



2018/2019 Annual Report

Tim Lince :- Chair (Lowther Gardens (Lytham) Trust)

This year has been a challenging year for Lowther Gardens (Lytham) Trust as we have tried to balance the commercial work done in the theatre whilst being inundated with community groups wanting to perform and use the space. In the seven years since the present Trustees took over the day to day running of the venue we have seen a major expansion of the work done by the Trust. Work has continued apace with regard to the gardens master plan and several schemes adopted that will add to the investment in the green spaces.

1. Lowther Pavilion secured planning permission for it's £5.5 Million redevelopment project.
2. We completed the overhaul of stage equipment replacing of all winches, lines and pulley systems to comply with Loler requirements. This included major structural repair and strengthening of external walls.
3. A new web site was commissioned and will go live at the ends of the summer.
4. A second full time box office member of staff was appointed and also a second technician.
5. The Car park proved management under the Trust was financially better than previous arrangements.
6. We completed our first year of Cinema production and authorised the fitting of a Lansat System so that we can show cultural events live from around the world.
7. Pathways were renewed and replaced. Garden Master plan further developed to augment the Planning Permission for the development of the whole of Lowther.
8. Sponsor a tree scheme was introduced to give money towards park development.
9. Lowther continues to defended a legal case brought by it's tenants of the café.
10. Plans developed to employ a full time fundraiser to work with the Trust.
11. The transfer of our accounting & payroll software to a cloud-based system.

1. Session Usage

Community and user groups totalled 226 (up from 198 in 2017/18) individual user sessions in year, this includes usage by FBC, fairs and charity events outside of the normal performance scope such as the dementia sing-a-long. It must be noted that Lowther has now passed the amount of subsidised Community events that it can fund. The SLA allows for 120 events per year and to enable us to keep prices reduced for community groups in future the number of subsidised user group sessions will have to be commensurate to the funding received and SLA negotiations.

2. Traffic & Sales

There were 427 unique saleable public events in 18/19, in total 56358 (up from 45379 in 2017) individual tickets were issued for these performances. (This excludes all agency sales for Lytham Festival 2018, SGDF 2018, Southport Flower Show, Lytham 40s Weekend & Events at Lytham Hall)

There were approximately 6000 new Customers in 2018/2019 (This is approximate as it does not take into account people who have moved or changed address details.)

49.4 % of our customers came from the FY8 and PR4 postcodes. A good deal of the remainder of customers coming from much further afield. Lowther is continuing to attract from places such as Manchester, Leeds and Newcastle and has recently embarked on publicising certain events across the north of England responding to the customer data that is presenting itself.

3. Training completed by staff in 2018/2019

Lowther believes in investment in it's staff through training and skills development. To these ends in 2018/19 it has completed the following formal training as well as on the job training conducted by senior management.

Induction training:

Box Office Staff x1

FOHM x1

Full FOHM Training:

FOHM X1

Volunteer Front of House Manager Training

4 Volunteers

Spektrix Box office Training

Box Office Staff x 2

Marketing Manager x 1

Theatre Administrator x 1

Volunteers x 3

Fire Warden Training

8 Volunteers

10 Staff

PASMA

5 staff

First Aid Training

10 staff

2 volunteers

EPOS Till Software

Bar Manager x 1

ACCOUNTS MANAGER

Continuous Professional Development Training for Fellow of the International Association of Bookkeepers Qualification. (Personal)

Completed of 3 modules towards Institute of Financial Accountants Qualification (Grades: Distinction & Merit)

4. Technically speaking

It's been quite a year at the Lowther Pavilion technically speaking.

We've managed to rescue a 30 year old partition wall from being unusable. We've had increases in our inventory and stock of microphones and technical equipment to help us deal with more and more incoming show requirements. We've also had a brand new stage truss system installed on one of our lighting bars to allow for more weight to be hung in our roof again making it easier for new acts to come and perform here. We are also now fully LED in terms of our utility lighting in the building which has dramatically cut our energy costs and given us more green credentials to move forward with.

We have recently hosted a full PASMA working at height course for all our technical and operational staff in house which enables us to correctly assemble our brand new scaffolding tower. This will enable us to carry out works both internally and externally that were only possible with the hire of expensive professional equipment before hand. It has also given the staff a certificate of safe usage for a number of years to come.

