

Fèis Rois: An Impact Study

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**Steve Westbrook, Economist,
Bellevue, Seafield Street, Nairn IV12 4HL
Tel: 01667 455308 E-mail: srwestbrook@aol.com**

**Sandy Anderson,
Community, Social & Economic Development Consultant,
Langwell, Achany Road, Dingwall IV15 9JB
Tel: 01349 863115 E-mail: achany@hotmail.co.uk**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is an independent report commissioned by Fèis Rois to explore the range of impacts that the work of Fèis Rois generates. The report was commissioned in partnership with Fèisean nan Gàidheal. We have carried out a complementary report on the impacts of Fèisean nan Gàidheal and the wider Fèisean movement it supports and together the two studies give a more complete picture of the impacts of the three arms of the Fèisean movement in Scotland – Fèisean nan Gàidheal, the Fèisean it supports, and Fèis Rois.

Because of Covid-19 and the associated lockdowns we have drawn impacts from the activity carried out in the 2019/20 financial year.

We have estimated that, in total, the activity of Fèis Rois supported 31.5 full-time equivalent job years (FTEs) across Scotland in 2019/20, including 20.5 FTEs in the Highlands and Islands; generating an annual income from employment of almost £850,000. This includes employed staff and freelance support from tutors, performers, sound engineers and other professionals. It also includes jobs created in providing accommodation and catering and indirect and induced jobs from associated spend.

Although unquantifiable we have found that Fèis Rois has also generated significant impact in areas such as:

Culture and arts

Fèis Rois's work provides opportunities for young people to experience Scottish and Gaelic arts and for artists and musicians to progress and develop, inspiring them to take that culture into the next generation.

Language

With a strong commitment to the Gaelic language, Fèis Rois encourages and motivates the use of the language, naturalising Gaelic in an enjoyable setting.

Socially

Fèis Rois has strong local and artistic roots, with their annual events being a highlight for many people who participate year after year.

Wellbeing

Fèis Rois provide a sense of achievement and friendship which, for many participants, lasts a lifetime.

Founded in 1986 as the second Fèis in Scotland (after Fèis Bharraigh) Fèis Rois has developed to become an organisation delivering a wide range of projects and programmes providing opportunities to participate, learn and progress in Scottish and Gaelic traditional music. To develop and manage its core and other activities Fèis Rois employed 4 people in 2019/20, with total core costs of £207,128. During the year 210 individual musicians and artists were engaged to deliver tuition and/or performances and the total direct expenditure in the year was £836,401.

Fèis Rois's core programme includes 3 separate Fèisean each held in Ullapool and aimed at a different age group:

Fèis Rois na h-Oigridh, the Junior Fèis, a 5-day residential event with 90 attendees held in April 2019 for young people in P4 to S1

Fèis Rois nan Deugairean, the Senior Fèis, a 5-day residential event with 67 attendees held in October 2019, for young people from P6 to S6.

Fèis Rois nan Inbheach, the Adult Fèis, a 3/4-day event over the May bank holiday weekend, with 275 participants, some coming from abroad.

Direct expenditure on the three Fèisean was £128,500, including accommodation costs (other than the Adult Fèis where attendees arrange their own accommodation).

To complement the Fèisean, Fèis Rois organises an extensive series of ongoing classes in various instruments, delivered in 3 locations across Ross-shire. The classes are aimed at both young people and adult learners. They are offered at various levels, from beginner to advanced. 29 classes ran for 30 weeks, attended by 81 young people and 62 adults. The cost of the programme was £36,502 including a residential weekend offered to adult learners.

Fèis Rois's Cèilidh Trail programme began in 2000 with 8 young musicians touring venues across the local area. The Trail is replicated by several other Fèisean and has been further developed by Fèis Rois so that in 2019 their Cèilidh Trail programme involved 3 separate tours with 15 young musicians took part. As well as a touring locally and around Scotland venues included sessions at the Cambridge Folk Festival, Sidmouth Folk Festival, and the Festival Interceltique de Lorient, Europe's largest Celtic festival, as part of Fèis Rois's commission to showcase Scottish talent in the Scottish Pavilion. Expenditure on the 3 Trails totalled £58,667.

