

ANNUAL REVIEW

SHINING A SPOTLIGHT ON OUR YEAR

This past year has been a remarkable journey for Forth Children's Theatre, marked by vibrant performances, significant organisational progress, and heartfelt moments that celebrate the spirit of our community.

From exciting productions and workshops to maintaining financial stability and successfully transitioning to becoming a SCIO, this report reflects the dedication and passion that make FCT a thriving space for young talent!



LETTER FROM OUR CHAIR

I am writing as Chairperson of Forth Children's Theatre (FCT) Board, having taken over this role in November 2023 from Pauline Dickson. Since stepping into this position, I have been continually amazed by the energy, talent, and dedication within our group. Over the past year, we have achieved a great deal, and it is my pleasure to share some of the highlights with you.

Since November, FCT has delivered a wide range of performances and initiatives. These include our heart-warming Christmas Concert, the spectacular 45th Anniversary Concert, a critically acclaimed run of *Everybody's Talking About Jamie* at the Edinburgh Fringe, and, most recently, an enriching Playhouse workshop organised by the ever-resourceful Lewis Baird. Each of these events reflects the passion, hard work, and creativity of everyone involved.

Acknowledging Our Volunteers

I want to express my deepest gratitude to our Board members and the many volunteers who work tirelessly behind the scenes. Without their invaluable support, FCT simply could not function. As you know, our charity has a wide range of needs, from organising events and managing finances to ensuring our young performers have everything they require to shine on stage. It is thanks to the dedication of these volunteers that we can continue to offer high-quality productions enjoyed by audiences far and wide. To all who have contributed—whether in big or small ways—please accept my heartfelt thanks. Together, you make FCT what it is: a vibrant, supportive community for our young people.



Becoming a SCIO

As some of you may be aware, the legal landscape for charities is evolving, and this may be the last formal AGM we hold. However, rest assured, we will still have regular meetings and provide opportunities for everyone to stay engaged and informed.

At last year's AGM, we announced our intention to transition FCT to a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). This structure offers the benefits of a charity while limiting liability for Trustees, providing greater security for the organisation. Over the past year, we have worked hard to implement this change, and I am pleased to report that, as of May 2024, FCT successfully completed the transition to become a SCIO.



“Delivering exceptional opportunities for young people to explore, grow, and shine.”

While this involved revising our constitutional documents, the way we operate and deliver on our mission remains unchanged. This step ensures that FCT continues to thrive, benefiting from the robust governance and protections offered by the SCIO model.

Remembering Mike Grainger

Not all moments this year have been easy. It is with great sadness that I reflect on the loss of a cherished member of our FCT family, Mike Grainger, fondly known as “Magic Mike.” Over the past few years, Mike was an inspiring and enthusiastic presence backstage and a beloved member of the Dickson family. His energy, kindness, and dedication left a lasting mark on everyone who had the pleasure of knowing him.

We were so grateful that Mike was able to see Everybody’s Talking About Jamie before his passing—a production that truly exemplified the magic FCT brings to life. In an extraordinary turn of events, we recently learned that FCT has been left a legacy in Mike’s memory. This generous gesture speaks to the impact of his friendship and his unwavering belief in what FCT represents. Mike will forever be a part of our story.

Looking Ahead

As we reflect on an eventful year, it is clear that FCT continues to go from strength to strength. Our young performers inspire us every day with their talent and determination, and our community of volunteers and supporters ensures that FCT remains a nurturing space where creativity flourishes.

Thank you for being part of this journey with us. Whether you have attended a performance, given your time as a volunteer, or supported us in other ways, your contributions make everything we do possible. As we move forward under our new SCIO structure, I am confident that FCT will continue to thrive,

With gratitude and best wishes,

Irene Hogg

Chairperson



2024 FUNDRAISING UPDATE

This has been my first year with FCT and in a bid to learn as much as possible I've been chatting with volunteers old and new about the company, its values, experiences and future plans. It has been a real joy to hear the stories and to transform them into case studies for funding applications.

