

Creative
Royston

ANNUAL REPORT 2019



Royston Arts Festival & Events

Premier Partner: Johnson Matthey

Annual Report 2019

ROYSTON ARTS FESTIVAL & EVENTS

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Management Committee 2019

Joanne Colgan, Treasurer

Carl Filby, Chair and Websites Administrator

Pip McLachlan, Committee Member

Phil Oddy, Vice-Chair & Marketing

Nicky Paton, Community Liaison

Hannah Theobald, Committee Member

Andy Tunnicliffe, Secretary

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Chairperson's statement

At one stage it was uncertain whether the 2019 arts festival would go ahead and it was only because several new volunteers came forward to join the Creative Royston Management Committee (CRMC) that it was able to do so. Even then we lost two of our new members owing to illness before the festival really started to take shape but gained one more and everyone worked hard to cover positions that had previously been filled by experienced committee members.

Despite the fact that we were all on a learning curve of one sort or another we collectively decided early on to take an adventurous approach and try and do things a bit differently. This started with the festival theme for 2019, 'Our Planet', which was chosen to reflect our concerns about the environment but could also be interpreted as an opportunity to celebrate the wonders of Planet Earth. The idea of linking social awareness with the Arts is not a new one but is perhaps a first as far as the Royston Arts Festival theme is concerned.

Fate then intervened to ensure that we would have to do at least one thing differently when Royston Parish Church, the normal venue for our Finale Concert, suffered a fire in November 2018. Fortunately, the King James Academy Hall proved to be an ideal alternative venue and it was packed out for a very enjoyable concert on the final day of the festival.

The fire at St John's Church also presented another opportunity as our Honorary President, Alison Balsom, was keen to help us raise funds for the refurbishment. She brought her ensemble of highly talented baroque musicians to Ashwell Church to create a proper festival 'Opening Night' concert for the first time in recent years, at least. The concert was effectively sold out and in another 'first' for the festival we raised £2,396.16 for the refurbishment fund, after deduction of the musicians' (much-reduced!) fees and expenses with Alison kindly waiving her fee altogether and taking care of some additional expenses.

We pushed the boundaries again when we staged a mid-week cabaret event featuring drag queen, Cookie MonStar, and burlesque star, Coco Nobel, and this was also a sell-out event which was hugely enjoyed by the audience on the night. Add to the above a very enjoyable and well-attended talk by author, Dr Stuart Clark; another popular Community Event in Priory Gardens based on the environmental theme, and another well-attended (apart from the Gala Concert) MusicFest event on the first weekend and I was very pleased with everything we managed to achieve during the festival period. So, I would like to express my thanks to my fellow committee members, in particular, and our volunteers for all their hard work and great attitude which has helped make this year's festival a very enjoyable experience for me personally.

The festival is not just made up from events organised by Creative Royston of course and many thanks are due to all the organisers of the other performances and exhibitions that are essential to the success of the festival.

Finally, we have made this report available in electronic form only in the spirit of our 2019 theme and we will continue to pursue environmentally-friendly policies and practices wherever and whenever possible in the future.

Carl Filby

Chairperson, February 2020

Volunteers and Contributors

Creative Royston events could not happen without the hard work of our volunteers, this year the following people kindly gave their time to support our events:

John Crosher, Joe & Emma Daintrey (Sound & lighting support), Sarah Dingley, Tina Filby, Robbie Filby, Sue and Terry Hartga (photography), Ashley Hawkins (NHDC support), Diane Jackson, Chris & Shirley Lee, Stacey Leigh-Ross (Mixed-Media Artist), Chiara Mannalà, Jo Tunnicliffe, Chris Walls (Cabaret/Artistic advice), Anne Williams.

Matt Bowmer has once again contributed his time and expertise to design our leaflets and festival programme, which is an enormous help, very gratefully received.

We are always keen to hear from people who would like to help out at events or who wish to join the management committee. If you're interested or would just like to know more, please email us on volunteers@creativeroyston.org.

Phil Oddy stepped up to the role of Vice-Chair in 2019 and Pip McLachlan with Glazed Creations has been a key part of the Community Event for a few years now. We would like to take this opportunity to thank them both for their services as they step down from the committee.

Those who participated in the 2019 festival include 3folk, Louise & David Atkins; Alison Balsom, (and her Ensemble: David Blackadder, Wolfgang Gaisböck, Simon Munday, Adam Wright, Adrian Woodward, Peter McCarthy, Anna Lapwood, & Ben Hoffnung) The Blues Measures; David Cambridge & Jenna Walker; Melody Causton; Boxwood Chessmen; Cambridge & Walker; Corvus Amateur Dramatic Society (CADS); Pat Crilly & Paul Hilder (Knuckles & Nails); Shaunaid Crosby; Curwens Art Gallery; Cut the Mustard; Kelvin Davies & Gary 'The Hat'; Elizabeth & Jameson; Paddy Findlay & Lloyd Crowley; Glazed Creations; Jeremy Harmer & Josh Lynch; Sue and Terry Hartga (photographers); Hertfordshire Libraries; Joe Hillman; Bernard Hoskin; Alice Hyland and her pupils; Icknield Walk First School; Rich Keam; Kelly & Woolley; Kerry Jo Hodgkin; King James Academy staff, choirs, musicians and performers (inc Boyz Choir); Hannah Long, Jack Horrocks & Madalina Rusu; Graham Palmer; Pass the Buch; Jenni Pinnock; Red Velvet; Roman Way First School; Royston Arts Society; Royston Cave; Royston Folk Club; Royston Methodist Church (Royston Fringe Events); Royston & District Museum and Art Gallery; Royston Photographic Society; Royston Roses; Royston Town Band; Royston Town Development Band; Royston Town Mayor Robert Inwood; Ruby Muse; Sky West; Studlands Rise First School; Tannery Drift First School; Therfield First School; Thursday's Band; The Velvet Underwriters, and WomenSing.