The Scottish Government commission at Lorient was part of Fèis Rois's international work which also included collaborations and partnerships with Wales Arts International, Light into Europe in Romania and the National Celtic Festival in Victoria, Australia. Each of these gave Highland and Scottish musicians the opportunity to travel, perform and collaborate with artists from other countries. The work had an expenditure budget of £95,960.

Fèis Rois delivered programmes under the Youth Music Initiative (YMI) for a number of local authorities including Highland Council (in partnership with Fèisean nan Gàidheal) where it delivered 8 hours of traditional music provision in 98 of the authority's 170 primary schools, a programme involving 19 tutors delivering to 2,847 children. In Aberdeenshire a 10-week project delivered 110 sessions to 238 pupils, in Angus 120 sessions were delivered to 590 pupils and in Dumfries & Galloway 1,382 sessions were delivered for 2,618 pupils.

Fèis Rois also delivered a number of other projects and programmes. These can vary from year to year depending on funding availability, but those in 2019/20 are representative of a normal year. They included:

- Bespoke one-to-one tuition for Care Experienced Young People in Ross-shire and Inverness, along with a music hub which began as a weekly session before moving to fortnightly. Classes were provided for 7 young people by 5 tutors.
- A weekend residential music making course aimed at 18-25 year old care experienced young people. 6 young people took part over 3 days with support from 6 tutors.
- A weekly programme of music making sessions at Obsdale Primary School in Alness, with tin whistle classes, two after school clubs and beginner classes in guitar and accordion.
- A Gaelic Conversation Circle held fortnightly in Dingwall, with between 5 and 12 participants attended each 1.5 hour session.
- A number of bespoke projects for individual schools.
- Masterclass Level Tuition including a 4-week Fiddle Immersion Course which attracted 3

of its 6 participants to come from America and a Guitar Colloquium Weekend with Innes Watson.

- Under Canvas, a partnership project with Eden Court Theatre, with Fèis Rois programming 62 performance slots in a performance space on Eden Court's lawn. The project was nominated in the Event of Year category at the MG Alba Scots Trad Music Awards.
- Two projects in HMP Inverness - a 2-day family learning project and a 5-day "fèis week" in the prison through which participants received a number of qualifications in core skills through Fife College.
- The Lullaby Project which targeted mothers of infants under the age of 3 in rural locations outside Inverness.
- The Highland Youth Arts Hub and the Highland Youth Music Forum.
- Traditional Music Agency, with Fèis Rois acting as a traditional music agency, sourcing musicians to perform for a variety of events across Ross-shire, the Highlands and more widely.

The total expenditure on these projects and initiatives in 2019/20 was £119,996.

Since 2019/20 Fèis Rois's public facing activity has been curtailed and there has been a need to adapt its offering to cope with the various lockdowns put in place. The Junior Fèis was cancelled in 2020 and 2021 but was reintroduced in 2022 with 65 attending. The Senior Fèis, was cancelled in 2020 and in 2021 was delivered as a non-residential delivered across three different sites across Ross-Shire. 46 young people took part. The Adult Fèis was replaced with Virtual events in May 2020 and Spring 2021. These were successful, with large numbers from across the world accessing the events. In addition a one-off winter Adult Fèis was held in November 2021 with 118 people registering for a weekend event. The Adult Fèis returned to its normal May dates in 2022, with 150 attending. These numbers show that attendances have fallen well below pre-pandemic levels and it will take some time to grow them back.

A similar picture emerges with the on-going classes, which although replaced with online versions during the pandemic have much reduced numbers. Much of the activity in projects and partnerships also went into abeyance through the pandemic. Clearly it will be important to continue to support Fèis Rois as it builds its activity and participation levels back to economic levels.

The pandemic did lead to opportunities however. Fèis Rois now has a library of 84 pre-recorded tutorials with supporting materials it made available online and can exploit further. It also took an important role in developing and delivering two major partnerships. The Highland Culture Collective brings together Fèis Rois as the administrative lead with the Highland Third Sector Interface, Eden Court, Highland Print Studio, Lyth Arts Centre and North Lands Creative. The project has created 6 jobs, as project manager and 5 new full-time artists in residence for a period of 15-months from 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2022, with funding recently secured to extend the project to August 2023.

