



Annual Report April 2021 to March 2022

Year in Brief

Lowther Pavilion Theatre was closed in April 2021 due to Covid shut down and only being able to launch Drive In Movies at the end of April. In May we were able to stage 3 internal events and carried on staging Drive In Movies. June saw us stage 4 events internally and a continuation of Drive In Movies. We continued to support community activities during the early part of the year by allowing rehearsals (by user groups) to take place at reduced cost and community user group meetings (due to our provision of a ventilated space and Covid security).

Throughout, July to December 2021 we continued to support community activities by allowing rehearsals to take place at reduced cost. In early July we staged our first Amateur performances since the third lockdown with Clifton Academy's Summer Holiday, this was only possible though changing the model of operation for Lowther and rehearsing the production on site. Throughout July, August and September we strived to operate in as near normal conditions as possible despite losing a number of performances due to artists having Covid or not wishing to tour due to a rise in cases. In October there was a degree of normality but as the new variant hit in late October/ November managing the theatre was really on a war like footing, never knowing if we would be able to open the next day or not. The mantra of "we are open today" became all important as venues across the country closed or had shows cancelled. Preparations were put in place for pantomime to move outside once again with a replacement cast and show if Theatres were once again shut in December. Luckily with a few bumps in the road (including an outbreak of covid in the pantomime cast) we managed to see December through with only the loss of a few shows and schools audiences.

Outside in the park we saw the successful:- Ice Cream Festival in July, the Food and Drink Festival in August and the new Pumpkins in the park (Where weather was not on our side) bring unprecedented number of visitors to the park and the theatre. On average the festivals are now bringing 10,000 people a day whilst running and attracting just above 60% of visitors from outside the FY8 and PR4 areas. Running these events saw Lowther nominated for Tourist Venue of the Year. Our marketing is now being placed in railway stations from as far as Leeds to Liverpool and Manchester as well as a concentration to attract right across Lancashire.

September saw the launching of Lowther's Youth Theatre which started with two groups a week and is now facilitating 5 separate groups a week. We also advertised and engaged an Education Officer for the theatre and their role has expanded over the last 9 months to take in work with refugees, HAF funded workshops and provision, Lowther being set up as an Arts Award centre and specific education work both in and out of schools.

Lowther had a strong Pantomime season with increased ticket sales for events over Christmas but unfortunately followed the national Arts trend of events being cancelled by promoters who realised there was not going to be a bounce back in ticket sales more generally. Around about 40% of audiences had not returned during this period and were not booking for future events. It has proved very difficult to pre-empt ticket sales as many people are holding off purchasing until a few days before a show and often this is after the promoter has got cold feet and cancelled a performance. Added to this the war in Ukraine and the cost of living crisis and you have a perfect storm that has seen tours collapse, venues close and the public stay away in their droves. During this period we have seen our daily booking rate fall from £3500 per day to often under £1000. It has been totally unprecedented but we are pleased to report that renegotiation with management, agents and promoters and changing deals has managed to keep the theatre functioning at a working level. By being open at all times we are pushing back against the crisis and following successful promotions of Easter and Garden festivals the figures are now plateauing a little. Promoters are now using Lowther as a best

practice scenario with other venues that have also struggled to sell tickets. We are thrilled to be leading the fight back and the whole team through positivity are delivering excellent results.

In October Lowther stepped up fundraising for the refurbishment and in November 2021 the spade was put in the soil to complete the foundations for the new Education Centre and Studio Theatre which were completed in March this year. This is a major step forward for Lowther as it cements its commitment to provide a first class cultural hub for residents and visitors alike going into the future.

In the park we have delivered investment into the tennis courts and have opened Lowther Padel and Tennis Centre which continues to attract visitors to the area to use its facilities. The park through the Gardeners and Parks Team are continuing to reinvigorate the gardens with new designs, ecologically sound paths and walkways, bluebell areas, a reimagined rose garden, a new mini golf course and general maintenance and upkeep.

Financially Lowther has honoured all its commitments without taking on debt and will finish the year at a break even position, having raised significant funds for the new build, coped with the shut down at the beginning of the financial year and continued its development path engaging new staff to deliver it's cultural policy.

1. Volunteer Hours

Please note that this is only based on the recorded duties the Friends and Theatre volunteers provide. The Volunteer hours are made up from ushering duties, box office, technical assistance and outdoor festival marshalling.