Businesses, local authorities, charities and other organisations which contributed financially or in-kind in 2019 include: Brian Leslie Racher Trust; Curwens Solicitors; David's Bookshop Letchworth; Glazed Creations; Jewson; Johnson Matthey plc; The Listing; North Hertfordshire District Council; Hertfordshire County Councillors Fiona Hill & Steve Jarvis; Royston First; Royston Masonic Hall; Royston Library; Royston Rotary Club, and Royston Town Council.

Venues used in 2019 include Banyers House; Conservative Club; Curwens Art Gallery; Heath Sports Café; Jolly Postie; King James Academy Meridian Hall; Market Hill Rooms; Priory Memorial Gardens; Old Bull Inn; Royston & District Museum & Art Gallery; Royston Cave; Royston Golf Club; Royston Library; Royston Methodist Church; Royston Parish Church; Royston Town Hall, and St Mary's Church, Ashwell.

Arts Quiz

On Friday 1st March our Chairperson, Carl Filby, turned Quizmaster again and, with some assistance from Stephanie Wilson, Natasha Evans and Chris Lee on the night, staged our second Arts Quiz and accompanying raffle at the Old Bull Inn.

Over 60 people attended this year absolutely filling the Oakroom and forming 11 teams, many made up from supporters of the arts festival such as CADS, Royston Arts Society, Royston Folk Club and the Library.

Including the proceeds from the raffle, the evening made over £400 profit (about £100 up from last year) and we had lots of good verbal feedback at the end.

Arts Festival Theme Launch



At the end of April, Royston & District Museum & Art Gallery hosted a low-key launch of Creative Royston's theme for the 2019 festival, 'Our Planet'.

The Museum were kind enough to place our theme and logo very prominently on their poster but on the day Assistant Curator Amy Judd and her colleagues did all the work with the children whilst Carl stood around and chatted to anyone who looked as though they might possibly listen to a sales pitch about the festival.

Thanks to Curator Madeline Odent and her staff for hosting and running this event and also to some Naturally Royston members who turned up to support and help out.

© Royston & District Museum & Art Gallery

'Tin Giants' Concert

For the second year in succession we decided to stage a concert on a Sunday evening in July at the Old Bull Inn, this time to host an evening of music from a newly-formed band featuring a number of experienced musicians originally from the Royston & Cambridge areas though now dispersed a little further afield. 'Shave the Monkey' were a well-known and widely-travelled band playing mainly in the nineties and early noughties with an astounding array of instruments including, hurdy-gurdy, bagpipes, mandolins, guitars, keyboards, saxophones, melodeon, violin and drums. Three former members came together with three members of current MusicFest band, 'Boxwood Chessmen', and a new drummer to form 'Tin Giants' with a similarly impressive variety of instruments.

MusicFest organiser, Carl Filby, took something of a chance on booking this new band based on the reputation of their individual members but backed this up by booking an up-and-coming duo, Elizabeth & Jameson, who have been building a strong following on the folk circuit. Unfortunately, although those attending the concert were treated to something of a masterclass in musicianship, audience numbers were disappointing and the concert produced an overall loss.

With hindsight, Carl thought that it was perhaps a mistake to book a band which had not itself had time to build a reputation as a separate entity from the individual musicians involved. However, the concert provided an opportunity for local audiences to experience something different which is at least a fulfilment of Creative Royston's constitutional remit.

Royston Folk Club 'Summer Shindig'

Photo © Mike Wells



Despite the success of their Young Artists Competitions in 2017 and 2018 with the support of Creative Royston (which put up the second prizes of £250) the Folk Club Committee decided that it would be good to take a break and have a two-day summer festival instead.

In line with one of our Constitutional aims “to promote all art forms in and around Royston ..” the Creative Royston Management Committee (CRMC) decided

to support the Folk Club again in its latest venture which was quickly christened the 'Summer Shindig'. In particular, we decided to sponsor the winners (Paddy Findlay and Lloyd Crowley) and the runner-up (Lizzy Hardingham – pictured) of the 2018 Young Artists Competition along with Chris Fox, another rising young star on the local music scene. All of these performers have played at Royston MusicFest and we were happy to sponsor them for their total fees for 'Shindig' amounting to £100.