Funding of over £7 million has also been secured for the Dandelion programme, a multi-partner project commissioned by EventScotland and funded via the Scottish Government. The project aims to reimagine the annual harvest festival for the 21st Century and follows the arc of the growing season, from April to September 2022, featuring locations across Scotland.

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This is an independent report which assesses the impacts of Fèis Rois, and the activities it delivers and supports. It complements a study we have carried out at the same time on the impacts of Fèisean nan Gàidheal and the wider Fèisean movement it supports.
- 1.2 To provide a comprehensive view of the impacts of the Fèisean movement as a whole Fèis Rois commissioned this work in partnership with Fèisean nan Gàidheal. The two impact studies mark over 40 years since the establishment of the first Fèis – Fèis Bharraigh – which has been the model for subsequent Fèisean development. Fèis Rois was the second Fèis to be established, in 1986, 5 years before Fèisean nan Gàidheal was set up. It is a member of Fèisean nan Gàidheal but has developed independently, sourcing its own funding, employing staff and building a substantial base of activity.
- 1.3 Our report adapts the objectives identified in Fèisean nan Gàidheal’s commissioning brief so that together the two reports cover the whole Fèisean movement:
- a. To measure direct employment and earnings impacts, with a focus on 2019 (pre Covid), relating to those employed by Fèis Rois on a long-term or temporary basis to deliver activities, including:
 - Fèis Rois staff
 - Fèis or project-based supervisors, tutors and trainers
 - Performers, administrators, sound and light engineers, and others contracted for events
 - Other contracted workers.
 - b. To measure indirect employment and earnings impacts; quantifying full time equivalent job years (FTEs) and earnings for the delivery of Fèis Rois activities through any third party, induced employment and spend on supplies and services. This includes:
 - An overall view of all Fèis Rois programme activities
 - Delivery of contracts for supplies and services through Fèis Rois and other initiatives outlined in its programme.
 - Valuing the impacts from additional visitor spend (including overnight stays) attributable to the activities considered.
 - c. To measure longer-term impacts; considering the success of Fèis Rois in stimulating growth in various sectors within the cultural and creative industries and in creating employment opportunities and a supply into related labour markets. This includes current and former Fèis Rois students now involved, or hoping to be involved, in activities such as media, Gaelic development, the music industry (as performer, promoter, organiser, technician or other support role), or teaching – whether on a casual, semi-professional or professional basis.
 - d. To explore impacts on Gaelic language promotion; considering benefits in terms of increased awareness and use of Gaelic among people engaging in Fèis Rois’s programme and how they identify with the language. This includes investigating the extent to which Fèis Rois’s programme:

- Offers opportunities to use Gaelic
 - Offers opportunities to improve skills in Gaelic
 - Shows people that Gaelic makes a difference to their lives
 - Enables people to appreciate ways in which Gaelic is important to Scotland.
- e. To measure impacts in terms of economic opportunity and increased sustainability in fragile areas in the Highlands and Islands, including gathering evidence of the following:
- Sustaining employment in fragile areas
 - Enhancing the visitor's experience of fragile areas
 - Creating income opportunities for local Fèis Rois staff.
- f. To inform future planning by setting out recommendations for the potential role of Fèis Rois in the future delivery of Scottish Government's Economic and Cultural Strategies, Scotland's National Islands Plan, and the National Gaelic Language Plan, as well as plans and strategies specific to Creative Scotland, Bòrd na Gàidhlig and Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE).
- 1.4 The work for this study has been carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic and the various restrictions on movement and activity that have been in force. That has affected the methodology for the study, with most contacts carried out remotely, over the telephone, or using Zoom or Microsoft Teams.
- 1.5 It should be noted that financial figures used in this report do not necessarily fit with those in the Fèis Rois annual accounts and financial statements. To give consistent results for both studies we have aimed to base our work on the last year of "normal" activity, before the start of Covid-19 lockdowns. Where possible we have used actual expenditures in 2019/20 without taking account of accruals and other factors which can affect published annual accounts.
- 1.6 Our research and consultation for this impact study has included:
- Liaison with and receipt of information from Fèis Rois.
 - Discussion with individual members of Fèis Rois staff.
 - Discussion with a sample of tutors, clients and creative industry representatives.
 - Discussion with past Fèis Rois participants.
 - A survey of tutors.
- 1.7 We are particularly grateful to Fèis Rois and its staff for providing a wide range of information throughout the study and for the time that they found to speak to us and provide financial and other information from their records.

