

LEISURE & AMENITIES COMMITTEE – 19 NOVEMBER 2018

REPORT FOR INFORMATION
PENLEE PARK OPEN AIR THEATRE 2018 SEASON REPORT

Background:

Members to receive and review the 2018 season report from the Penlee Open Air Theatre.

Appendix 1 – Open Air Theatre Season Report 2018

CORNWALL YOUTH THEATRE COMPANY

Penlee Park Open Air Theatre

SEASON 2018

INTRODUCTION

May I start by offering a vote of thanks to Penzance Town Council for the opportunity to fund-raise by running the 2018 Season at Penlee Park Open Air Theatre and, in particular the support offered by Hester, Ben, Teresa and the Park's gardening staff. This season we applied for a change of License to include the sale of alcohol and particular praise must go Cllr Dennis Oxford who assisted us in the pre-application process. Not only will this bring the venue into line with other similar venues but it will alleviate the expenses and time accrued to the multiple applications for Temporary Event Notices. I must also thank the Director and staff at Penlee House and the NT Welcome Centre who aided publicity on our behalf and our regular volunteer crew of 13 local residents. This season we enrolled 3 new volunteers. Our volunteers range from 18 years to 83 years.

We offered 43 events in the 2018 Season. The range of events offered was extensive; from Shakespeare, opera, songs from the shows and outdoor cinema. One event was cancelled : Daisy Clarke - due to weak sales. In Season 2018 we continued our links, via our Feed the Mind project, with the Penzance Foodbank, distributing over 40 complimentary family tickets to clients selected by the foodbank organisers. This year we joined the Spice Network, a central government funded project that rewards volunteering opportunities for those seeking employment with theatre tickets as rewards. We released 15 Spice vouchers.

PUBLICITY

Following a brochure print run of 12,000, I am indebted to the Golowan Festival and it's Director, Alan Shepherd who, in the 2018 season, again agreed to devote a full page in the Golowan Brochure to our own programme.

Our publicity outlets ranged from a wide variety of local shops, hotels and guesthouses to regular reports in the Cornishman and West Briton newspapers and I am grateful to Lee Trewelha for his support and enthusiasm for our events. Both Cornwall Today, Cornwall Living, My Cornwall and Cornwall Life magazines ran a full diary inclusion of all our events. In terms of print media, the venue was featured over 120 times. Once again, Jubilee Pool generously provided advertising banner space and we look forward to developing this relationship in the future.

Social media - Facebook and Twitter play a significant part in our 2018 publicity. On average over 1500 people saw our weekly Face Book post and we now have over 3500 followers to our Twitter account; an increase of over 2000 followers since 2015. Our Instagram account is now just over a year old and we currently have over 1100 followers. Mail Chimp now plays a significant role in our marketing, we have almost 4500 people who receive our mailing and our average opening rate is over 35% (our industry average is 25%). We are now members of West Cornwall WDYT and in their weekly digital ratings for Penzance we were placed in the top 3 for every week from May - September.

Both BBC Radio Cornwall and Pirate FM featured our regular diary inclusions and Tiffany Truscott & Debbie McRory of BBC Radio Cornwall interviewed and broadcasted about every event of the 2018 Season. This season we featured all events in the What's On Cornwall magazine and employed Arts Around Cornwall to distribute information and publicity. For the first time, we also employed a local leaflet distributor to distribute to the 3 post codes adding the venue; early data analysis from CRBO suggests this was a very worthwhile exercise.

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FACILITIES

The Open Air Theatre space was immaculately maintained and regularly mowed by the gardening staff and I am grateful for their help in "wood-chipping" the back stage area, and the extensive pointing work done to the stage wall, the maintenance of front-of-stage wall flower baskets and the placement of new banner locations. We now have ten flag pole/banner mounts and this particularly helps our white festoon lighting placements to aid the audience exits.

There were no significant issues with site security, all access points to the site are padlocked and GSD Security provided a very good service. We had no issues with rough sleepers in Season 2018.

EXPENDITURE

Fee : £1,500

Our largest expenditure, financed by the Town Council, is the cost of Brochure printing :

12,000 print run : £750

Refreshments : £1600

Advertising : Gate Banners/print media : £2050

Arts Around Cornwall distribution/Local postcode distribution : £600

Capital : trolley / pavement signage £400

INCOME

Fee : £1,500

Box Office Sales : £37,635 : 30% = £11,290.50

Refreshment sales : £4,107

CONCLUSION/DEVELOPMENTS

All the 2018 Season companies have expressed a firm wish to be considered for inclusion in the 2019 Season. The 2019 Season programme is almost fully booked and reflects the quality and variety that the theatre has enjoyed in the 2018 Season. We have also begun negotiation with London's The Globe Theatre about a 3 day visit in 2020. Following audience feedback we are investigating spoken word as an option for next season are currently discussing bookings with Ann Widdicombe and Lucinda Hawksley.

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Season 2018 was the 70th Anniversary of the opening of the venue and on WEDS JUNE 6th 3pm we hosted a Cornish Cream Tea event to celebrate this milestone. We invited older residents of Penzance to this free event and we were delighted to be joined by the Mayor and the Revd Davies both of whom spoke to the event. Revd Davies unveiled a commemorative venue plaque. The cream tea was provided by the Whole again Communities group.

The 70th Anniversary was also be marked by a photographic exhibition in the Penlee Gallery and we are indebted for their project support.

We are founder members Plastic Free Penzance and in Season 2018 discontinued serving any refreshments in single use plastic bottles. All our cold liquid refreshments are served in re-cyclable glass bottles and all our "plastic glasses" are derived from plant-bases rather than petroleum and are fully compostable. Our food containers and cutlery are fully compostable and we currently re-cycle the majority of our audience generated rubbish into 4 dedicated bins.

Since 2017, we are part of outdoor theatre consortium in partnership with Sterts Theatre in Upton Cross and Trebah Amphitheatre at Trebah Gardens. In Aug 2018 we submitted a joint bid to the Arts Council of England (ACE) for a new writing project : Shearings. This will involved local community involvement and if successful will be performed in June 2019.

SHAZZ ANDREW DAVID HUNTER JACKIE MOULE Oct 2018.

