

THE
SPOTLIGHT
IS OURS

ANNUAL REVIEW 2025

A YEAR OF CREATIVITY IN ACTION

Theatre is often defined by what happens during the few hours the curtain is up. But at Forth Children's Theatre we know the most profound transformations happen long before the house lights dim. This past year, the "spotlight" hasn't just illuminated our performances; it has shone a light on the incredible resilience, bravery, and talent of the young people who call this company home.



School of Rock



The Sound of Music



Goldilocks and the
Three Bears

LETTER FROM OUR CHAIR

Where has 2025 gone? There were times when all of us thought about 'Wishing it was all over!' Well in real terms – it is, and we start the cycle again. Three shows in one year was not the original concept of FCT. The Easter production was supposed to be a low cost well produced show, giving youngsters experience as our older members studied and sat exams. You can think on that one yourself and then think of the Fringe. The School of Rock was something else but combined with The Sound of Music, FCT produced two terrific shows which had customers standing giving their support for everyone's efforts.

All well and good, but then we were catapulted into a new venue, the North Edinburgh Arts Centre, for a pantomime, Goldilocks and the Three Bears. Again, we produced a performance which had the audience on their feet congratulating the cast on their acting/singing/dancing and not forgetting the band, lighting, sound, costumes, make up, scenery, and front of house. Add in the 'stage crew' including the people doing microphones, set, and the one on the book, then this is a huge number of people that are in it, not for themselves but for the aim of FCT – which is to enable young people the education they require to perform on stage and also in backstage positions. I will add, N.E. Arts, were delighted with our promotion of their centre and realise the potential that is contained there.



The FCT Board are behind everything, they are responsible for this education plus the safety of everyone who has anything to do with an FCT production!

So can we enumerate the above – yes, we could but every time we try, it would be wrong – oh and how about so and so, did he/she not do... This is a huge number well over 100, and guess what? No one gets paid, this is done as voluntary work, we all volunteer for what we do.

I fear that in the future, posts like Director, Musical Director, and Choreographer, will necessitate payment. We already are aware of losing potential applicants and that other amateur companies already pay for the above posts – we will require new income to balance the books!



**“Thank you to anyone
who has done the smallest
thing to promote FCT”**

As Chairperson, I extend my most sincere thank you to anyone who has done the smallest thing to promote FCT as one of the best youth theatre groups, perhaps anywhere in Scotland. I cannot go any further without giving my sincere thanks to the Board members plus Vic Laing who is always willing and able to help.

Janet Kirkwood has decided it is time to leave the Board, but we hope one of her talents she brought, might continue! Who would think of sourcing X number of porridge oats breakfasts as presents for all those who had something to do with Goldilocks and the Three Bears – it did take several people an explanation to appreciate the relationship! We look forward to seeing her at shows and perhaps onstage again.

When one leaves, you need a replacement, and so we welcome Kieran Hudson who has volunteered to join our Board and will be appointed at our next meeting. There is still a position vacant on the Board, so if anyone wishes to help us, just say the word!

There are people and companies who help us along the way, and one of them is Emperor. A long time supporter of FCT, Roy helps us keep marketing costs down and assists in other ways as and when he can. Charities like us would be lost without help from many different sources, and we thank them all.

Please support FCT and give the young people of the future, the opportunity to gain experience, not just of the theatre, but of the life that surrounds them. Help them to be confident in themselves and in return transfer that to others who are less fortunate than they have been.

Sincere best wishes for 2026 and beyond to all.

Irene Hogg

Chairperson

FUNDRAISING UPDATE 2025



2025 was an incredible year for FCT with three superb productions creating a huge amount of fun and laughter, but also some very tired volunteers! We are very lucky to have received support in a number of ways:

Grant funding

Once again, we are extremely grateful to The William Syson Foundation whose generous grant of £5,000 came at a crucial time for FCT. An unexpected cost due to the sound complexities in our School of Rock production, threw our whole budget into chaos! While it wasn't quite make or break for the production, there was a collective sigh of relief when the award was confirmed and we cannot thank the Foundation's staff enough for their support over the last three years. The £5,000 of unrestricted funds enabled us to produce SOR to the standard we had been aiming for and the audience feedback of the production continues to highlight how fortunate we are to be able to put on such a high standard of show.

