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LYMM PERFORMING ARTS CENTRE – LETTER OF SUPPORT

In November 1998, Lymm Parish Council set up a Festival Organising Committee to put into effect the wishes of many people and organisations who thought it would be a great idea to have a Festival. I was involved right from the start.

The theme of the Festival would be:

'A showcase of Lymm talent' and it would take place at the end of June. It would include a wide range of events and activities such as jazz, folk music, a classical concert, art exhibitions, a range of dance programmes, dramatic happenings and live poetry, nature walks, boat cruises and special catering arrangements in the local pubs and restaurants. We hope that there will be something in the Festival for everyone and that if successful it will become a regular event.'

The 'theme' is much the same today and it has become a regular event and a major part of Lymm's calendar of activities. There is an eleven day Festival in the summer but events are put on at other times of the year. It has taken place every year up to 2019 but we were forced to cancel it in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID. However, in the last two years a much reduced virtual Festival has been put on to keep the spirit alive.

It remains a showcase for local talent but we also like to book national and regional acts. The attached document is brief history of the Festival and includes details of the notable people who have performed over the years.

The maximum capacity of each of the two largest venues in Lymm is around 250. Our 'star' act usually performs at the Statham Lodge Hotel on a Monday night. We deliberately keep the price of tickets to a reasonable level so we don't exclude those less able to pay. This means we make a loss because the revenue from ticket sales does not cover the performance fee, the staging, the lighting and the sound. Buying in staging, lighting and sound as well as being costly is far from ideal because sight lines can be a problem and the acoustics are sometimes not as good as we would like. These limitations can affect the kind of performers we can book.

A larger venue would enable us to sell more tickets and make a modest surplus to subsidise other events. It would also enable us to mount more expensive acts and expand our geographic reach beyond Lymm and its immediate environs.

A performing arts centre with a range of flexible and different size spaces would also benefit us in other ways. It would provide venues for smaller events and provide rehearsal space for other local groups who might wish to perform at the Festival in the future. At present we use church halls, sports clubs, pubs, the Library and community centres and we would want to continue to support these and not move everything over to a new centre.

However having a centre with good facilities would give us flexibility to put on more events at times of the year outside the main summer period.

Our links with the High School work in two ways. We have used the main hall and the grounds for events. We have enabled musicians and musical groups from the School to perform as part of our programme. One year we commissioned the School to compose a piece of music for us.

I am very pleased to be a member of the Working Group and will do everything I can to help move the project forward. My committee is very excited about the prospect of the facility operating in a few years' time and members will also give support as and when the opportunity arises.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ian', with a horizontal line underneath.

Councillor Ian Marks MBE
Chairman Lymm Festival