There are many opportunities to increase the income we generate as an organisation. We plan to investigate them all as we learn and develop a long-term funding strategy to ensure the continuation and growth of FCT, while retaining our unique core-value of offering performance and stage experience to any young person regardless of social and financial background.



Grant funding:

We were very grateful to The William Syson Foundation who awarded us a grant for £4,000 this year. These unrestricted funds were immediately used towards our *Everybody's Talking About Jamie* production in August. The continued support of the foundation over the last two years has greatly impacted our ability to meet the increasing cost of productions to the high standard for which FCT are known.

We've applied for several other grants this year but unfortunately not been successful. However, we will continue honing the skills necessary to compete in an increasingly difficult time where all charities are competing for funding.

We have also registered with many of the corporate and retail foundations. The registrations are often the first step to eligibility to submit grant applications and we hope that these will help generate funding in the near future.

Sponsorship:

We have slightly revamped the sponsorship packages on offer, including an annual package and the reintroduction of personal sponsorship.

We have our first Annual Sponsor, Neilsons Solicitors and Estate Agents, along with several other show sponsors and thanks to them, we were able to cover all marketing and promotion costs for the festival show.

Raffle:

The raffle at each show continues to be a vital and popular way for us to generate funds. Thanks to the donations from parents, families and local businesses we have been able to have between three to five hampers or vouchers on offer at every show this year.

A massive thank you to all who contribute and particularly to Helena who continues to collect the donations and turn them into beautiful hampers!

Community Fundraising:

Along with seeking grant funds, we are experimenting with some community fundraising. We have applied for Tesco's Blue Token scheme which we are waiting to hear back from, but were offered a day doing a bucket collection at Tesco on Broughton Road. Helped by a rota of parents and cast members of ETAJ, we spent a Saturday in July shaking our new collection buckets and handing out show flyers. We raised almost £400.00 and helped raise awareness of the show.

During the run of Jamie, I met two groups of people who came along after being impressed with the cast's enthusiasm. The cast represented FCT brilliantly that day and the feedback from all involved was very positive.

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Future plans:

We have a lot of exciting ideas and plans for fundraising in 2025 including:

- Working to build up our Social Media following – this in turn will encourage both more sponsorship opportunities and ticket sales!
- Introduce a Donation feature and Fundraising blog onto our website
- Create a database of ex-FCTers that we can reach out to for support.
- Continue to build-up our sponsorship supporters
- More community engagement – bag-packing; leafleting; attending local events to increase FCT's visibility.

How you can help:

- Please like, comment and share all of our Social Media posts.
- Please keep a look out on Social Media, our newsletter and the WhatsApp group as we ask for nominations and support for grants. These usually only take a minute to complete, but can result in us getting £1,000.
- Please donate to our raffles – a bottle of wine, some chocolates, a toy are all great, but if you work with an organisation who can support us with a gift voucher for a luxury treatment or experience, that would be amazing! We would be happy to publicise your generosity in our social media and newsletter.
- If you have your own business, please consider sponsoring us in our show programmes.
- If you work in a store that can offer us a bag-packing or collecting day, please let us know.
- If you work for an organisation that supports local charities or has match-funding, please consider nominating us.

Caroline Richardson

Fundraising Lead

**THIS LAST YEAR HAS
BEEN A BUSY BUT
HIGHLY SUCCESSFUL
TIME FOR FCT**

Our Shows This Year:

A CANDELIT CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Our Christmas concert of 2023 was held in the lovely venue of St Andrew's and St George's West, with the old church adding to the beautiful festive feel of the evening.

An array of Christmas hymns, traditional carols and festive pop classics showcased the amazing talent of our young people. As well as beautiful vocals, the cast also provided the orchestra and much of the musical arrangements themselves. Seeing them support and encourage each other behind the scenes not only provokes the true meaning of Christmas, but more importantly, the sense of joy, commitment and family that keeps FCTers returning. I wasn't the only audience member softly singing along, trying to remain seated as the cast danced on stage and were very clearly enjoying themselves.