Legacy Donation

In 2024 FCT lost a treasured volunteer and supporter, Mike Grainger. Mike helped with sound in numerous productions over the years and all our FCT cast and crew were deeply touched when despite being very ill, Mike came along to see our *Everybody's talking about Jamie* Fringe show. We were further astounded when we found out FCT had been left an extremely generous gift in Mike's will. One of Mike's close friends, former FCT Chair Pauline Dickson, came along to a board meeting to inform us of the donation and share how much FCT and working with the young cast had meant to Mike. The FCT Board are currently considering how the donation will be best used and also a way to create a permanent tribute to Mike.

Sponsorship

Neilsons Solicitors and Estate Agents very kindly sponsored our marketing materials and programmes over the year. Their support along with Edinburgh Vocal Care; The Bohemians and Leitheatre is highly valued and we thank you.

Raffle

Our raffles are a major income generator and cannot exist without the amazing donations from cast families and local business'. The fantastic work of Helena crating beautiful hampers makes our raffle winners the envy of audience attendees. Thank you to all who donate.

2026 Plans

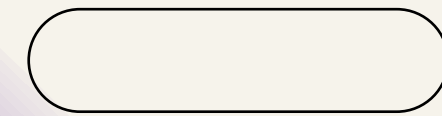
The FCT Board are an experienced and optimistic bunch, but we do have to be realistic. The cost of putting together these shows continues to spiral, not just in relation to the everyday costs of rental and maintenance of our home at Madelvic, but also how the cost-of-living crisis impacts everything.

We have seen a 100% increase in our production costs over the last five years. Theatre rental; sound and lighting equipment; set materials and costume costs have all risen. We are extremely lucky to have many skilled volunteers who give us their time for free over the show week and rehearsal period, but even this is becoming harder to guarantee as paid opportunities with other organisations are available. As a supporter of FCT you will have hopefully seen some of our recent shows and know what a high level of production we are lucky enough to be able to put on due to these volunteers and amazing young cast. To continue to do this in 2026 and beyond, we need to increase our fundraising efforts considerably to cover not just our current Easter and Fringe shows, but to also have a reserve fund to ensure that if another pandemic or other disaster were to occur, we have the financial security to cover the next show.

How you can help

- If your company offer charity grants; sponsorship; match-funding or volunteer days, please consider nominating us.
- If you can, please consider setting up a regular donation.
- A legacy donation to help the future FCTers.
- Consider volunteering with us in show week or over the year in fundraising, marketing or admin.
- Volunteer at our community fundraising events
- Promote our shows – come flyering with us, display our posters in your business etc
- Or simply support us by continuing to come to our shows, sharing our media posts and telling all your friends, family and coworkers how brilliant our young cast are and what they are missing out on!

Thank you!



PROGRAMMING

2025 was a substantial year in Forth Children's Theatre history as the board of trustees stepped away from sole creative control and handed the opportunity to our young people to select our programming. Our 2024 and 2025 show selection workshops have given us a massive advantage in understanding the shows our young people want to tackle and have helped us pave our future in a really productive way.

THE SOUND OF MUSIC

Due to restrictions on the production voted for by our young people (Sister Act) our board had to make one final decision on the programming of our company. Through looking at all available productions, we knew that Rogers and Hammerstein's classic would be the right musical to kick off 2025.

Our creative team for this production came in the shape of three newbies to the company and a returning member, with Aoife Summers as Director, Jayne Orchard as Choreographer, Mirrin Macleay as Assistant Choreographer and Jack Gardner stepping up as Musical Director.



The four creatives united to bring a powerful and beautiful production of The Sound of Music to audiences in Easter 2025. With four star reviews, sold out houses and a great reception from audiences, it was a great production, with a stellar cast.

The most impactful aspect of this production was how much our young people put into this timeless classic. Sometimes, when it comes to more classic musicals there's a fear of it not resonating with this current generation of young people, how wrong we were. As the curtain drew, the tears falling from our cast's face was very visible – sad that this experience was drawing to a close and proud of the accomplishments during the Easter Production.

It was a revival for the history books, and has shown that young people still want to pretend they're prancing around hills bringing out their inner Julie Andrews.



Stellar cast!

A beautiful production!



SCHOOL OF ROCK



A truly

rocking show!



School of Rock was a major production to bring to the stage. Technically, it is one of the toughest shows we have ever had to produce. Our faithful sound and lighting technician, Callum Farrell, raised this at the first production meeting, stating that balancing a band in the pit with a band made up of young people on stage was going to be a bigger mountain to climb than the one in The Sound of Music. We set off with ambition and faith in our team to ensure that we could once again produce the best possible production for our young people.

