a substantial sum in the bank, more than was necessary to follow the policy of the organisation to hold a reserve fund equal to one year's festival cost (approximately £15k). The funding from Johnson Matthey is normally agreed on a three-year cycle and instead of claiming our final year in the current cycle it seemed more sensible to hold that sum over until 2022 when it could, hopefully, be put to better use and Johnson Matthey kindly agreed to this.

The Brian Lesley Racher Trust has given us great assistance over the last few years, regularly supporting MusicFest in its entirety and also making a substantial contribution to the production or distribution of our festival programme. We decided that we would not make any claim on their generosity in 2021 and would instead find the money from our existing funds and return to them when we were next able to put forward a substantive case to ask for a further grant from them.

In effect, we decided in advance to make a loss for 2021 and reduce the amount of money held in our bank account with Lloyds. This aligns with our statement at this point in the 2020 Annual Report: "In 2021 we will aim to spend more on events and reduce our reserve fund to align with our policy, providing the Covid situation allows us to do sensibly."

In the continuing absence of a Treasurer, I have again put together an Income & Expenditure Account covering the 2021 financial year. It shows that Creative Royston remains in a healthy financial position and the organisation closed the year with a general reserve fund of £22,401.77 which is exactly the 'Opening Balance' of £25,958.36 minus the Total Expenditure of £3,556.59. To the best of my knowledge there are no outstanding debts but IT Costs will rise in 2022 as our 5-year agreement with Internet Service Provider LCN.com ends in early March.

Carl Filby
Chairperson
7th January 2022

DRAFT Income & Expenditure Account Year ending 31 December 2021

	2021	2020	2019	2018
OPENING BANK BALANCE	£25,958.36			
INCOME	£	£	£	£
Sponsorship	0	5150	7150	7950
Grants	0	2700	4700	4700
Ticket Sales & Other Earned Income	0	26.97	8750.87	2843.18
TOTAL INCOME	0	7876.97	20600.87	15093.18
EXPENDITURE				
Artist fees & associated expenses	1,345.00	975.00	6,071.29	5,140.25
Advertising & Marketing	27.00	0.00	129.20	5,480.01
Volunteer Costs	0.00	80.00	72.80	50.00
Equipment & materials costs	104.59	373.10	1,396.67	1,095.00
Seed-Funding & prizes	427.50	156.75	1,154.84	660.32
Venue Costs	0.00	0.00	227.00	280.50
Insurance, First Aid and Licences	218.40	268.40	260.40	317.40
Stocks for Refreshments	21.57	0.00	210.61	200.00
Miscellaneous	0.00	77.58	52.64	1,575.40
Printing Costs (non-programme)	12.00	99.00	145.50	
Programme Costs	1,353.60	1,359.00	3,558.73	
Donation to Royston Parish Church	0.00	0.00	2,396.16	
Repayment of Unused Grant (to BLRT)	0.00	256.00		
Governance Costs				
Subscriptions	0.00	0.00	0.00	199.00
Website & IT costs	46.93	50.85	94.82	30.00
AGM	0.00	*	*	50.00
Stationery & Postage	0.00	4.56	0.00	150.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	3,556.59	3,700.24	15,770.66	15,227.88
PLUS LATE INVOICES	0	0.00	494.01	1,432.24
NET INCOME FOR THE YEAR	-3,556.59	4,176.73	4,336.20	-1,566.94
CLOSING BANK BALANCE	£22,401.77			

* included in Miscellaneous

Looking Ahead

Who would have thought that nearly two years on from the first Covid infections in the UK there would still be such huge numbers being infected each day, albeit with a different, hopefully less virulent strain.

Clearly, at this stage we would be foolish to gaze too deeply into the crystal ball and come up with any definitive statements on the content of the 2022 arts festival. Whilst it is encouraging that all five members of the Creative Royston Management Committee will be staying on in the immediate future, that number is insufficient to adequately cover all the tasks involved in the staging of a festival on the scale that we last saw in pre-pandemic 2019.

Our first priority therefore is to raise awareness of the festival and try to recruit more committee members and volunteers, which should not be impossible given the expansion in the number of houses in the town. If we can do that, then despite the seemingly permanent loss of the 'Royston Fringe' from the festival and the shrinking number of venues it may still be possible to hold more than just another hybrid festival to keep things ticking over.

We have in fact already agreed to support Royston Live's (the Folk Club's new name) Young Musician Competition which will take place during July, August and September at their new venue, The Royal British Legion, with the results being announced during the festival. Creative Royston will be putting up the second prize of £250.

In the unlikely event that you are reading this and don't already put something back into your community, then perhaps you might consider these (slightly amended) words of John.F.Kennedy: "Ask not what your town can do for you – ask what you can do for your town." We wouldn't feel obliged to object if you chose to substitute 'arts festival' for 'town', though the words are not mutually exclusive.

As we are looking forward, let's end by wishing everyone all the very best in 2022.