Beautiful Vocals!

**Provokes the true
meaning of christmas!**



High Energy!

spectacular!



CELEBRATING

45

YEARS

OF FCT!

Speaking of returning family, we then went into our first show of 2024 celebrating the 45th year of FCT. A showcase of musical numbers from many of the company's previous productions, the performances were a spectacular, non-stop, high-energy celebration of young and old. Directed and choreographed by two previous FCT performers, Taylor and Jack, they didn't let the young age of many of the cast prevent them from putting together a west-end level performance which led to very well-earned five-star reviews.

As an audience member, I was again blown away by the talent and commitment of our cast and was exhausted just watching the two and a half hours show with barely a breath between each song. It was lovely to see some previous cast members return and of course the much-enjoyed cameo of our very own Rene Hogg had the audience hollering their appreciation. I'm already wondering how this can be topped for the 50th celebration!

EVERYBODY'S TALKING ABOUT



JAMIE



In August we were very proud to offer festival goers the first amateur full-length production in Scotland of *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*. Highly topical, relevant and insightful, this show allowed FCT to focus on some serious topics while still providing a fun, talent-filled, optimistic experience. Starring many young people new to FCT, it was a great opportunity to prove that FCT can continue to put out high-quality productions and provide opportunities for new generations.



Highly Topical!

Talent-Filled!

SHOW INFO & STATS

CHRISTMAS CONCERT

21

Cast Members

300

Audience Numbers

CELEBRATING 45 YEARS OF FCT

36

Cast Members

750

Audience Numbers

9.5

NPS Score

EVERYBODY'S TALKING ABOUT JAMIE

29

Cast Members

1500

Audience Numbers

500

Ice Creams Sold

5

4 Star Reviews

9.7

NPS Score

TREASURER REPORT

2024 has been a steady year for Forth Children's Theatre in the financials, we kept up the strength we had built in 2023 to keep us in a good financial position

I think it is fair to say everyone has had so much enjoyment over the last 12 months with 3 successful productions and giving the opportunity to perform to lots of young people.

We started off by doing Forth Children's Theatre's Christmas Concert. This was a heart warming experience for all involved. Financially it brought us a surplus of **£2,245.65**

The second production of this year was our 45th Anniversary Gala, the production was brilliant however this posed a risk in many ways as we performed this event in The Churchill Theatre. It was also a different production as we created the show and the running order. We sadly did not sell as many tickets as expected to fill a venue like Churchill. This however did still manage to bring us a small surplus of **£281.83**

The third and final production of the year was *Everybody's Talking About Jamie*. It was a truly fantastic production across the 2 weeks

for all involved. Once again hosted in our new venue we used in 2023 of Broughton High School which was truly amazing. Financially the show produced a surplus of **£919**

We also were successful in our second grant application from William Syson Foundation which we are so thankful for their support giving us **£4,000** added to our funds.

Overall it has been a stable year where we have added a small amount of **£116.94** to our funds, however this is super positive that we did not have a deficit after running a full year programme. There is a balance of **£29,453.09** in our bank account and taking off our outstanding costs for Madelvic House rent leaves us with **£23,204.09** in unrestricted funds.

Thanks,

Cameron Smith

Treasurer

FINANCIAL REPORT

Shows	Debit	Credit	Surplus/(Deficit)
Christmas concert	£1,058.56	£3,304.21	£2,245.65
45th Gala	£9,607.93	£9,889.76	£281.83
ETAJ	£22,810.00	£23,729.00	£919.00
Overall	£33,476.49	£36,922.97	£3,446.48

Overall	Debit	Credit	Surplus/(Deficit)
General	£5,592.93	£5,816.20	£223.27
Marketing	£2,073.05	£0.00	(£2,073.05)
Production	£30,819.64	£27,121.78	(£3,697.86)
Wellbeing	£3,210.99	£4,474.57	£1,263.58
Cash	£0.00	£4,401.00	£4,401.00
Overall	£41,696.61	£41,813.55	£116.94