Total Hours volunteered 16910 @ £9.98 P/H

Saving to Lowther of £168,761.80 April 2021 – March 2022

2. Session Usage

- a. Number of events staged (each performance where there were tickets on sale) 282
- b. Number of sessions hired by community groups (User Groups) a session is classed as either a morning/ afternoon or evening. 202 sessions.
- c. Number of session hires by ad hock (fairs/ rehearsal not contained above) 9 NHS sessions
- d. Number of Cinema sessions. 102

3. Traffic & Sales

- a. Number of attendees (Tickets Sold) : 41,242 It must be remembered that some of these tickets were for Drive In where there may have been 4 or more occupants.
- b. The Revenue from Ticket £661,048

4. Bar Report

- a. Bar Total Sales: £166,731
- b. Kiosk Drinks and snacks (Inc. Ice Cream) £38,315

5. Programming.

Silver Screen continued throughout the shutdown periods and streamed to over 10,000 care home rooms for broadcasts.

Lowther has continued with its dynamic programming moving away where possible from tribute acts and engaging original artists as well as presenting the best of Local Community drama and cultural endeavours.

Highlights programmed include:-

- John Culshaw / Les Dawson
- The Wedding Present

- Under The Boardwalk
- Glen Tilbrook
- Oh What A Night
- Newton Faulkner
- Marti Pellow
- The Undertones
- Mark Thomas
- The Sweet
- International Ballet
- Houghton Weavers
- American Four Tops
- Abba Mania
- Chris McCausland
- Magic of Science
- Danny Baker
- Francis Rossi
- Hurrah for the Pirates (Children's opera)
- Lesley Garret
- Jason Manford
- Showaddywaddy
- Lowther Jazz Club (Bi Monthly)
- John Lydon
- Marisha Wallace
- Omid
- Michael Portillo
- Steve Harley
- Ed Byrne
- Maddy Prior
- Judge Jules
- Dr Feelgood
- Ballet Theatre UK
- Suggs
- Blues Band
- Exciting Science
- China Crisis
- The Blow Monkeys
- Martin Kemp
- Shanty Crew
- Capricorn Singers

6. Marketing Report

Since June 2021, we have done a variety of marketing activity including, but not limited to:

- 4x brochures (including the re-launch of our What's On brochure)
- Become a member of Visit Lancashire
- Become a member of Theatre Online
- Launched our new website
- Became a finalist in this year's Lancashire Tourism Awards
- Successfully launched our Youth Theatre and Technical Training course
- Run digital campaigns with JPI Media to promote the Lytham Ice Cream Festival, Food & Drink Festival and Pumpkins in the Park
- Advertised further afield for Pumpkins in the Park in October, by geo-fencing 10 train stations in the North West including Manchester Piccadilly and Liverpool Lime Street
- Run a month long campaign in November advertising Sleeping Beauty on the back of buses in Blackpool
- Working with UCLan students to create new films (Youth Theatre, Support Lowther) for us to use on our website

Website stats

Website page views (1st April 2021 – March 31st 2022): 860,274

Social media reach

Facebook reach (1st April 2021 – March 31st 2022): 705,920

Instagram reach (1st April 2021 – March 31st 2022): 16,804

Twitter (1st April 2021 – March 31st 2022): 218,524

Social media audience information

Facebook audience: 77.90% women 22.10% men

Facebook top 5 popular cities and towns: Lytham, Blackpool, Preston, Kirkham, Poulton le Fylde

Instagram audience: 73.40% women 26.90% men

Instagram top 5 popular cities and towns Lytham, Blackpool, Preston, Poulton Le Fylde, Kirkham

Education and Community initiatives

- Developed connections with local schools.
- Delivered workshops at Lowther
- Supported families through hardship. Lowther has set up a support fund.
- Education booklets on shows presented for schools and home downloading .
- Supported local degree students from UCLAN on a short placements.
- Started Arts Award process. Lowther Pavilion Theatre has Arts Award Centre status. In February and April 2022, we ran Discover Arts Award, offering a first qualification to sixty children aged 6-10, over the two projects. Fylde Mayor presented awards to the children at an evening event at Lowther Pavilion Theatre.
- Met with Fylde Borough Council about HAF Programme.
- Made contact with Break Time programme at Lancashire County Council.
- Research and setting up for Adult Theatre Group.
- Research on existing work with Early Years / Parent, Carer and Baby projects. Connections with Horse and Bamboo, More Music, Note weavers to develop our own programme of work.

In Conclusion

Lowther Trustees and Management would like to thank Fylde Borough Council for its support, help and advice through what has been a very difficult time for the creative industries. In the face of adversity Lowther believes that it has laid the groundwork for a very exciting future in providing cultural activities for all generations going forward.

Finance report enclosed:- End of year accounts will be sent on when received from the accountant.