



2022/ 2023 Engagement Report

Lowther has had a strong return to pre pandemic levels of trading. It finished 2022/ 2023 with a surplus in the accounts of £77,000 + Contingencies and depreciation of £30,000 which bucked the national trend of other arts organisations. This was in part due to strong programming, keeping staffing levels contained and sweating the asset. Our community work with classes for children who educate at home, Arts Award, technical training workshops, 4 youth theatres and adult theatre classes has developed the venues output into being more customer facing whilst providing the best in participatory arts and professional shows.

We have continued the great work done at the theatre and park whilst adding new work to the roster. Productions of note must include our Pantomime which moved away with name and semi name production to deliver results that were unmatched elsewhere nationally. Our turn over went from £102,000 in 2021 to £163,000 in 2022. At the same time we welcomed the Pre West End show about Les Dawson and played four sold out nights with this show. Lowther is now presenting sold out events on a regular basis as well as increasing cinema audience. We have had sold out National Theatre Screenings and sold out Soup and a sandwich sessions for our afternoon cinema.

The beginning of 2023 proved quite challenging as the Cost of living Crisis and inflation have affected some ticket sales. Mortgage rates going up has hit the younger patrons but those who are mortgage free seem to be less affected. It has proved very difficult to pre-empt ticket sales as many people are holding off purchasing until a few days before a show. Lowther have a robust non cancellation clause in our contract and this have prevented cold feet coming to play with some tour promoters. Other venues seem to be faring worse than Lowther and this has seen a few North Western venues close for good. (The Epstein, Liverpool, Southport Theatre, Oswaldtwistle Civic, Floral Pavilion, New Brighton, Oldham Colosseum) Lowther has proved it is nimble enough to adapt to changing circumstances and has had the sense through good management to build a level of financial resilience.

The education officer has developed more resources that include four Youth Theatre Groups, an adult acting class, refugee and HAF funded work, Schools workshops, weekly workshops for children who educate at home (See enclosed Email), Education packs for enhancing the performances in the theatre, working with the Park and Rangers team for outdoor education, pre school creative arts sessions as well as a number of other fields of development.

Fundraising for the new education centre and studio theatre has also continued with some very large donations being added to the pot. Not only has Lowther continued to develop its artistic programme but has pushed ahead with the building development of the Education Centre and Studio Theatre. Construction is now underway for the shell. (Sept 2023) The earliest the building will be returned to the Trust for opening is the end of April 2024 (depending on finance) The addition of these facilities will provide Fylde with a unique resource and Iconic Community space.

LOWTHER CREATIVES: Education, Outreach sessions

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Children's Theatre Workshop. 4pm-5.30pm (4-6 yrs) Adult Theatre 6pm-7.45pm (18 yrs plus)	Home Ed. 10am-11.30am (4-6 yrs)	Home Ed. Drama 9.30am-11am (11-16 yrs) 11am-12.30pm (6-10 yrs)			Youth Theatre 9.30am-11am Junior YT 1. 11am-1pm Senior YT. 1.30pm-3pm Junior YT2

Additional regular sessions:

- 'Little Lowther', Parent/Carer & Baby/Early Years session, last Thursday of the month.
- New groups being created: 14-18 years senior groups. Creative dementia group involving carers.
- School Holidays: Easter, Summer and Christmas - HAF programme for families in receipt of free school meals. Various sessions including drama games, story time, Film School, Arts Award for HAF/self-funding.
- Half Term performance projects - involvement in outdoor festivals, Arts Award, film projects.
- Senior Youth Theatre: National Theatre Connections festival, rehearsing and performing a full play.
- Collaboration with external agencies: outdoor with Rangers; Fun Palaces at local libraries.

A facebook comment from a parent.

Lowther children's and family groups are utterly amazing. In the time that Tim and Kerry have been there the vision for Lowther has exploded from a little known theatre that cost most of us too much or just put on amateur shows to the most amazing community hub for all ages and all budgets. My daughter absolutely loves going and from a child who saw no other children and had no friends as she home educated and we were shielding to having so many little buddies and so much fun it's transformed her little life. I was terrified of Covid and infections but the joy she gets from going is amazing. Kerry has the patience of all the saints as it is not easy managing such a diverse range of children's backgrounds, abilities, ages, and personalities and she does it amazingly. The vision for Lowther is just growing and growing. I can't say much as it isn't my place but the fundraising is going well and every penny is going to things that will benefit the whole community and bring joy to so many. I have family connections to Lowther back to my grandparents and to see it being used and loved by so many is just so wonderful. If you can make it to the events please do, they are not all costly, they're not all for kids or adults, there is truly something for everyone. The gardens alone are beautiful and full of wildlife and plants and walks that even I can manage to tootle around.

Throughout the year we continued to support amateur community activities and increased the number of user groups working at Lowther. There were notable absences from certain groups that had not managed to reform after covid, but this was balanced by new groups representing young people taking to the stage.