For School of Rock we had the largest creative team, perhaps in FCT history, with Kayleigh McDonald debuting as Director for the company, Taylor Doig returning from maternity leave to choreograph, teamed up with Mirrin Macleay as Assistant Choreographer and a trio of MDs, in the form of Evie Alberti as Musical Director, and Jack Gardner and Eric Rogers as Assistant Musical Directors. Our six creatives work hard to bring a truly rocking show.

We were fearful of casting for this production – could we really get enough young people to form a live band on stage? I don't know why we doubt this, because every time we put a callout for a demanding show, the young people of Edinburgh and the surrounding areas answer. And answer they did – we had an astonishing live band on stage night after night, led by our own Dewey Finn, Joseph Coane. Who we must mention whilst talking about this show, as Joseph had been an FCT regular since 2022, whether that was backstage, on stage or in the band. And School of Rock was the perfect production for him to bow out on, we must say our thanks to him for his massive contribution to the company over the last few years. Along with Emma Swain who had been with FCT prior to COVID and danced her way through production after production.

Anxiety was still very much present as we got into Broughton High School theatre for this production, questioning the technical aspects, how well the production would do ticket wise and of course how would the audience react to this show? School of Rock with a massive hit on every level, audience feedback was incredible, we had two five star reviews, and a four star review, and houses were sold out for the majority of the run.

There isn't a question that this was not only thanks to our cast, but also our production team who worked tirelessly to ensure that we had the best show possible, and as always our thanks has to go to Gavin, Callum Jane, Angie, Megan, Geraldine, John, Rene, Kevin, with newbies Owen and David. Of course a huge thanks has to go to parent volunteers, and front of house team led by Angelo and Helena. The people helping behind the scenes are key to ensuring the quality of a production and what a team we have.

