

English Folk Dance and Song Society Review of the Year, 2023-2024



Fiona Butcher - Chair's Report

This is the first year with a lower National Portfolio grant from Arts Council England (ACE) but we have continued to deliver a vast array of events across England. Activities for people of all ages and abilities, and professional artists and educators took place in Devon, Hertfordshire, Lancashire, London, Manchester, Norfolk, Somerset, Suffolk, Yorkshire, and Tyne and Wear. We saw the National Youth Folk Ensemble perform at More Music (Morecambe), Saltburn Festival and Summer Sounds Festival in London, and the London Youth Folk Ensemble at Folk by the Oak in the grounds of Hatfield House. Once again, we brought folk dance to the U.Dance Youth Dance Festival and delivered Inclusive Folk, a year-round programme of workshops for young people with disabilities.

Artists' development projects continued with the Alan James Creative Bursary programme and the Micro Grants programme together with showcases for early career and EFDSS Creative Bursary and Micro Grant artists at Sidmouth Folk Festival and Stage4Beverley. The Vaughan Williams Memorial Library and Archive's annual conference focused on the theme of folk dance and tradition this year with "Folk Dance: Grappling with the Tradition". It also presented the annual Broadside Day with the Traditional Song Forum, and a programme of online lectures. The Gypsy and Traveller Music in the Archives project with East Anglia and Sheffield Universities continued with the creation of an online resource, launched at the Strumpshaw Tree Fair in Norfolk.

Of course, much of this work would not be possible without the support of members, donors and funders. We are very grateful to John Lyon's Charity (Inclusive Folk); Scops Arts and Postlethwaite Music Fund (National Youth Folk Ensemble and Engagement Programme); PRS Foundation (Artists' Development); Good Luck Charitable Trust; donors Conrad and Jennifer Bailey (Artists' Development); and all our members and donors. Also to the Arts Council England Transform Fund which will support core costs until 2026 and the capital development of Cecil Sharp House.

The EFDSS Gold Badge, awarded to individuals who have given exceptional service to EFDSS and/or to the folk arts, was given to four people this year. Frank Lee has made an incalculable contribution to rapper sword as a dancer, musician, and sword maker, and was involved in establishing DERT (Dance England Rapper Tournament). Jo and Simon Harmer have long and distinguished careers in dance performance, education and research, and made an immeasurable contribution to the validity and depth of the step dancing tradition. Sean Goddard is a dancer, academic, and editor, chairing Keymer Folk Dance Club and producing Sussex Pie, the folk newsletter for Sussex. Congratulations to them all.