Our Padel Tennis courts continue to flourish and early evening playing has reduced the antisocial behaviour in the park. Working closely with the gardens team we are developing the whole park as a destination for both tourists and residents alike. Successful festivals in the gardens contributed to increased footfall across the whole site.

All in all, it has been both a financially an artistically successful year with youth development projects, rehearsing and staging a professional new musical, increased attendance and traction for our social media hubs. Lowther continues to go from strength to strength.

1. Volunteer Hours

Please note that this is only based on the recorded duties the theatre volunteers provide a great deal of ad hoc work outside of our standard arrangements including.

2012/2023

- FOH Duties
 - 375 live Events in the theatre 7 persons per performance, average of 4 hours per person (10500 hours)
 - in the park 5 festivals * 3 days 8 persons at 8 hours each (960 hours)
 - 180 Home education sessions 2 people * 4 Hours (1440 hours)
 - Arts Society Fylde 9 sessions 6 People * 4 hours (216 Hours)
 - FOH Manager 375 Sessions * 5 Hours (1875 Hours)
- Box Office
 - 8 persons per week, average 6 hours per person, period of 51 weeks.

(2448 hours of box office support.)

- Technical & Operations
 - SM 375 performances with V Techs, average 5 hours (1875 Hours)

Total Volunteer time (19314 Hours * @ £9.98 P/H £192, 753.72 of time)

Session Usage

- Number of events staged (each performance where there were tickets on sale) 375
- Arts Society Fylde – 9 events
- Number of sessions hired by community groups (User Groups). A session is classed as either a morning/ afternoon or evening. 165 sessions in total.
- FBC 4 sessions
- UCLAN 2 sessions
- Creative Crafts 15 days
- Bonhams 4 events
- Number of Cinema sessions 84 film sessions
- Number of session hires by ad hock (fairs/ rehearsal not contained above) 3 sessions.

2. Traffic & Sales

- Number of attendees (Tickets Sold) : 66554
- Number of new attendees (People added to our list of customers) : 10,933

3. Complaints/ Comments and reviews.

Selection of Comments and feedback

Beverley Walker

*We came today and had the best time. Laughter all the way! Fabulous performance, thankyou .
5* xxx*

Jane Johnson

First time at Lowther Pavilion this afternoon and will definitely be going back. Thoroughly enjoyed Cinderella. Brilliant cast and excellent value for money. My granddaughter's first trip to the theatre so it was a special day 😊

Donna Heap

What a fantastic show.

This show was way above the Aladdin panto we saw at Southport last week with a professional actress in it. Aladdin was nowhere near the standard of this show. Brilliant 🍷

Christine Boyle

Show was absolutely brilliant we went to grand theatre to see sleeping beauty which was good but CINDERELLA AT LOWTHER WAS MUCH MUCH FUNNIER WE LOVED IT AND LOVED HOW THEY GOT THE AUDIENCE INVOLVED!!

Maureen Wright

The theatre, and all the staff involved was excellent .

All contributing to ensuring every one had a happy and memorable visit in lovely surroundings.

Thank you to everyone.

Graham Curry

The show was amazing, it was so professional, we really enjoyed it.

Louise Charnock

Great show -

My first time attending Lowther and a great first experience.

Liz Kift

Absolutely brilliant pantomime, great venue and value for money definitely be back

Jane Johnson

I was very impressed with the quality of the show, friendliness of staff and the overall experience was fantastic

Sue Sankey

The Panto was amazing and all the cast were first class. The costumes and production were brilliant and our young members were fascinated.

All 27 Rainbows and leaders enjoyed every minute.

All the staff were so helpful from start to finish.

We will definitely be back next year.

Steve Bardsley

Excellent production in a lovely intimate theatre, well done everyone

David Rankin

Fantastic performance who really involved the audience backed by amazing front of house staff who treated us really well and gave our group of disabled adults an unforgettable time.

Rebecca Jeory

Brilliant performance, great venue and staff. Will be back again 😊

Malcom Smith

Lovely show

Sally Gent

Was perfect!

Derek Grundy

Brilliant

Google Reviews

"Marvellous evening in a packed theatre with the Houghton Weavers last night. Very clean and smart venue with reasonable prices in the bar."

"Great venue, friendly and helpful staff."

"Went here to see a music gig and was very surprised to see how good it was inside. All the seats have a great view. Would recommend."

"Excellent little theatre, comfortable seating, and good view of stage. Friendly staff and good beer in the bar!"

"Loved our visit here to see La Voix. Great little theatre with loads of volunteers who help from entering to assistance where needed."

"Great place for entertainment."

"Great theatre in lovely tranquil grounds."

"Lovely little theatre, can't wait for the next show."

