

Frome Festival Board Report. AGM 29th April 2025

Members of the board year ending 31st October 2024: Ellie Capron, Lisa Hardstaff, Rosie Eliot (Chair), Andy Jones, Lockhart Murdoch (Vice Chair), Gail Norris (resigned July 2024), Zoe Newing-Moore, Simon Norris, Mick Randall (resigned November 2024), Rick Rycroft (resigned November 2024), Roger Southard, and Jeremy Towler (Company Secretary).

The following were co-opted onto the board in November 2024 Dawn Denton and Rosie Hiron-Grimes.

Board Activities

The board formally met on five occasions during the year from November 2023 to October 2024.

We have an active and engaging board of trustees who endeavour to offer the governance and leadership of running a small arts charity. The board strives to provide the framework within which the Festival operates, and aims, through its membership, to reflect the diverse community which it serves.

It creates and monitors policies to ensure compliance with regulations, and to reflect the needs of the Festival.

All our board members actively support the Festival outside the formal meeting structure in areas as diverse as fund-raising, sponsorship, the Friends scheme, and programme distribution.

These activities, and others such as stewarding (Sara Morris,) are supported in turn by an extensive network of volunteers, without whom the Festival simply would not exist. We remain extremely grateful to them. We want to say a heartfelt thanks to Suzanne Cooke for her years of support as a volunteer and in the sponsorship team. Sadly, Suzanne passed away earlier this year and our deepest condolences go her to her family.

The year marked the retirement of just three trustees including the following long-term members: Gail Snook, Rick Rycroft and Mick Randall. Endless thanks to these hardworking supporters of the festival.

Fundraising

As is the case with many arts organisations nationwide, we continued to see notable cuts in fundraised income throughout the year. Funding from both charitable trusts and foundations and public funders are reduced from previous years, and where funding has been secured it is mostly restricted grants that does not address the core funding shortfall within the project. As such, project funding applications have focussed on building capacity within the team to maximise other forms of income generation, including securing grant funding to support a freelance fundraising professional and a new friends scheme management software.

We were delighted to see an increase in income from other sources to help to fill this gap within this financial year. Event submission fees from independent event organisers raised thanks to excellent engagement from new organisations in Frome

and a raise in fees to help fully support delivery costs. Sponsorship income increased in this period, thanks in part to a major piece of event sponsorship from Lilley's Cider towards The Festival Food Feast, one of Frome Festival's most visible and popular annual events. We hope to continue to maximise this kind of event sponsorship in future years.

The Festival derives income from other sources including:

- Brochure entry fees - the amount we charge organisers to appear in our printed and on-line programmes.
- Sponsorship and advertising - support from local businesses.
- The Friends of Frome Festival membership.
- Our own festival events (e.g. The Bob Morris Lecture and Hidden Gardens.)
- Other grants (e.g. Frome Community Lottery.)
- Fund-raising activities (quizzes etc.)

We have a fund-raising and sponsorship team to look critically at all these areas to see where we can improve our processes and generate sufficient income to secure our future.

Festival Office

The festival has had its offices in the Market Place for over 20 years courtesy of Eyetechn Ltd. This has been a valuable and much appreciated asset, gifted to the festival from Eyetechn.

Our Festival Director, Adam Laughton and his hard working team delivered a superlative 2024 festival with over 250 events spread out over the ten days. Both Sarah Swales, Festival Manager, and Clare Lloyd, Bookkeeper, have taken on the challenge of supporting Adam and have proven to be extremely hard working and committed to making a success of the festival.

Our grateful thanks go to this much valued and exceptionally hard working team whose 'unpaid' extra hours and unnerving calm in the chaos of the festival itself, are respected and praised by the board of trustees. We wish them all the greatest success with Frome Festival 2025!