2. CORE ACTIVITIES

- 2.1 The core activities of Fèis Rois are the promotion and provision of opportunities to participate, learn and progress in Scottish and Gaelic traditional music. Founded in 1986 it now offers three annual Fèisean and an extensive programme of music tuition across Ross-shire as well as delivering a range of additional programmes across Ross-shire, Scotland, the UK and internationally.

The Fèisean

- 2.2 A Fèis is a traditional arts tuition festival, often run as a 5-day event during school holidays for young people aged between 8 and 18, organised by a local, independent, voluntary group. Most Fèisean make extensive use of volunteers but paid tutors are engaged to deliver sessions in a variety of instruments, in song and drama, in art and media and other activities; and children can choose which sessions they take part in over the week. The first Fèis was held in Barra in 1981, and since then the number of Fèisean groups in Scotland has grown to approaching 50. The majority are held in the Highlands and Islands, but a growing number have been established in other areas so that Fèisean are now accessible to many of the young people in Scotland.
- 2.3 44 Fèisean groups were active in 2019/20: 17 in Highland, 7 in the Western Isles, 7 in Argyll & Bute and 13 elsewhere in Scotland. 33 of these were in the HIE area, with 15 within fragile areas; although others had participants coming from fragile areas.
- 2.4 Fèis Rois's annual programme of residential Fèisean is a central part of its programme although as shown later in this report Fèis Rois has developed a wide range of complementary activity, including for adults, lifelong learners and young people wanting to further their development beyond what is available locally. Fèis Rois also differs from most other Fèisean in that, although its Board members serve in a voluntary capacity, paid staff organise and deliver its activity.
- 2.5 In 2019/20, as in previous years, Fèis Rois held three separate Fèisean, each held in Ullapool, a fragile area:

Fèis Rois na h-Oigridh, the Junior Fèis, a five-day residential event during the Easter holidays, 8-12 April 2019, for young people who are in P4 to S1

Fèis Rois nan Deugairean, the Senior Fèis, a five-day residential event, during the October holiday, 21-25 October 2019, for young people from P6 to S6

Fèis Rois nan Inbheach, the Adult Fèis, a three day event over the May bank holiday weekend, 3-6 May 2019.

- 2.6 **Fèis Rois na h-Oigridh** had 90 attendees, with 35 boys and 55 girls. 63% had previously attended a Fèis Rois event. 11% were fluent in Gaelic, and 8% intermediate Gaelic learners. 40% said they could remember some Gaelic from attending a Fèis in the previous year and 41% had no Gaelic. All participants took part in 3 hours of Gaelic language learning. 77% of participants were residential, including 5 young people from the Gergel School in Kiev, Ukraine, and 2 sight impaired young people from Fèis Rois's partner organisation, Light into Europe, in Romania. 15 tutors and 12 supervisors (2 staff) were engaged.