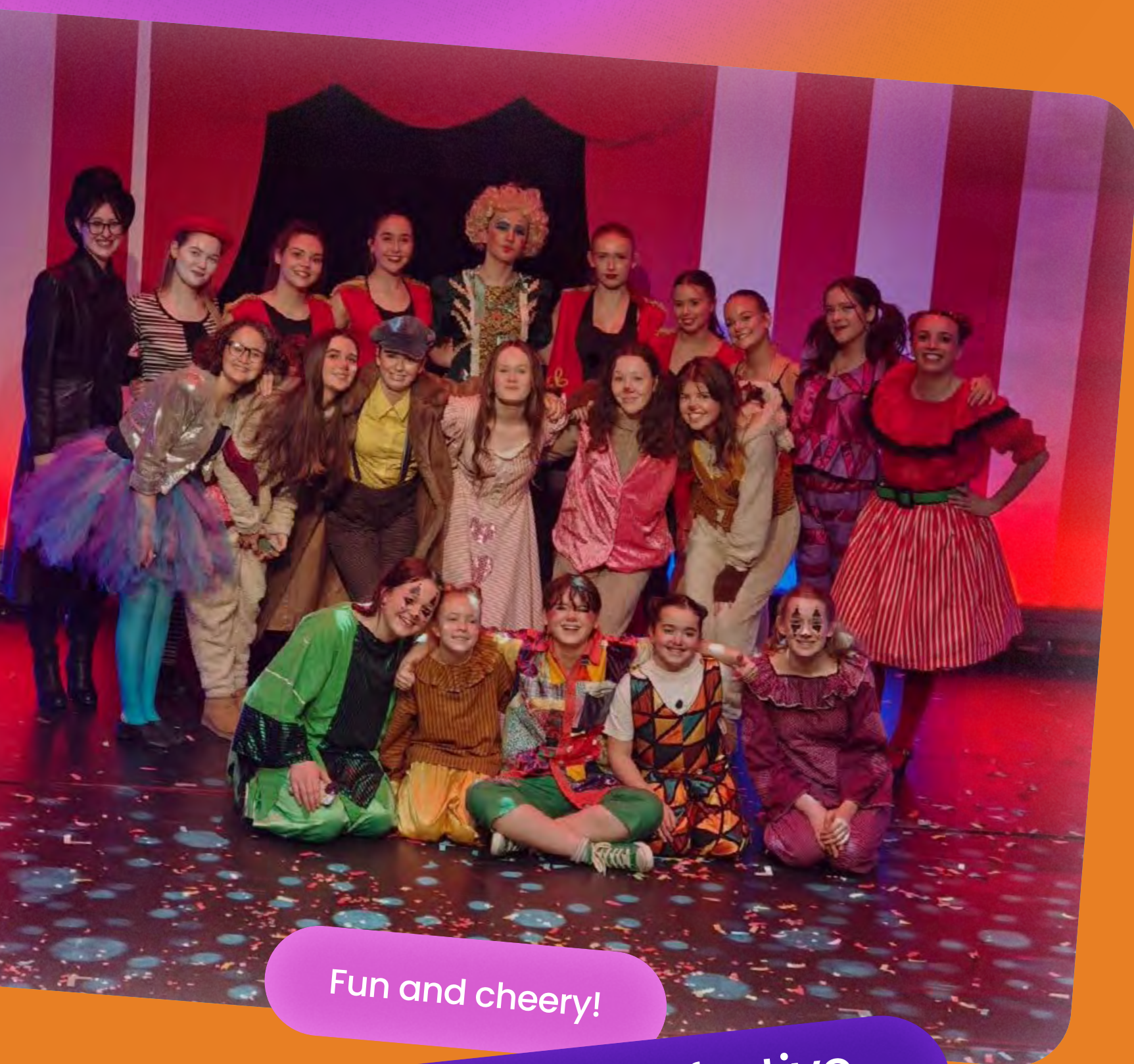


A massive hit!

Astonishing live band!



GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS



Fun and cheery!

Kick off the festive
celebrations!

Goldilocks & The Three Bears was a late entry into our programming calendar, however with the ever approaching 2026 programming, we knew we had to raise a bit more funds to ensure that Deloris gets her Diana Ross dress and Elsa actually can in fact make it snow.

We partnered with North Edinburgh Arts, utilising their black box theatre and newly refurbished building to put on a smaller-scale production. We admit now, that for any other production this would not be a feasible theatre space to utilise for our size of cast but find any venue that has our needs during the festive season that doesn't already have a pantomime on, is very much restricting, and we don't fancy freezing our backsides off in a closed Debenhams anymore.

Aoife Summers directed this production, with choreography from Mirrin Macleay who had shown her dedication and ambition for the company throughout 2025, and Erin Munro returned for the first time in two years to vocal coach. This was a fun production which gave our cast and company something slightly different to work towards. And audiences loved this kick off of festive celebrations, with a fun and cheery panto.

Our production team put their all into this show, whilst albeit, still trying to catch up on rest from the last two productions. However we managed to give our young people one final great experience in 2025 to round off a very busy year for the company.



LOOKING FORWARD

2026 Shows!

In 2026 we are continuing to be ambitious, bold and ensure that we are catering for our young people by producing shows which peaks their interests.

In Easter, we are revisiting Sister Act the musical, we first produced this show for our Fringe production back in 2018, it was a stonking hit, and we know for a fact that our 2026 Easter revival, is going to be just as successful, if not then even more so. With FCT favourite Taylor Doig on directing duties, Mirrin Macleay returning as Choreographer and Rosin Caulfield as Musical Director, these three heavenly sisters are guaranteed to bring our cast and audiences something special later this year.

For the first time, we are producing a show from the house of mouse, Disney's Frozen was a late contender at last year's show selection workshop, however was resoundingly voted as the favourite for us to tackle this year. We have just appointed our creative team and are proud to exclusively announce that newcomer Georgia

Brennan will be directing this production, with Taylor Doig returning to Choreograph and Jack Gardner also returning as Musical Director. We are really excited to present this show, it's clear that it will be a momentous challenge, but I have no doubt that our team is up to the challenge.

In June we will also be facilitating our third annual show selection workshop, this will determine shows for Fringe 2027 & Fringe 2028, we will also begin discussions for what our young people would like to see in 2029 for our 50th anniversary. Seems far in the future yet, but we want to get the ball rolling.

Finally - after Goldilocks, we vowed to be a bit easier on ourselves in 2026 and only do two productions. However, last year I was approached by Leitheatre to write and direct an original production for their 2026 November show, following directing their May 2025 show. This led to the conversation of a collaboration with Forth Children's Theatre - previously we had our cast members in their

production of The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie, which was a massive success and gave a great opportunity to our young people.