The Folk Club is the main regular provider to the music scene in Royston and runs showcase events on the second Friday each month and concerts on the last Friday in the month. Details of forthcoming events and performers can be found on their website <http://www.roystonfolk.org/>.

Roger Britten Project

One of our seed-funding applications came from ex-Creative Royston Chair, Graham Palmer, for he and Jenni Pinnock to run a workshop at King James Academy for the Boyz Choir. Their aim was to write a song about Roger Britten, the first recorded black resident of Royston. We also funded a related project - the creation of a collage of Roger's life by Stacey Leigh-Ross for display, alongside her sketches for the piece, as part of Royston and District Museum's celebration of Black History Month in October 2019.



The song was duly written and performed by the Boyz Choir at our Finale Concert (pictured) and again at the Museum for the launch of Black History Month and the unveiling of Stacey's collage. Carl attended the launch on behalf of Creative Royston.

Subsequently we also funded the recording of the song 'Making A Good Impression' and it can be heard by following this link to [YouTube](#)

Creative Royston Competitions

Cover Art Competition



Despite another busy year on a personal level, local artist Stacey Leigh-Ross (ByLeigh) was kind enough to once again to run the cover art competition. She chose images from around 20 pieces of art created by local school children (some pictured left with Stacey) from around 150 entries and used them in a mixed media collage to form the imagery for the festival.

The final cover art, original winning pieces and all of the entries were displayed in Royston Library during September. Thanks are due to the Library and Royston Arts Society for removing their paintings and allowing us to use their display boards.

Photo © Carl Filby

The original artwork was auctioned for £100 in aid of local charity Khandel light.

Creative Writing Competition

Thanks to continuing support from The Rotary Club and David's Bookshop in Letchworth we were once again able to run a creative writing competition which was open to all ages. We were looking for inspiring original writing with a limit of 500 words and with the theme of 'Our Planet' at its core.

Two expert judging panels from the world of journalism and literature were lined up to judge the competition but unfortunately the number of entries was disappointing and prizes were awarded in just five categories in the end.

Next year we will need to carefully consider whether it is worthwhile running the competition again.

Creative Royston Festival

Creative Writing Competition 2019

Deadline 29 July

Capture the Royston Arts Festival 2019 theme of 'Our Planet' in 500 words.

Supported by:
Rotary Club of Royston
David's Bookshop

What does Our Planet mean to you?

An expert judging panel will select the six winners:

- Best Fiction age 5-9
- Best Non-Fiction age 5-9
- Best Fiction age 10-17
- Best Non-Fiction age 10-17
- Best Fiction age 18+
- Best Non-Fiction age 18+

Prizes include vouchers from David's Bookshop, Letchworth

JM Johnson Matthey
Premier Partner

Full details, competition rules and entry forms available at:
www.creativeroyston.org

Royston Arts Festival 2019

Alison Balsom and the Balsom Ensemble



This year's festival spanned 9 days and two weekends starting on Thursday 19th September with a Grand Opening Night featuring Alison Balsom and the Balsom Ensemble of highly-talented baroque musicians and ending on Sunday 29th September with our traditional Finale Concert. Both these events were connected to the fire at Royston Parish Church in November 2019.

The first concert was staged partly as a way of raising funds for the refurbishment of the church and provided us with another opportunity to embrace the wider village community around Royston by using the beautiful St Mary's Church in Ashwell as the venue. The acoustics for the concert were perfect and lots of candles and a full house helped create a wonderful atmosphere on the night as well as raising £2,396.16 for the refurbishment fund. Click [HERE](#) to see the programme for the evening.



Finale Concert



Our Finale Concert normally takes place in Royston Parish Church so we were delighted to find that the hall at the King James Academy (KJA) Meridian Site was available to hire after the CADS production ended the previous night and it proved to be the perfect venue with its stage and raised seating.

CRMC member Hannah Theobald put together and compered a varied and entertaining evening featuring pupils from KJA (pictured right) and the Town Band, in particular and also featured in her professional capacity as Hannah Long, Soprano, accompanied by Jack Horrocks on the Clarinet and Madalina Rusu on the Piano (pictured above).

Thanks to all the performers for providing a wonderful concert and to CADS stalwarts Emma & Joe Daintrey for kindly providing the sound, lighting and stage management and all the staff at KJA who made the concert possible. The programme for the evening can be viewed by clicking [HERE](#).

Community Arts Event



The Community Arts Event in Priory Memorial Gardens has always created such a great buzz in the town that the Committee were determined to run it again despite losing most of the expertise involved in previous years. However, Glazed Creations has always been central to the event and having co-owner Pip McLachlan on the Committee this year helped enormously. Andy and Carl did a lot of the admin and planning and with lots of volunteers to help again and good-ish weather the event was again very busy though perhaps with a slightly reduced overall attendance.

Thanks to all those organisations which ran stalls (including Naturally Royston whose 'Buggingham Palace' is shown above) and to our performers, Royston Town Development Band, the Wild Man of the Woods (with Town Mayor Rob Inwood at right), Stage Right Dance School and, in particular, the Limitless Academy of Performing Arts (below) which brought a big stage and a lot of enthusiastic and talented young people to help make it a successful event.



