

Financial Report

The Friends have/had two main sources of income. Subscriptions augmented by donations and donations made at physical events (partially offset by the cost of refreshments). Together these met our modest outgoings, mostly the printed quarterly newsletter distributed to members etc, the monthly posters, etc. and left us with a very modest balance.

Two years ago we agreed to use some of the flexibility our reserves allowed us to strengthen our promotional activities. Initially this took the form of a very well received quarterly printed programme, eventually a trifold, some very modest Facebook advertising and a lot of work by the Committee arranging events up to six months in advance.

At the end of the last financial year everything changed. The Pandemic brought our physical events to an end and not far short of half our income disappeared.

Moving our events online has involved significant new costs, most obviously just under **£200 for Zoom** in the 13 months since we went online. We were advised that if a relatively small operation like ours relied on YouTube to host our recordings of our events they would be hard to find and difficult to promote so we opened a Friends **Vimeo account** at, again, **just over £200** for the 13 months so far. The Eventbrite account is free and has been at heart of our expansion.

The cost of **printing our own posters, leaflets, newsletters and programmes** isn't very different whether we do it ourselves or commercially, roughly **£1000** a year, but we are looking forward hugely to the normal opening of print shops because the work involved is massively different. In the absence of Committee Member post, our **postage bill** has about doubled to about **£120 a quarter**.

Running our events through Eventbrite (linked to Zoom, Facebook and Mailchimp) has been very productive and has helped us to build a very active GDPR compliant mailing list which is well on its way to being 600 hundred strong, most of it still fairly local. It has also made the roughly **£10 per month sponsored Facebook posts** much more productive. Google analytics suggest the traffic to our website is approaching 700 visits a month and we score more hits than that with each of our events on Facebook. We don't have equivalent data for our Twitter and Instagram accounts.

All our events have been well attended, several have pushed our normal 100 attendee limit on Zoom and two required a £48 Zoom supplement so we could accommodate 130 and 160 attendees respectively. This owes a lot to the fact that all our upcoming events are listed in advance on our Eventbrite page and Eventbrite helps us publicise our events to people it thinks might be interested. As most people will know, attendance is now supplemented by the publishing of all our events on our Vimeo site and Facebook Page as videos. As a result most of our events have been attended or viewed by more than 100 people, some considerably more and two have involved several hundred.

Quite a number of those who have attended/seen the videos are long standing Friends who would now have difficulty in attending a physical event. For many Friends our monthly Zoom meetings have been a bridge to keeping in touch. We have learnt a lot about what is needed by our community to avoid loneliness and still have much to do to eliminate Zoom hesitancy.

Obviously, spending so much more than we get isn't viable in the long term. Problem isn't urgent. We still have **reserves of £4,489.12** less some prepaid subscriptions for 2021-22. Having, we hope secured our place in people's hearts, we are from this month **using Eventbrite's facility to collect donations**. When booking everyone is offered an opportunity to make a donation, nothing pushy, and it **seems likely that even at this first attempt we will collect more than we use to at the physical events** (and without refreshment costs to set off) and probably sufficient, with subscriptions from, hopefully, a growing group of Friends, to meet our costs.

As soon as I have the April Bank Statement and I can do a final analysis of subscriptions for the 21-22 year, I will publish the above in a rather more formal way.

Patrick Lefevre – 7/4/21