- 2.7 **Fèis Rois nan Deugairean** had 67 attendees, including Care Experienced Young People and some young people considering a professional performance career. 20 freelance staff were contracted, 16 of them musicians. An audience of 150+ attended a showcase concert in Strathpeffer Pavilion on the Friday evening which closed the event.
- 2.8 Aimed at an older age group than the Easter Fèis, Fèis Rois nan Deugairean attracts both local young people and others from across the Highlands. Retaining young people once they have moved to secondary education is an issue for many of the local Fèisean in Scotland, but Fèis Rois's Senior Fèis offers an option for those older children keen to advance their learning.
- 2.9 At the next stage, beyond formal education, **Fèis Rois nan Inbheach** was attended by 275 adults. These included participants from the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland and the USA. 31 freelance artists were engaged to deliver 11 hours of tuition for each attendee over the 3 days (31 classes offered in the mornings and a further 26 classes in the afternoons). In addition, 20 Fringe events attracted audiences totalling over 1,000 and included:
- 2 sold out showcase concerts in the Macphail Theatre (220 people at each performance);
 - 3 busy lunchtime recitals in the Macphail Theatre;
 - 2 capacity pub gigs in The Argyll Hotel (Friday) and The Ceilidh Place (Sunday);
 - A popular talk in Ullapool Museum on 'The bagpipes of Scotland';
 - 11 sessions in various venues across the village over the weekend and a daily Gaelic conversation circle;
 - A final sharing event in the Macphail Theatre on the Monday afternoon before the event closed at 4pm, including a performance from Eben to mark the launch of a new creative partnership project with Festival Interceltique de Lorient.
- 2.10 Direct expenditure on the three fèisean was £128,500, as detailed in the table below.

Fèis Rois Fèisean expenditure 2019	Junior Fèis	Senior Fèis	Adult Fèis	Total
Tutors fees	£9,665.00	£7,450.00	£17,065.00	£34,180.00
Tutors travel	£1,083.60	£874.70	£4,035.49	£5,993.79
Tutors accommodation/subsistence	£6,584.95	£4,456.82	£8,175.12	£19,216.89
Supervisor fees	£5,175.00	£3,300.00	£300.00	£8,775.00
Supervisor expenses	£463.35	£296.10	£220.25	£979.70
Supervisors accommodation/subsistence	£5,499.73	£2,109.22	£3,815.90	£11,424.85
Participants accommodation/subsistence	£15,562.44	£10,465.42		£26,027.86
Transport	£930.97	£867.04	£746.72	£2,544.73
Freelance support	£2,550.25	£2,551.00	£2,500.00	£7,601.25
Venue/hall hire and costs	£625.00	£1,807.60	£1,150.00	£3,582.60
PA hire			£969.60	£969.60
Miscellaneous/Other	£1,060.36	£823.26	£5,349.31	£7,232.93
Total Expenditure	£49,200.65	£35,001.16	£44,327.39	£128,529.20

2.11 Almost half of the above expenditure relates to tutors – covering fees, travel, accommodation and subsistence. Expenditures such as the cost of input from Fèis Rois staff or central administrative expenses are not included, although freelance support costs are itemised. Adult Fèis participants arranged and paid for their own accommodation in Ullapool. No information is available on how much was involved, but with the majority of the 275 participants travelling to Ullapool for a minimum of 2 nights (and mostly for 3 or more nights), this would have led to significant spend. Many participants were accompanied by partners who enjoyed other activities through the day, attending the concerts and events in the evening.

2.12 Income that covered the above expenditures is detailed below:

Fèis Rois Fèisean income 2019	Junior Fèis	Senior Fèis	Adult Fèis	Total
Local Authority	£5,000.00	£4,835.00		£9,835.00
Creative Scotland	£13,835.00	£8,165.00		£22,000.00
Foulis Wind Farm grant		£1,731.28		£1,731.28
Fees	£25,170.17	£18,775.85	£41,366.40	£85,312.42
Bus charge	£82.90	£206.20		£289.10
Admission charges			£2,763.13	£2,763.13
Venue fees			£200.00	£200.00
Merchandise (e.g. T-shirts)	£5,112.58	£1,287.83		£6,400.41
Total Income	£49,200.65	£35,001.16	£44,329.53	£128,531.34

2.13 Around half of the cost of the junior and senior Fèisean is covered by participant fees, while less than 40% comes from grant aid from Highland Council and Creative Scotland. The adult Fèis covers its costs from earned income without grant support.