Complaints

1. **Complaint about tickets not resold when they requested their money back. (Resolved)**
2. **Trees being cut down. Tree Guardians (Resolved)**
3. **Social Media Complaint. (Updated Social Media rules)**
4. **Late performance time (Resolved)**
5. **The introduction of charging for Blue badge holders in the carpark.**

6. Working with the police to resolve the man who keeps urinating and flashing in the park. (Possible dementia)
7. A few complaints received about policy for Marti Pellow show over not allowing late admission to the theatre. This also meant that people leaving the auditorium during the first half were not returned to their seats until the interval. This was caused by problems earlier on the Tour. Promoter refunded where required and accepted this is a difficult situation.
8. Lytham festival after show parties Letter. (Vendor).

4. SLA extra payment to support local user groups

This Scheme only came into place in September once the theatre had opted for tax with regard to VAT
So far the following groups have applied for financial support.

Fylde Coast Players - Dial M for Murder -
St Annes Musical Productions – Evita -
Fylde Coast Players – Pygmalion -
St Annes Parish Operatic Society – 9 to 5 The Musical -
NW1

More Groups are applying for the financial year 2023/2024

Link to our published annual report:- 2022

https://issuu.com/lowtherpaviliontheatre/docs/final_annual_report_2022

Link to our Published Summer of “The Tent” Review 2023

https://issuu.com/lowtherpaviliontheatre/docs/the_tent_summer_2023_report_e8263c0920562a?fr=xKAE9_zU1NQ

5. Programming. (Some of the Acts booked at Lowther)

Tommy Canon
Chris McCausland
Jazz Club
Paul Zerdin
Magical Bones
Tony Christie
Dukes Shakespeare
Dr Karl Kennedy
Crown Ballet.
Arthur Smith
Times Like These
Rocking with Laughter
Woofers for next 12 month
Mrs Formby
Craig Harrison (MJ)
Judge Jules
Seth Lakeman
The Sweet
Houghton Weavers
Magic of Motown
Ireland show
Pantomime
Gordy Marshall
Brian Bilston
Nick Kershaw
Iona Lane (Folk)
The Furies

Lipstick on your Collar
The Coral
Chris McCausland
Jazz Club
Paul Zerdin
Magical Bones
Tony Christie
Big Country
Chaka
Crooners
Exciting Science
Kids 4 Kids
Gary Delaney
Ben Hart
Psychic Sally
G4
The Coral

In addition to local user groups and Dance Schools.

6. Marketing

2022 – 2023 in black . 2021/ 2022 years figures in Red.

Since April 2022, we have done a variety of marketing activity including, but not limited to:

- Sold around 66,000 tickets across 400+ performances
- Cinderella became our most successful pantomime with a 50% increase on Box Office sales figures when compared with pre-pandemic
- Gave out 10k free souvenir programmes for our pantomime Cinderella
- Created free, A4, 24-page garden activity pack, which was designed in-house by a local artist and Lowther's Marketing Assistant. This was launched our Garden Festival in June this year.
- Fully launched our Google AdWords campaign with National World:
 - Total revenue: 125k
 - Total transactions: 4809
 - Total website clicks: 67,488
 - Total impressions: 171,850
- Sent 376,725 emails out to our customer database via Spektrix, which were opened 270k times.
- Distributed around 60k what's on brochures across the local area and further across Lancashire

Website stats

Website page views: **1,443,297** **860,274**

Social media reach

Facebook reach **979,031** **705,920**
Instagram reach **26,039** **16,804**

Social media audience information

Facebook audience: **78.4% women / 21.6% men**

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

Instagram audience: **73.7% women / 26.3% men**

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

Projects:

In April 2023, we successfully completed the work on our outdoor activity pack. The pack, designed in-house and bespoke to our gardens, features a variety of activities and learning opportunities for children aged 5+. We are giving out these for free. Here's a link to the example: - https://issuu.com/lowtherpaviliontheatre/docs/a4_garden_brochure_-_update?fr=xKAE9_zU1NQ

In Conclusion

Lowther has built a national reputation over the last 12 years that is second to none. It has grown from staging occasional tribute acts and amateur theatre to being a 52 weeks of the year operation that is raising the profile of Fylde across the country, bringing much needed tourist revenue to the area (as is demonstrated by audience profiling) and providing a cultural resource to residents and visitors alike. In addition, it is attracting investment into the park and the theatre that will allow us in partnership and support from Fylde Borough Council to invest in facilities for the future. It must be remembered that public “wellbeing” is going to vitally important as the country moves forward and Lowther delivers this both through the gardens and the theatre. With investment in the park and the theatre’s much needed redevelopment the Trust can ensure it can provide Fylde with facilities for the next generation. We look forward to working with Fylde Borough Council in 2023/2024, delivering the development project for the theatre and park and providing the region with an iconic cultural space for all generations. Through the SLA, Fylde Borough Council ensures the community use of space at Lowther and supports the Trust in providing first class facilities.

Lowther Trustees and Management would like to thank Fylde Borough Council for its continued support, help and advice. 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.