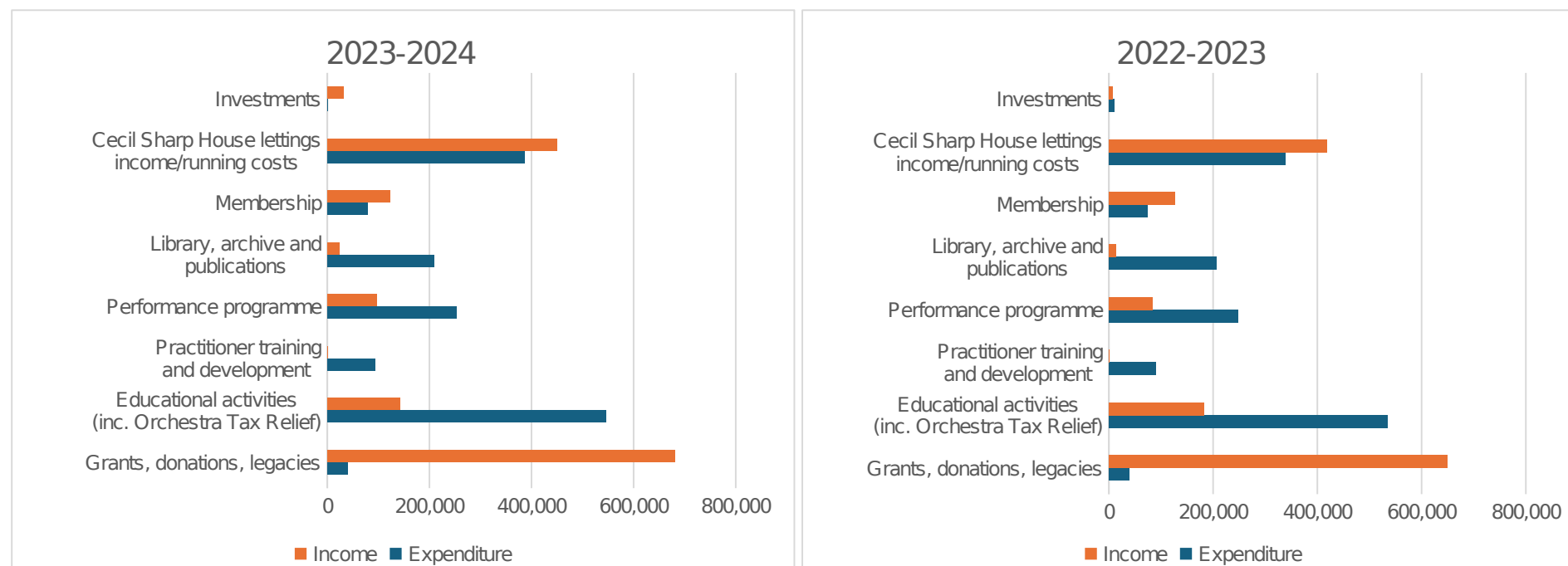
Finally, I would like to thank my predecessor, Lorna Aizlewood who steered the EFDSS ship for six years as Chair following five years as a Trustee, and my fellow Trustee/Directors for all their work and for their support of me in my first months. Also to thank others who retired from the board in November 2023 – Nicola Kearey, Arti Prashar, Andy Wooles, and Martin Parker. I also wish to thank our Chief Executive, Katy Spicer, and her team for their continued dedication and development of the organisation.

Ed Fishwick - Treasurer's Report

The charity has an overall deficit of £57,579 (2023: £57,810). The deficit reflects depreciation on fixed assets being written off over a set number of years. The income of the charity is £1,548,519 (2023: £1,481,658). The increase represents the receipt of funding from the Arts Council Transform Programme, as well as continued success in the aim of increasing the letting income generated from spare space in Cecil Sharp House.

Expenditure in 2024 was £1,605,925 (2023: £1,529,251). The increase represents ongoing high costs for running a venue for hire and associated VAT, which is irrecoverable to the charity, returning to normal levels after the offset of a release of a provision in 2023. Staffing costs have increased from 2024, due to both inflationary pressures and also reflecting the staffing levels needed for the range of activities of the charity for its own operations and as a venue.

EFDSS holds restricted, designated and free reserves, totalling £2,720,242 (2023: £2,777,821) which includes the value of Cecil Sharp House. Of this, free reserves stand at £399,974 (2023: £394,653); the Trustees have agreed a policy for free reserves to maintained at a level of £400,000. Free reserves are defined by the Charity Commission as funds that are freely available to spend on the charity's purposes. Trustees review EFDSS's Reserves Policy and reserves levels annually as part of the planning process and are satisfied with the level of reserves at 31 March 2024.



A full copy of the Annual Report and Accounts is available from efdss.org/about-us/who-are-we/annual-reviews; paper copies are obtainable from membership@efdss.org or 020 7485 2206. English Folk Dance and Song Society (EFDSS) is a Charity Registered in England and Wales No. 305999, a Company Limited by Guarantee No. 297142, VAT No. 233 8664 49. Registered Office: Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London, NW1 7AY. Registered Office: Cecil Sharp House, 2 Regent's Park Road, London, NW1 7AY.