

CHAIR'S REPORT FOR AGM

OCTOBER 2023

Nailsworth Festival 2023 was held from 20th to 28th May in the week running up to the Spring Bank Holiday. We were very fortunate to have excellent weather on the Saturday which is always an important factor in prompting enthusiasm and enjoyment of the day. Our new banners also enhanced the visual look of the town, especially around the Bus Station area. As usual Saturday events were free and included Markets in both main areas, buskers, a variety of performers in Mortimer Gardens and the Duck Race. An innovation this year was an Eco Fancy Dress competition which prompted a number of entries and was great fun. Three Storeys hosted an oral history project which proved very popular and involved a number of Nailsworth's senior residents.

We always aim to include specific family events in the Festival. The Sports Fest has been increasingly popular over the last two or three years and proved very successful in 2023. The Duck Race and Children's choir also attract families as did the traditional Punch and Judy show. On Sunday the Playcircle played to three full houses in the Town Hall.

The Festival Team organised 10 evening events, including a variety of music, talks and a Poetry Slam. Audiences were generally good but we did struggle to generate interest in some. Alongside the evening events there were three Art/Craft exhibitions, a Quilting Exhibitions, a Sketching Workshop and Vegan Cookery. We also managed to include two walks this year. Our total ticket sales for paid events were 779 which was excellent in the current financial climate.

Financially we made a small loss but most events covered their costs. We are also grateful to our sponsors who allow us to cover general costs and to Nailsworth Town Council for their on-going financial support for Festival Saturday. Additionally, this year we received some grant support for our new banners. I would like to record formal thanks to Town staff who very efficiently sold tickets as the Town Information Centre was closed through the sales period.

Part of our ethos is to work in co-operation with a variety of local organisations. This year these included:

Ruskin Mill
Three Storeys
Chamber of Trade and Market Street Traders
The Steppes
Christchurch
Nailsworth Film Club
Nailsworth Health Partnership
Youth Club
Nailsworth School PTA
Stroudwater Textile Trust

Stroud Valley Project
Five Valleys Quilters
Playcircle

We are grateful for their contribution to the Festival which enhances participation and broadens our offer to the general public.

Last but definitely not least, none of this would be possible without the enthusiasm and hard work of the Festival Committee who bring their ideas, energy, contacts and steady "graft" throughout the year in order to make the Festival happen. I would like to acknowledge this contribution and record a huge THANK YOU to you all. A number of members have been involved for a long time and carry out their roles with huge skill and efficiency. A special "thank you" to Jo, who has recently left us to move to Spain with her family, for her contributions over the last few years. We will miss her very much. The team are looking for one or two more people to join the Committee and would particularly welcome someone with the skills to edit the website and to promote the Festival on social media platforms.

Mary Saunders

Festival Co-ordinator