



Newsletter

Issue 13
July 2024

Welcome to the 13th issue of Perth & Kinross Music Foundation's 6 monthly Newsletter. The Trustees hope that you and your families are all well, and have been able to enjoy the Spring and early Summer weather?

In this issue, we bring you up to date with what we have been up to over the last 6 months and give you some information on our plans for the future.

What have we been up to over the last 6 months?

Whilst colleagues at Perth & Kinross Council Education & Childrens Services have confirmed that all PKC music tuition fees were formally abolished as of August 2022, this matter has not yet been passed into legislation by the Scottish Parliament, so there is still the possibility of them being reinstated by a future Scottish Government – of whatever political hue! That said, Perth & Kinross Council (PKC) decided in February 2024, when setting their budget for 2024-2026, to re-introduce fees for certain aspects of the Instrumental Music Service (IMS) activities – i.e. attendance at Central Groups/Orchestras and Music Camps, with an income target of £48,000 per annum being set. They also agreed to reduce the staffing levels in the Service by 3.5 full time equivalent staff thus saving £199,000 over the next 3 years. Due to the rural/urban nature of provision across Perth & Kinross, several members of staff work part time in order to achieve the most flexible provision of instrumental tuition across the whole Council area. This means that effectively, there could be as many as 10 jobs lost over the next 3 years to achieve these savings.

You will have seen in the local press that the young people currently receiving music tuition have been protesting against these cuts, and a petition has also been launched, which, after only a few weeks, had attracted more than 5,000 signatures. The young musicians have been supported by other organisations lobbying local and national politicians to have these cuts reversed. These protests and lobbying efforts will continue until the Council again considers its next budget in February/March 2025. If you wish to support these protest efforts, then the Foundation's Trustees urge you to write to all your local Perth & Kinross Councillors asking that they vote to reverse these very damaging cuts to one of the Council's' most high-profile services when setting the next Council budget in February/March 2025. We will keep you updated on how these efforts progress over the coming months.

At the time of writing this Newsletter, PKC has not announced what these charges will be, only that they will be based on “the full cost recovery” of the provision of these activities. So, as young people enjoy their Summer break, their parents do not know what charges they might be faced with for these activities when the schools return in August. This could have a major impact on uptake of attendance by young people, or indeed, whether the Service will have enough staff to run these extra-curricular activities after the Summer break.

In the meantime, since our last newsletter, the Trustees have continued to support the IMS, whilst remaining within the terms of our OSCR approved constitution. During academic year 2023/24 we awarded the Service a grant of £18,000 towards the purchase of instruments, equipment, and other resources that were identified by Allan Young and his team. However, future direct support of this nature to the Service is now very unlikely to continue as we, as a charity, will need to respond to the planned re-introduction of charges for those activities referred to earlier in this Newsletter.

Even after paying out the 2023/24 grant mentioned above, the Foundation will still have some funds as, despite doing no proactive fundraising since the Scottish Government announcement in Summer 2021, we continue to receive the odd financial donation from individuals/groups. We also still have in place the joint funding arrangement with NSPCC for a share of the net profits of the annual Childline concert held in Perth Concert Hall each December. Last month, we received confirmation that the Foundation’s share of the proceeds of the December 2023 Concert would be £703. During June 2024 one of the fathers of a young musician completed a sponsored ultra marathon (running 70 miles between Carlisle and Newcastle) to raise funds for the Foundation. At this time, we do not know exactly how much he raised but it was looking like a very considerable sum when last we checked in with him. We are very grateful to this gentleman for all his efforts.

What are our future plans?

At a recent meeting the Trustees agreed that we would once again become active in raising funds so that we could revert to our prime reason for existing (i.e. to financially support young musicians from financially challenged households to pay fees due to PKC) in order that no youngster would be prevented from enjoying such activities simply because their families could not afford the fees set by the Council. However, until such times as PKC announces the level of charges for these activities, and we see how many applications for financial support we receive from families, we have not yet decided how we are going to raise future funds. It will, however, be a mix of grant applications to local Charitable Trusts, direct fundraising events, and seeking contributions and donations from other local supporters. We will be writing to all our previous funders and supporters regarding this matter in due course.

And Finally

At the end of the school term just ended, we said goodbye to IMS Co-ordinator, Allan Young MBE who has decided to retire. We wish Allan and his wife, Laura a very long and happy retirement. We are delighted to announce that Allan’s replacement as IMS Co-Ordinator will be Lynsey Patterson who has been one of the IMS tutors for several years. We are very much looking forward to working with Lynsey and her team over the coming months and years.

One of Allan’s final acts was to lead the team of music instructors in performing at the end of term “Follow the Band” concert in Perth Concert Hall. There were 1,200 primary age schoolchildren in the audience, and you can see how much everyone (children and staff) enjoyed the afternoon in the attached video clip. The concert itself starts at around 7.55 minutes into the video and lasts for approx. 90 minutes. This is the sort of activity that could be lost if the PKC cuts are allowed to remain.

<https://youtube.com/live/XAWzqgYyTA0?feature=share>

The Trustees once again say a massive thank you to all our funders, sponsors, supporters and Friends, for your support over the years.