

Edinburgh Competition Festival Association

Trustees Report 2026

The Edinburgh Competition Festival Association (ECFA) is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation, SC 006128. The aims and objectives of the Association are to advance education in the arts, particularly in Music. It does this primarily by holding an annual music Festival of competitive and non-competitive classes for a wide range of ages and abilities, offering opportunities for string, piano, wind, vocal, guitar, percussion, harp and traditional amateur musicians to take part. Classes are adjudicated by specialist adjudicators. The Festival is called The Edinburgh Music Competition Festival.

We are without a permanent Treasurer at the moment. With much difficulty we found a replacement for our long-standing Treasurer, Russell Pugh, who announced his retirement at last year's AGM. Unfortunately our new Treasurer, Richard Fong, suffered a stroke in January and Russell once again took over the reins. We are extremely grateful to him for all that he has done to see us through another festival. We wish Richard well in his recovery from his stroke.

Our Vice Chair, Claire McLean, resigned from the board in March. Claire worked hard for the festival and took on many roles on the Council over the years, including the positions of secretary, string advisor, the engaging of adjudicators and the organising of the Highlights part of the final concert. We are grateful for all that Claire did and acknowledge the part she played in the success of our festival.

This year the Concerto class first round was held on the 23rd and 24th of January. We had 30 entrants. The four chosen finalists were Rhea Fitzgerald - Chopin Piano Concerto no. 1 mvt.;, Sandy Reilly - Rebecca Clark Viola Sonata; William Guo - Mozart - Violin Concerto no.4 mvts.1&2; and Paul Oggier - Haydn Cello Concerto in C Major mvts. 1 & 2.

The Association ran its main 2026 Festival from the 3rd to the 15th of March. We had slightly fewer entries this year. Our piano, strings, wind and vocal classes were very popular. Harp, guitar and percussion classes all had less, but nevertheless just as enthusiastic, entrants.

The venues this year worked out very well though the initial timetabling was difficult as St Mark's Unitarian Church and St Michael and All Saints had less all-day availability. We had to use the more expensive St Cuthbert's Parish Church more than we would have liked. St Vincent's Chapel provided good accommodation for our guitar classes and some of the beginner string classes.

Our Highlights concert and the concerto Finale were held in St Cuthbert's Parish Church on Sunday 15th March. It was a wonderful festive occasion with great performances by several of the class winners. In the second half, The Friends of the Festival Orchestra, conducted by William Conway, played with the four finalists in the Concerto Class. The standard of play was outstanding and the adjudicators, Hilary Stuart and Jena Pang, declared Rhea Fitzgerald and Paul Oggier as joint winners of the Audrey Innes Trophy. Audrey Innes and the Lord Provost of Edinburgh presented the trophy and medals.

Our 15 minute recital class winners, Mrabh Downey, singing, Shionka Kamikaji-Inkster, harp, Jemma Grosse, flute, Grace Cooper, violin, and Ki Ming Jia, piano, performed in the

music series "St Giles at 6" on Sunday 19th April. This was a wonderful showcase for young musical talent. The large audience was very appreciative.

Unfortunately the success of this year's Festival is not reflected in the financial figures. For the period ending 30th April 2026, the income was £23,141, down 14% from last year and expenditure, at £28,861, was an increase of 15%. This results in a deficit this year to 30th April 2026 in a loss of £5,720 and a lower cash balance of the same amount at the end of the year.

We were without two of our regular sponsors this year and total sponsorship was down £3,600 while adjudicator and accompanist fees and expenses increased by £2,652, accommodation increased by £761 and venue costs increased by £1,010. These represent the largest changes in the year. We need to look again at our venue costs and our accommodation costs which continue to rise in Edinburgh.

The Association records with gratitude the financial assistance of sponsors large and small, in particular, The Plum Trust and The Educational Institute of Scotland. It remains very important that we continue to attract donations and grants to support amateur music performance, particularly for the young, as we seek to develop our festival and make it even more accessible to all.

As always, we are also grateful to the Council members who donate a great deal of their time and expertise to the planning and administration of the festival throughout the year and to the day to day management of the Festival itself. Without them and the many other volunteers, hosts and stewards, we would not be able to run a successful event.

We also thank the many schools, teachers and parents whose interest and enthusiasm encourages the growing number of entrants to our festival. And finally, thanks must go to the venues for providing excellent facilities and for making us feel very welcome in their space.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Gillian Cowie". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial 'G' and a long, horizontal flourish at the end.

Gillian Cowie
Chair, ECFA

EDINBURGH COMPETITION FESTIVAL ASSOCIATION

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR 1 May 2025 to 30 April 2026

	2025/2026		2024/2025
		Notes	
RECEIPTS	£		£
Membership subscriptions	995		875
Entry fees	12,551		13,175
Audience takings	1,490		1,303
Sale of Programmes	1,089		1,247
Advertising	710		910
Grants	4,000	1	7,600
Donations	1,654		1,181
Bank interest received	412		476
Other	240		-
Total Ordinary Receipts	23,141		26,767
 PAYMENTS			
Adjudicator/Accompanist Fees/Expenses	10,938		8,286
Adjudicator Accommodation	3,295		2,534
Administration	1,312	2	1,555
Printing	2,034		2,470
Awards	320		368
Venues	9,912		8,902
Instruments/Music	330		365
Federation Membership & Insurance	700		570
Other	20		104
Total Payments	28,861	3	25,154
 Surplus (Deficit) for year	(5,720)		1,613

Notes

1 The grants were from The Plum Trust and The EIS

2 Covers range of costs, mainly postage, stationery, IT and the on line entry system.

3 Total Expenses incurred by and reimbursed to ten Trustees was £1444

EDINBURGH COMPETITION FESTIVAL ASSOCIATION

STATEMENT OF BALANCES AS AT 30 April 2026

	At 30.4.26		At 30.4.25
	£	Notes	£
Bank Accounts			
CAF Bank Treasurers Account	640		3,763
CAF Bank Gold Account	19,784		22,381
Total	20,424		26,144
Total Net Balances			
	20,424		26,144
Balances at 30.4.25	26,144		24,531
Surplus for Year to 30.4.26	(5,720)	1	1,613
Balances at 30.4.26	20,424		26,144
Other Assets			
Computer	50		50
Music light and 2 music stands	50		50
Banners	1		1
Trophies	1,000		1,000
Total	1,101	2	1,101

Notes

- 1 Surplus from Receipts and Payments Account
2 At estimated current value.



Gillian Cowie
Chairman
ECFA
www.ecfest.org.uk
1 June 2026