Bank Accounts	
Bank of Scotland - Current Account	£29,453.09

Outstanding Costs (Restricted Funds)	
Madelvic Rent (Covid Outstanding)	£3,000.00
Madelvic Rent (March 2024 - March 2025)	£3,250.00

Unrestricted Funds	
2022	£14,592.98
2023	£20,243.80
2024	£23,203.09

THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Irene Hogg

Chair



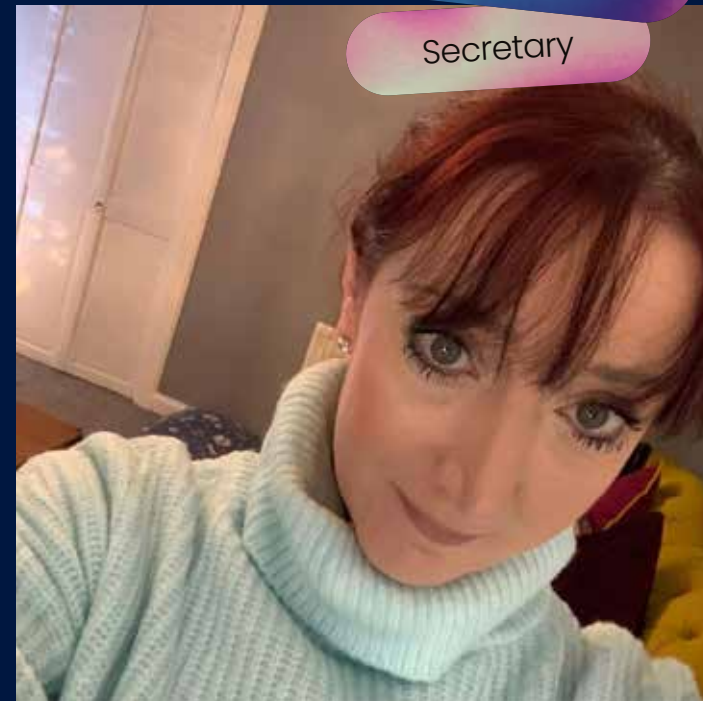
Cameron Smith

Treasurer



Yvonne Rowley

Secretary



Chris Richardson

Governance Lead



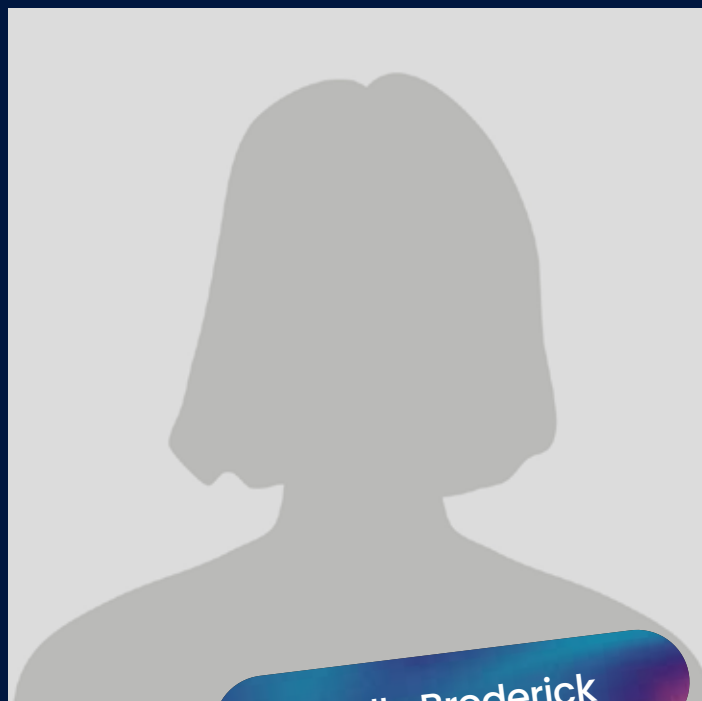
Janet Kirkwood

parent Rep



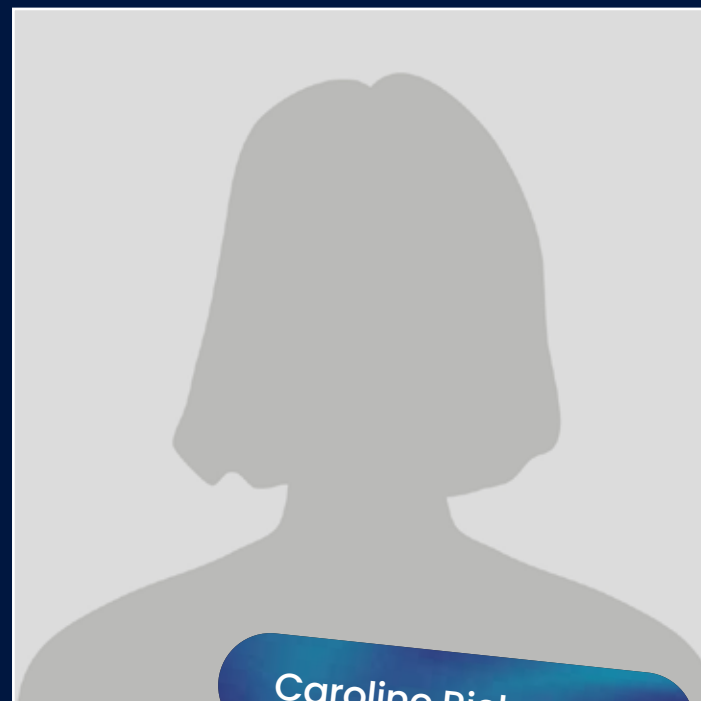
