

Evenley Parish Council

Arts Co-ordinator Report March 2018

Evenley Arts exists to develop the arts in Evenley to provide a rich and varied set of experiences and to contribute to the sense of community by bringing people together.

Accompanying documents

- EVA Development Plan 2017 – 2018 with review column completed
- Analysis of ticket sales
- EVA Accounts – NB 2017 – 2018 on 4th sheet

Main Issues

This is the last report I will give as Arts Co-ordinator. At the time of writing, I have not received any enquiries from people considering taking over and have not been informed of any such enquiries to the Parish Council. As the PC know, I have decided to resign from his role because there seems to be insufficient interest amongst the people of Evenley Parish to sustain a programme of arts events. This I am sure would deter anyone from volunteering to take over. It would of course be possible for a small team of people to fulfil the role but again I have not heard of any such interest.

The EVA programme has not fully met the main objective defined in italics above but has been successful in other ways. These are the things I am most proud of:

- there have been 60 events/ activities over four years: 28 main events (NB includes 2 planned for late March and May), 7 play readings, 24 visits to other art events and one extended course of six one hour sessions (counted as one event);
- in addition, EVA has facilitated 6 events by providing publicity and setting up the village hall; these events have not been included in statistical analyses;
- the aim of providing variety has been achieved with all art forms represented though dance has not had a significant showing;
- there have been opportunities as planned for low/ no cost events and participative events;
- £2,595 has been raised for charity/ other organisations: £1,830 to St George's Church, £350 to The Air Ambulance, £230 to EVHMC and £85 to Children in Need. Fund-raising, however, was not the aim of the EVA programme;
- the programme has not required any subsidy from any other body;
- nearly all events have sold out albeit with large numbers from outside Evenley parish – please see Analysis of Ticket Sales.

In previous reports, I have provided statistics of attendance at EVA events. There are two more small events planned which may alter figures slightly but current figures are accurate enough for the purpose of this report. The proportion of people from Evenley Parish buying tickets/ attending events works out at exactly two-thirds overall ie 66.6%. This is reasonable but hides some that were very low. The pantomime is the lowest with the attendance from Evenley dropping over the four years to just under 40% in 2017. It is worth noting that the number of children resident in Evenley attending the panto has also declined from 14 in 2014 to 10 in 2018. The latter figure would have been 6 had I not allowed numbers to go over the limit to accommodate 4 Evenley children whose parents made late requests.

The percentage of Evenley households represented at one or more events over the four years (ie attending 1.66% of events) is 33.72%. The percentage attending 5 or more events (ie 8.3% of events) is 12.64%. It is clear that the EVA programme has been sustained by a fairly small number of households – 33 in fact – and that 66.28% of households have never been to any EVA events. I am very grateful to those who have been to several events as it is their support that has sustained the programme.

Finances

When I created Evenley Arts in Autumn 2013, I asked the Parish Council for a small reserve to be set aside to cover possible losses in the early events. In the following financial year, £200 was reserved for this purpose. However, a small reserve was built up in Evenley Arts and the PC's reserve was never needed.

The only events to have drawn from the reserve have been play readings which involved small charges for refreshments. These events were offered free to fulfil the objective of providing some no cost arts events. The only other event to lose money was The Stage is Yours in November 2017 because a donation was made to Children in Need; the village hall charge was slightly higher than anticipated, however.

At the time of writing, the EVA reserve stands at £719.34p but this is likely to drop as the last two events may not cover costs.

I would like this money, if possible, to be used for furthering the arts as that is how it was raised. However, my intention is to retain this money for six months. If no one comes forward to take over the role of Arts Co-ordinator in that time, a decision will then need to be made as to how to spend this money. The following are possibilities but I have attached conditions to each:

- donate the money to the Village Hall Committee on condition that one arts event other than the pantomime is organised by them per year; money to be paid in three instalments after each of three events have been organised;
- donate the money to St George's Church on condition that it is spent on improving the sound system and/ or obtaining a suitable digital piano;
- offer small bursaries to Evenley children who wish to take private lessons in music, dance, theatre or visual art or to off-set expenditure for arts activities on condition that if parents were resident in Evenley during the period in which Evenley Arts operated, they attended at least two EVA events.

I would be happy to receive other suggestions but will retain the right to decide how this money should be used.

The Future

No one has come forward to volunteer to take on the role of Arts Co-ordinator which is not surprising given the fairly low level of interest in the Parish in the Eva programme. One person may continue to organise occasional play readings but this will be by invitation and not open to anyone. The parish Council (Jeff Peyton-Bruhl) has booked Looking Glass Theatre to perform their pantomime again in December 2018. Unless the Parish Council has had volunteers, Evenley Arts is unlikely to continue. It is the old story – use it or lose it.

Kevin O'Regan
March 2018