We have also recently hosted a professional training course by the manufacturers of our lighting desk - Avolites which is a nationally recognised training course run up and down the country and abroad.

We now are fully licensed for civil wedding ceremonies at the Pavilion and this was something that had previously not been explored. We have hosted 3 weddings so far with more enquiries in the pipeline and along side our new community cinema it really has pushed the Lowther to new places previously not explored as an established venue.

Success is measured in *"does the event happen smoothly"* and *"are the patrons and incoming crew happy with us as a venue"*.

So far this year greeting everyone we meet with a cup of tea and a smile goes a long way to making this happen s we are becoming more of a nationally recognised venue everyday.

7. Bar Matters

We have introduced drinks in then Foyer and the Theatre itself. With Alcohol now able to be purchased directly in the theatre.

2017 Profit - £50,989.38

2018 Profit - £59,857.12 Which is a 17.39% increase

Using the last 3 months of the financial year we are 22.24% up on last year which is very promising as we expected to see lower sales on the bar from last year due to people buying drinks in auditorium and foyer. These figures do not include the second bar for From the Jam which sold a further £4,083

The Box office drinks/snacks which from when we started in February last year has sold £1,532

Ice cream / snacks area

2018 Jan – Apr - £2,794.50

2019 Jan – Apr - £4,363.55 Increase of 56.15%

This year we fitted new tills which now integrated card machines meaning faster service. Also new taps for all 3 pumps and new draft products more suited to the customers requirements which gave us better profit margin. Through links with Coke we now have a new fridge so have doubled our fridge space as well as having Coke branded products on draft. This leads onto also getting Coke fridges for the foyer and the large new fridge for the auditorium greatly increasing out POS, the ice cream area has become much larger and sells snacks and drinks as well as ice cream with the new addition of PET beer bottles. We have DOUBLED WINE SALES in last 2 years,

Due to new tills we are now able to track stock on the system itself and this gives us the potential of the tills automatically ordering stock.

Challenge 25 is in place on the bar. All bar staff are given training on this and have signed to say they have received it.

8. Volunteer Hours.

I would like to note that this is only based on the recorded duties the friends and theatre volunteers provide a great deal of ad hoc work outside of our standard arrangements including print distribution, brochure stuffing, general works etc. which isn't included in standard figures. We have increased volunteer engagement to the theatre and are seeing an increased uptake in volunteering hours and projects for the general upkeep of the venue. Additionally the volunteers undertook work for the 2 local club days in the period, the family fun day that took place in the gardens and for the St. George's Day Festival.

Volunteer hours for year

- FOH Duties
 - 306 performances, 6 persons per performance, average of 4 hours per person
 - 7344 hours in FOH staffing * £8.77 = £64406
- FOH Manager 105 * 5 Hours = 525 hours £4604.25

- Box Office
 - 5 persons per week, average 6 hours per person, period of 52 weeks.
 - $(5*6)*52 = 1560$ of box office support (£13,681.2)
- Technical & Operations
 - 205 performances with VTechs, average 5
 - $205*5 = 1025$ Hours of technical support (£8989.25)
 - Follow spot 134 Performances *4 hours
 - $134 * 4 * .77 = £4700.72$

Additional Volunteer Hours

- Club Days
 - 6 Volunteers for 3 hours each day (2 days)
 - $(6*3)*2 = 36$ Hours
- St. George's Day
 - 6 Volunteers for 5 hours (2 events)
 - $(6*5)*2 = 60$ Hours

- Family Fun Day
 - 6 Volunteers for 6 hours each
 - $6*6 = 36$ Hours
- Totalling 132 additional hours for special projects.
- £ 1157.64

**Total Volunteer value to the Trust.
(£97,539.06 @ min wage of £8.77)**

9. Marketing Report.

Marketing report presentation at meeting

10. In Conclusion.

Lowther Pavilion and Gardens continue to grow in stature and reputation and invest in the future with regard to facilities and staffing. We look forward to working with Fylde Borough Council on delivering the redevelopment project and providing the region with an iconic Park and arts space for all generations.