We had so many good photos to choose from this event that it seems a shame that we only have space for these four!

It was also amazing what they made on the day in the Glazed Creations Craft Tent (see right – but we don't know his/her name!)



MusicFest

This year's MusicFest again took place during the afternoon of the first Sunday (22nd) so that we could again incorporate a Gala Concert in the evening at the Old Bull Inn. Unfortunately, we lost one MusicFest venue shortly before the festival started and then had to make some last-minute re-arrangements at another owing to the popularity of, and unanticipated conflict with, the England Rugby World Cup match against Tonga. Notwithstanding these difficulties the afternoon music was very popular and we received lots of positive feedback as usual. Pictured below are the Velvet Underwriters playing at the Heath.



Not so popular was the evening Gala Concert which only had around 40 in attendance a number which dwindled as the evening wore on. Although the first Gala Concert in 2018 was a big success it seems that music in the evening makes it a long day for

some of the audience and also for some of the performers. It is therefore unlikely that we will continue to stage an evening Gala Concert taking place the same day as the rest of MusicFest.

An Evening with Cookie MonStar

We didn't know quite what to expect when Nicky suggested that we should have a Cabaret Evening featuring a Drag Queen and weren't entirely sure that Royston was ready for it. We decided to push the boundaries and were pleased to engage the services of Cookie MonStar as the star of our show. To back that up we also decided to have a Burlesque Dancer, Coco Nobel, as the support act. We also had the benefit of advice from a professional, Chris Walls, who helped to engage both Cookie and Coco, and Emma and Joe Daintrey who did a tremendous job providing a suitably glitzy stage and all the sound and lighting.



The evening was a bit hot and humid but a tremendous success, not only being a sell-out but also attracting lavish praise from the audience. As there is clearly some popular demand we may well do something similar in 2020.

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Creative Royston also engaged Dr Stuart Clarke to talk on the subject of 'The Search for Earth's Twin' a well-attended event which was kindly hosted by Royston Library and sponsored by Curwens Solicitors. Alongside our own events, there were a range of exhibitions, performances, workshops and talks delivered by other Royston based societies and groups, many of whom chose to use the 'Our Planet' theme as inspiration.



The Ramblers Royston on manoeuvre.

32 separate daily events including Performances, talks, exhibitions, music etc..*

Joe & Emma Daintrey on Sound & Light at the Finale Concert

Approximately 5400 visits To Arts Festival Events



Approximately 350 visits to CADS performances of Flare Path

*This number rises to 67 'events' if you include each separate performance in MusicFest'19.

Royston Arts Festival 2019 Attendance & Feedback

Creative Royston's 'core' events:

For the first time in recent memory we had a proper festival 'Opening Night' when **Alison Balsom** brought her ensemble of highly talented baroque musicians to a packed St Mary's Church in Ashwell. Alison had expressly wished to raise funds for the refurbishment of Royston Parish Church after the fire in November 2018. The concert was effectively sold out and we raised £2,396.16 for the refurbishment fund, after deduction of the musicians' fees and expenses. Alison kindly waived her fee altogether and took care of some additional expenses and the other musicians all performed at much reduced fees.

We collected 28 feedback responses from the concert and 100% rated the concert as 'Excellent' including some which said that their visibility could have been better. Despite that, only 2 people (7.14%) rated the venue as low as 'Satisfactory' and the majority (67.86%) thought it was 'Excellent'. Whilst it is true that St Mary's Church does not provide all the facilities of a top-notch concert venue it did provide a wonderfully atmospheric setting for this type of music.

Despite the late withdrawal of the Old Courthouse leaving us with only 6 venues for **MusicFest** (compared with up to 10 in previous years) and the England World Cup rugby reducing the programme at the Heath, the estimated attendance held up well at around 1,320. This compared with 1400 in 2018 with an extra venue, however, the Gala Concert was not very well supported this year and there was a feeling that it also made it a bit of a long day for some of the musicians.

The 'Excellent' feedback ratings for MusicFest were 74.47%, down on 2018's 84.78%, but 100% of respondents thought the events were either 'Excellent' or 'Good'. That was similar to the ratings given for the venues in 2018 but this year 4.17% thought they were only 'Satisfactory'. One statistic reflecting the festival as a whole was the increase in the 16-25 age range of visitors from 3.66% in 2018 to 10.29% in 2019 and we again received lots of supportive and appreciative comments.

We recognised at the outset that we were entering unknown territory when we commissioned **An Evening with Cookie MonStar** so were delighted that it sold out and received such glowing and enthusiastic reviews from the audience, 100% of whom thought the show was 'Excellent'. The Ballroom in the Old Bull Inn was full and quite hot and humid, so perhaps not ideal, but that didn't seem to spoil the enjoyment. This event was also the one which overwhelmingly appealed to the 26-40 age group, forming 59.09% of the audience giving feedback. We had also been unsure about staging this event on a Wednesday evening but needn't have worried as clearly that is an evening when partners are prepared to stay home and look after the kids – and maybe watch football!