So earlier this month our board of trustees had a meeting with their president and vice-president, where Leitheatre outlined that this production would be an optional participation for our team, who will need a rest after heading to Arendale in August. This was coupled with the promise of profit to put towards our 2027 programming, and once again, another opportunity for our young people to participate in something different.

We can exclusively announce that we will be collaborating with them on this production. In November we will be heading back to the Church Hill Theatre for the first time in over two years with The Tale of Eliza Scrooge a modern Scottish twist on Charles Dickens' A Christmas Carol.

This show will be announced by both companies in the coming weeks, with a sub-committee being formed to communicate between the two companies. More information will be released in due course with rehearsals kicking off in September.

OUR YEAR IN NUMBERS

THE SOUND OF MUSIC

106

Auditionees

35

Cast Members

5

Performances

752

Tickets Sold

SCHOOL OF ROCK

90

Auditionees

27

Cast Members

10

Performances

1156

Tickets Sold

GOLDILOCKS AND THE THREE BEARS

50

Auditionees

23

Cast Members

6

Performances

454

Tickets Sold

TREASURER STATEMENT

Cameron Smith

Treasurer

I am pleased to present the Treasurer's Summary for the 2024–2025 financial year 1st November – 31st October. The charity ends the year in a strong and secure financial position, reflecting responsible management, successful fundraising, and targeted investment in the organisation's future.

Overall Financial Performance

For the year, Forth Children's Theatre recorded:

- Total Expenditure: £98,799.49
- Total Income: £113,285.68
- Overall Surplus: £14,486.19

This positive result strengthens our financial resilience and supports continued delivery of high quality theatre opportunities for young people.

Income & Expenditure by Activity

- General Operations: Surplus of £7,393.41
- Production: Surplus of £4,394.46
- Wellbeing: Surplus of £1,656.10
- Marketing: Deficit of £2,567.78
- Cash Income: £3,610 received

Production activity continues to be a major financial contributor, with general operations remaining steady and sustainable.

Key Financial Points for 2024–2025

- Received a grant of £5,000 from the William Syson Foundation
- Received a generous legacy donation from Mike Grainger
- Additional donations totalling £2,025 were received from supporters throughout the year
- Cleared the outstanding Madelvic Covid rent of £3,000, closing this historical liability
- Invested in organisational capability, including new technology and upgraded costume storage to support long term operational efficiency and production quality

These contributions and investments have had a significant positive impact on our financial strength and future readiness.

Bank Accounts & Available Funds

Year end bank balances show continued improvement:

- Total Funds Available: £43,939.28, up from £29,453.09 in the previous year

This increase highlights strong liquidity and effective financial planning.

Restricted & Unrestricted Funds

Restricted expenditure decreased this year as the Covid related rent obligation was completed:

- Restricted Funds Used: £4,933.40 (down from £7,570)

Unrestricted reserves have grown significantly:

- Unrestricted Funds 2025: £39,005.88

Closing Statement

Forth Children's Theatre ends the 2024–2025 year in a robust and increasingly confident financial position. With rising unrestricted reserves, completed legacy obligations, and strategic investments in our infrastructure, the charity is well placed to support its young performers and deliver ambitious productions in the year ahead.

My thanks go to our board members, volunteers, supporters and audiences who continue to sustain and inspire our work.

FINANCIAL REPORT

Fixed Costs (Restricted Funds)	2024	2025
Madelvic Rent (Covid Outstanding)	£3,000.00	£0.00
Madelvic Rent	£3,250.00	£3,250.00
Insurance	£1,320.00	£1,345.00
WiFi	£0.00	£338.40
Total Restricted Funds	£7,570.00	£4,933.40

Overall	Debit	Credit	Surplus/(Deficit)
General	£60,260.21	£67,653.62	£7,393.41
Marketing	£3,239.78	£672.00	(£2,567.78)
Production	£31,928.97	£36,323.43	£4,394.46
Wellbeing	£3,370.53	£5,026.63	£1,656.10
Cash	£0.00	£3,610.00	£3,610.00
Overall	£98,799.49	£113,285.68	£14,486.19

Unrestricted Funds	
2023	£20,243.80
2024	£21,883.09
2025	£39,005.88

Bank Accounts	2024	2025
Royal Bank of Scotland - Current Account	£0.00	£42,540.63
Bank of Scotland - Current Account	£29,453.09	£1,398.65
Total Funds Available	£29,453.09	£43,939.28

BOARD OF TRUSTEES



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.

Forth Children's Theatre is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation number SC053360