Sally Broderick

Marketing Lead



Caroline Richardson

Fundraising Lead



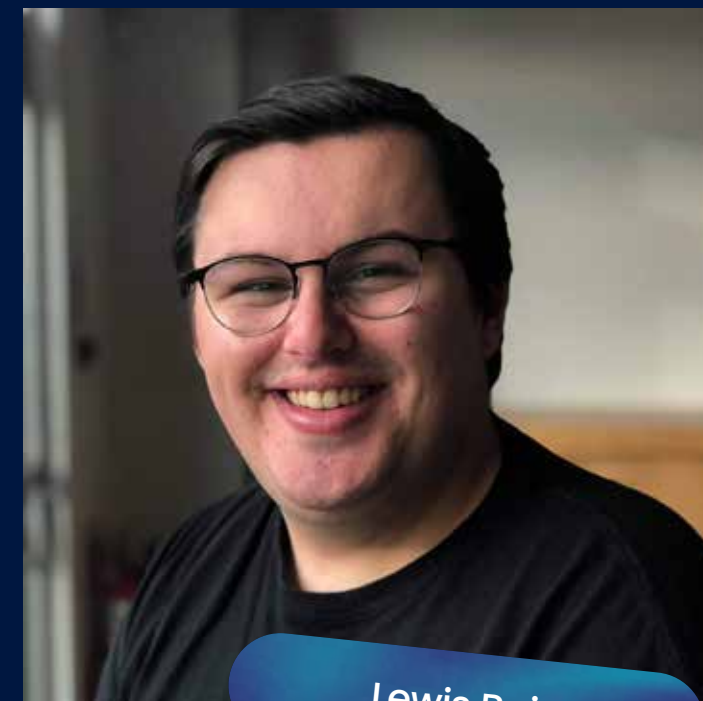
John Allan

Production Advisor



Lewis Baird

Creative Advisor



Jane Sutherland

Honorary Member



A MUSICAL THEATRE
GROUP FOUNDED ON THE
PRINCIPLE THAT ACCESS
TO THE STAGE SHOULD
NOT BE A PRIVILEGE.

Forth Children's Theatre (FCT) was formed in the summer of 1979 and today is one of Scotland's most respected youth theatres.

FCT aims to create a safe but stimulating place for young people to take creative risks and to be rewarded with a lifetime of friendship.