Attendance at the **Priory Gardens Community Event** was estimated to be around 700 which is a little down on the estimate of 800 for 2018. It may be significant that the ratings for 'Publicity' showed only 15.79% for 'Excellent' in 2019 as against 41.67% in 2018 with the balance being distributed to 'Satisfactory'. Also, no-one cited a Child's School as being the source of knowledge about the event. This makes the cause difficult to analyse because we didn't do much different in the way of publicity from last year. Perhaps it was the weather (exceptionally good in 2018) which made the difference or maybe that the number of feedback forms collected in 2019 (19 vs 54) was significantly reduced from 2018. Everyone who actually attended the event rated it as either 'Excellent' 63.16% or 'Good' 36.84% and lots of positive feedback was received in the comments particularly about the range of activities for children.

By contrast, although the feedback for the **Finale Concert** in 2018, at 80% 'Excellent' and 20% 'Good', was difficult to improve on, that is just what happened with 96.43% rating it as 'Excellent' in 2019, That was even more impressive when this is based on 28 feedback forms returned in 2019 compared with 11 in 2018. Again, we received lots of praise in the feedback comments and the only hint of criticism was that the finish time was still a little late for younger children.

The other 'core' event was the talk in the Library by **Dr Stuart Clark on "The Search for Earth's Twin Planets"**. This was very well attended, virtually selling out the 50 seats available and 91.18% thought it was 'Excellent', the remainder 'Good'. The event was held on a Thursday this year as opposed to a Saturday when perhaps more people are doing other things or have prior commitments. There were a few comments about the lighting making it difficult to view the presentation amongst all the praise so that is something to be aware of next time.

Events & Exhibitions managed by others (with significant feedback):

Royston Fringe kicked off their part of the festival with the Clarinet Choir on Saturday 21st and which achieved an 82.35% Excellent feedback with the remainder rated Good. They put on a talk by Simon Gogerly based on his life and times as a record producer, which attracted 100% positive feedback, 75% of which was Excellent. Their Art Exhibition and Junior Artist Competition displays attracted up to an estimated 300 visitors and Friendly Folk on the Final Sunday also achieved a 100% positive feedback 85.71% of which was 'Excellent'. The Fringe also staged the Kaleidoscope of Life on the Final Saturday and attracted an audience of 52, though an insignificant number of feedback forms.

Corvus Amateur Dramatic Society (CADS) staged their production of a wartime drama, Flare Path by Terrence Rattigan, which attracted around 350 people over 2 weekends. 89.86% thought the production was 'Excellent', the remainder 'Good' and the impressive number of feedback forms (69) indicated that there was a good spread across all the age ranges amongst the audience when the play might have appealed to only the over 65s (just 31.52%).

Royston Arts Society (RAS) Autumn Exhibition attracted an impressive 850 visitors and once again returned 100% positive feedback ratings though from a very small number of feedback forms.

Royston Photographic Society (RPS) did a great job in collecting 84 completed feedback forms from visitors of which 100% were positive, being 66.27% Excellent and the remainder 'Good'.

General points for the festival overall:

A total of 400 completed feedback forms were collected by Creative Royston and other Event Organisers for the 2019 festival, a significant increase on the 339 collected in 2018. However, the current method of obtaining feedback, although providing some useful comparisons year-on-year, is very time-consuming and it would be a good idea to review it with a view to making it shorter and, if possible, entirely electronic.

A total of 83.04% of respondents gave the events in the festival an Excellent rating compared with 77.13% total for 2018 but perhaps the most satisfying aspect of this was that the remaining 16.96% all thought events were Good. The last time that 100% of the responses were either Excellent or Good was the 2013 festival when statistics were first produced in this format.

The Excellent ratings for the Venue were down to 58.52% compared with 64.63% for 2018 but the Good ratings at least rose to 38.17% from 32.93% which almost compensates for the fall but still suggests that the venues used do have limitations, some more than others.

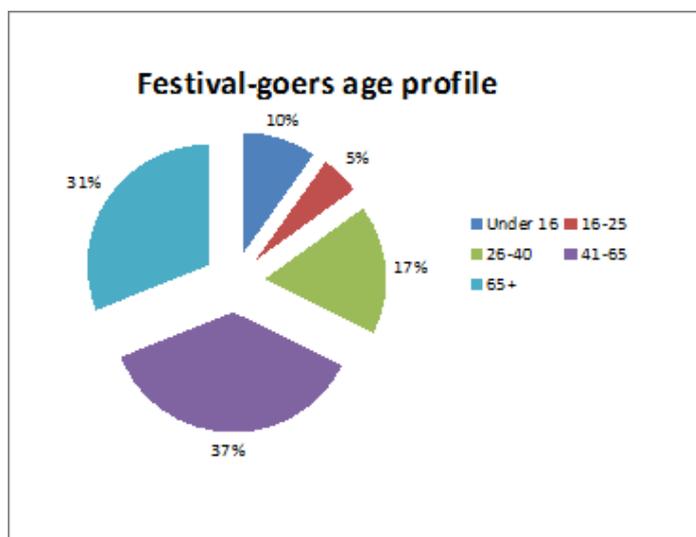
The ratings for 'Publicity' and the 'Festival Overall' do not vary much from last year and it is questionable how useful responses from these questions actually are as they are both rather broad and subjective. There is an added difficulty with asking people to rate the festival overall at an early stage in the proceedings which makes the responses less valuable than those for the events themselves which in any case, in total, provide an effective assessment of the festival overall. Both of these feedback questions might be usefully dropped in the cause of brevity.

The pattern for the answers to the next set of questions, 'Where did you hear about the event?', has been clear and set for some time now with 'Word of Mouth' always the main reason cited for hearing about the festival followed closely by 'The Listing'. Together these two categories usually account

for around 45% of the responses and after that the printed programme usually attracts around 12-13%. The only big difference this year was that the 'Other' category fell back to a more usual 5.54% from 10.13% last year, which suggests that the last figure was something of an aberration. All in all, this set of questions does not now seem to be telling us anything new and must be a candidate for dropping altogether.

It is probably useful to know what percentage of festival visitors are first-timers as that also measures the percentage that are returning, though of course the actual numbers are probably a better indicator if they could be collected or estimated entirely accurately. Do we also need to know what percentage of visitors use the facilities in the town? Possibly not!

That leaves the statistics collected on the age range of visitors to the arts festival which can vary quite considerably from one year to another and as such can be a valuable measure of which age groups the festival is reaching effectively. This year for example, the percentage of visitors from the 16-25 age group more than doubled to 5.21%, though conversely the under-16 representation has fallen by almost half to 9.78%. The 26-40 age range also increased its percentage share significantly from 12.17% last year to 17.32% this year. We can then use these figures in the following year to help us orientate the festival towards a particular age group that has found it less appealing. The discrepancy in the appeal of the festival to the various age groups can be best illustrated by the pie chart below.



The pie chart illustrates clearly that we still have a lot of work to do to appeal to 16-25 year-olds and now also need to ensure that we increase appeal for the under-16s as well. The fall in appeal for the latter may in part have been caused by the addition of the Alison Balsom Concert and the Evening with Cookie MonStar, neither of which would have had much attraction for that age group.

Comments from festival-goers on Creative Royston events

- 1 Beautifully done, wonderful concert, friendly volunteers. (Alison Balsom Concert)
- 2 Excellent – World Class performers – so lucky to have them play locally. (AB Concert)
- 3 Really well organised, efficient, friendly “staff”. (Alison Balsom Concert)
- 4 Wonderful evening. Thank you Royston Arts Festival. (Alison Balsom Concert)
- 5 Nice church but not so good visibility. (Alison Balsom Concert)
- 6 Greater publicity that the 'Private' Clubs (Con & Golf) were open to all. (MusicFest)
- 7 Great bands, Great music. (MusicFest)
- 8 Please keep doing it! (MusicFest)
- 9 A magic set of brilliant artists. (MusicFest)
- 10 Excellent quality and great atmosphere. (MusicFest)
- 11 Absolutely fantastic. Looking forward to many more. (An Evening with Cookie MonStar)
- 12 Awesome. Incredible. Royston needs more events like this. (An Evening with Cookie M)
- 13 Bit warm in the venue. (An Evening with Cookie MonStar)
- 14 Cookie MonStar was brilliant. More please!!! (An Evening with Cookie MonStar)
- 15 Fantastic event! More like this please. (An Evening with Cookie MonStar)
- 16 Great choice of activity for kids. (Priory Gardens Community Arts Event - PGCAE)

- 17 Fantastic creative stuff as loads to do – a great afternoon! (PGCAE)
- 18 Great event. Enjoyed huge variety of activities. (PGCAE)
- 19 Love all the hands on crafts in Priory Gardens. (PGCAE)
- 20 Wonderful event. Great for the children. (PGCAE)
- 21 A huge well done to all involved in this community event. Great success. (Finale Concert)
- 22 A fantastic evening. Thank you everybody. (Finale Concert)
- 23 Consider slightly reducing run time – late night for the kids on a Sunday. (Finale Concert)
- 24 The King James School children singing to the band was lovely. (Finale Concert)
- 25 Excellent inclusion of all ages + good mix of music & performance groups. (Finale Concert)

.... in conjunction with Royston Library

- 26 Very enjoyable. (The Search for Earth's Twin – Talk by Dr Stuart Clarke)
- 27 Excellent! Really clear even to a non-scientist. (The Search for Earth's Twin)
- 28 Wish we could have seen images better on the projector. (The Search for Earth's Twin)
- 29 Too much light so could not see what was on the screen. (The Search for Earth's Twin)
- 30 Thanks again for organising the event. (The Search for Earth's Twin)

Comments on events staged by other groups and societies

- 31 Beautifully directed. Wonderfully performed. (CADS – Flare Path)
- 32 Excellent – stage sets, costumes & actors. (CADS – Flare Path)
- 33 Very good acting, very realistic and Doris made me laugh – great character. (CADS – FP)
- 34 Really caught up in the drama, glad it ended well! CADS – Flare Path)
- 35 Fabulous performance! CADS – Flare Path)
- 36 Always good! (Royston Arts Society Annual Exhibition - RASAE)
- 37 Excellent paintings – getting better every year! (RASAE)
- 38 Excellent variety and quality of arts – could have benefitted from a more spacious venue(RASAE)
- 39 Very difficult to choose the best painting. Excellent display all round. (RASAE)
- 40 Painting exhibition felt a bit cramped. (RASAE)
- 41 Well laid out, as usual, a nice exhibition. (Royston Photographic Society)
- 42 Lovely interaction with visitors. (Royston Photographic Society)
- 43 Always interesting exhibition. (Royston Photographic Society)
- 44 Great talent shown. (Royston Photographic Society)
- 45 Photographic exhibition is very well organised. (Royston Photographic Society)
- 46 Good art exhibition. (Royston Fringe – Art Exhibition)
- 47 A printed programme for the audience would be a good idea. (Royston Fringe Clarinet Choir)
- 48 Wonderful afternoon. (Royston Fringe – Friendly Folk)
- 49 A very unusual talk. (Royston Fringe – Simon Gogerly)
- 50 More like this. (Royston Fringe – Simon Gogerly)
- 51 Really interesting talk! (Royston Fringe – Simon Gogerly)
- 52 Pleased to see a number of young people in the audience (Royston Fringe - Simon Gogerly)
- 53 Very enjoyable. (Royston Fringe – Simon Gogerly)

General comments on the festival

- 54 This event gets better every year. Thanks to all of the dedicated volunteers.
- 55 Royston is so talented and Creative Royston supports this. Thanks.
- 56 Great range of festival events – something for everyone. I'm always made to feel very welcome.
- 57 Carry on doing this festival. I think it's great!
- 58 Good festival: shame about the drag act!
- 59 Please have a music festival in Priory Gardens.
- 60 Well done, the arts festival is brilliant.

Marketing and Promotion

Phil Oddy took care of marketing again this year (on top of being Vice-Chair) with some assistance from Nicky and as in 2018 it comprised four focus areas: programme distribution; banners, posters and flyers; press and social media; and schools' communication.

Programme distribution:

As in previous years, the Festival programme was distributed by The Listing to its full distribution list of 16,500 homes in Royston and 31 surrounding villages in South Cambridgeshire and North Hertfordshire. As usual a separate programme was produced for MusicFest and distributed around Royston and a more local area.

Banners, posters and flyers:

Vinyl banners were displayed at Tesco roundabout, Folknoll roundabout on Old North Road, Royston Train Station, Meridian School, Market Place and Royston Town Hall. In addition, banners promoting Royston MusicFest were placed outside The Jolly Postie, Royston Train Station and at Banyers. Posters were also put up across the town. Flyers were distributed for the festival at Royston Kite Festival in August, and specific event flyers distributed (for the film festival and library event) around Royston and participating villages in the run-up to those events.

Press and Social Media:

As well as a number of articles in the Royston Crow and monthly coverage in The Listing, 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 tweeting, posting, liking and sharing.

We sent 16 Tweets in September during the run-up to the festival with 12,770 impressions, and an average of 22 interactions or engagements (link clicks, retweets and likes) per day. So fewer tweets than last year, but with greater impact. We now have 1094 followers on Twitter compared to 1037 this time last year – up by 5.5%.

We used Facebook to announce events and performances throughout the arts festival and to create 'events' for Creative Royston's own events in order to improve awareness and provide an additional route to ticket sales. During the year we sent a total of 24 posts with the most successful one by far being that advertising 'An Evening with Cookie MonStar' which reached 1,813 people.

The total number of people liking the Creative Royston Facebook page is 495 compared to 442 last year, an increase of 12%.

After last year's housekeeping on our email list to ensure compliance with GDPR and the subsequent reduction of e-newsletter recipients to 252 that has now increased to 262. We produced four e-newsletters between March and September (one more than in 2018) and the August issue, which shared highlights of the upcoming festival, had the highest percentage engagement with 39.5% opens - 3.5% up on 2018.

Schools:

We continue to work with schools in Royston and the surrounding villages most obviously through our Cover Art and Creative Writing competitions and the Finale Concert. KJA kindly publicised and sold tickets for the latter and allowed us to put up posters but with all the changes in the schools recently we will need to ensure that our relationships with the schools is carefully maintained.

Creative Royston Draft Financial Statements For the year ending 31 December 2019

For approval by the Annual General Meeting on 4th February 2020

Supporting Statement

We are again grateful for the generous local support and sponsorship from our Premier Partner Johnson Matthey; the Brian Lesley Racher Trust; Curwens; David's Books Letchworth; Hertfordshire County Councillors Fiona Hill & Steve Jarvis; Royston First, and Royston Rotary Club.

It is the policy of the organisation to hold a reserve fund approximately equal to one year's festival cost (approximately £15k) but it is also our remit to promote all art forms and we have done this in a number of ways outlined above. At the same time, we have paid careful attention to the costings for each event and aimed to at least break even where we can. This hasn't always worked but we have raised money through the Arts Quiz and also made money from bar profits where we can.

We have also reduced Governance Costs to the extent where they are minimal and are really only shown separately from other expenditure in 2019 by way of comparison. Some other items have been separated to provide more detail e.g. Programme and Printing costs are now shown separately from Advertising & Marketing. We have also discontinued our membership of the British Arts Festivals Association (BAFA) as the benefits to us did not match the increased annual fee of £150.

The main difference between 2019 and 2018 are the hugely increased ticket sales. Much of this was due to the Alison Balsom concert but we have also been fortunate in having excellent attendance at all of our ticketed festival events.

I have put together an Income & Expenditure Statement covering the 2019 festival alone. It does not attempt to reconcile the figures shown in previous years such as the 'Miscellaneous' sum of £1,575.40 for 2018 which covered some outstanding payments still owing by Creative Royston. Instead I have itemised all the outstanding payments due, to produce what I hope is an accurate statement of the income and expenditure relating to the 2019 festival alone. Nor does it include any outstanding payments made in respect of the 2018 festival.

As can be seen from the following page we have made a profit on the festival of £4,336.20 but the profit on the year will be reduced, in the more formal set of accounts that I still hope will be produced, once the outstanding payments made in 2019 relating to the 2018 festival are deducted.

Nevertheless, Creative Royston remains in a healthy financial position and the organisation closed the year with a general reserve fund of £21,835.57 compared to £17,194.30 at the end of 2018. To the best of my knowledge all outstanding debts from 2018 have been paid as have those of 2019 except for those itemised below.

In mid-2019 we also closed our current bank account with NatWest which no longer had a branch in Royston to Lloyds Bank which does. We also acquired a Debit Card with the new account which makes it a lot easier to make purchases and has greatly reduced the use of cheques which has in turn reduced postage costs.

Carl Filby
Chairperson
2 February 2020

Income & Expenditure Statement - Draft For the year ending 31 December 2019

	2019	2018
INCOME	£	£
Sponsorship	7,150.00	7,950.00
Grants	4,700.00	4,700.00
Ticket Sales & Other Earned Income	8,750.87	2,843.18
TOTAL INCOME	20,600.87	15,093.18
EXPENDITURE		
Artist fees & associated expenses	6,071.29	5,140.25
Advertising & Marketing	129.20	5,480.01
Volunteer Costs	72.80	50.00
Equipment & materials costs	1,396.67	1,095.00
Seed-Funding & prizes	1,154.84	660.32
Venue Costs	227.00	280.50
Insurance, First Aid and Licences	260.40	317.40
Stocks for Refreshments	210.61	200.00
Miscellaneous	52.64	1,575.40
Printing Costs (non-programme)	145.50	
Programme Costs	3,558.73	
Website & IT costs	94.82	
Donation to Royston Parish Church	2,396.16	
Governance Costs		
Subscriptions	00.00	199.00
Website hosting & data protection	see above	30.00
AGM	included in Venue Costs	50.00
Stationery & Postage	00.00	150.00
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	15,770.66	15,227.88
PLUS LATE INVOICES *	494.01	1,432.24
NET INCOME FOR THE YEAR	4,336.20	-1,566.94
* Hire charge for King James Academy Hall	224.40	
* Waste management charge from NHDC	219.61	
* First Aid from Hearts for Herts Ltd	50.00	

Looking Ahead

We will face new challenges in 2019 as we lose another more experienced member of CRMC in our Vice-Chair, Phil Oddy, and also the services of Pip McLachlan, whose business Glazed Creations has made a key contribution in recent years.

Fortunately, we have two new members in the shape of Chiara Mannalà and Jon Sackman the former having been a volunteer in 2019. Hannah Theobald has also agreed to stand for Vice-Chair and Andy Tunnicliffe has already made a big contribution since being co-opted as our new Secretary in May 2019.

Our new theme 'A Question of Balance' was chosen partly as a play on the year 2020 and also in order to highlight the importance for everyone of well-being which can be achieved by correctly balancing the different priorities in our lives. As with the 2019 theme we hope that it provides an opportunity to engage with important social issues whilst allowing flexibility for different artistic interpretations.

We hope to introduce at least two new events in 2020 and build on the success of events in 2019 whether they were new or more traditional ones. These will be announced in due course when plans have taken a clearer shape and in addition, we hope to run another Arts Quiz, possibly in April or May, and to revive the film festival now the running of the Picture Palace has been taken over by Saffron Screens. It is also the personal aim of the Chairperson to have a festival event on each day between the start date of 18th September and the Finale Concert on 27th September.

Whilst CRMC will be working hard to bring together some new, interesting and hopefully exciting events for the 2020 festival we will also need lots of support from the various arts groups, societies and organisations in and around the town to help make it happen. Individuals can also be a big help by becoming one of our festival volunteers, even for as little as a couple of hours, and anyone interested should check out this link to our [website](#) in the first instance.

CRMC's priorities for the year will be:

1. To try and join up both festival weekends so that there is a festival event on each day.
2. To rationalise and improve the collection of feedback from visitors and, in line with our 2019 environmental theme, increase the use of electronic information and reduce paper usage.
3. To try and balance festival events so that there is more appeal to younger age groups.