Core Classes Programme

2.14 To complement its three fèisean, Fèis Rois organises an extensive series of ongoing classes that take place across Ross-shire. The classes are aimed at both young people and adult learners. They are offered at various levels, providing the opportunity for progression:

- Beginners – for those completely new to an instrument.
- Improvers – for those who have been playing for 6-12 months and have a basic understanding of technique and a few tunes under their belt.
- Intermediate – for those who have been playing for 1-2 years and know a good number of tunes, songs, dances or steps.
- Advanced – for those who have been playing for a minimum of 2 years and have a good grasp of their instrument. They will know different kinds of tunes, dances, songs or steps.

2.15 Classes were delivered in:

- Fortrose
- Evanton
- Dingwall

- Ullapool

2.16 20 classes for young people and 9 classes for adults were provided each week. The classes ran for 30 weeks of the year and were led by a team of 10 freelance musicians. The classes for young people had 81 participants while those for adults had 62 attendees.

2.17 Classes were delivered as follows:

- April – June 2019 (8 weeks)
- August – October 2019 (6 weeks)
- October – December 2019 (6 weeks)
- January – March 2020 (10 weeks)

2.18 Instruments are available for hire for those taking part in weekly classes. Fèis Rois holds a bank of some 100 instruments, and normal charges are:

- Fiddle: £7.50 per month
- Guitar: £7.50 per month
- Accordion: £10 per month
- Clarsach: £20 per month

2.19 To complement the weekly classes for adults, an accordion masterclass with Mairearad Green was offered in November 2019 and a guitar masterclass with Anna Massie in December 2019. Also, in February 2020, Fèis Rois collaborated with Eden Court to offer a masterclass for advanced players with the Cape Breton band Coig.

2.20 In addition, a weekend residential course of focussed tuition was held for those attending the weekly adult learners session at Badaguish Outdoor Centre on Saturday 23rd and Sunday 24th November 2019. 18 adult learners took part in a weekend of workshops led by tutors Mairi Campbell and Dave Francis.

2.21 Expenditure for this programme totalled £36,502 as detailed below:

Fèis Rois Weekly classes programme expenditure 2019	Weekly classes Children	Weekly classes Adult	Total
Tutors fees	£16,873.75	£11,000.00	£27,873.75
Tutors travel	£2,055.67	£1,891.68	£3,947.35
Participants accommodation/subsistence		£2,551.38	£2,551.38
Freelance support		£375.25	£375.25
Venue/hall hire and costs	£365.00	£1,380.00	£1,745.00
Miscellaneous/Other	£4.50	£4.93	£9.43
Total Expenditure	£19,298.92	£17,203.24	£36,502.16

2.20 This includes the costs of the masterclasses and Badaguish weekend.

2.21 Income fell below expenditure, with the adult classes and events which were not grant aided requiring subsidy from profit making elements of the Fèis Rois programme.

Fèis Rois Weekly classes programme income 2019	Weekly classes Children	Weekly classes Adult	Total
Creative Scotland	£2,094.36		£2,094.36
Fees	£17,204.56	£13,082.71	£30,287.27
Donations/gifts		£475.50	£475.50
Total Income	£19,298.92	£13,558.21	£32,857.13

3. TOURING AND INTERNATIONAL WORK

Cèilidh Trails

- 3.1 Fèis Rois established its successful Cèilidh Trail programme in Ross-shire in 2000 to help teenage musicians develop their performance skills and to create a vibrant traditional music entertainment programme in the Highlands. It provided a paid summer job for around 8 young musicians who carried out a tour of venues across the local area. Fèis Rois has gone on to develop this programme into a major development opportunity for young musicians.
- 3.2 In 2019, the Cèilidh Trail programme involved 3 separate tours, each beginning on 22nd July and coming together for a finale concert in Eden Court on 17th August. 15 young musicians took part, including one with a disability and one transgender young person. Performances included sessions at the Cambridge Folk Festival from August 1st-4th, Sidmouth Folk Festival from August 5th-7th, and at the Festival Interceltique de Lorient, Europe's largest Celtic festival, from August 2nd-11th as part of Fèis Rois showcasing Scottish talent in the Scottish Pavilion.
- 3.3 The musicians taking part received a week of training at The Old Brewery in Cromarty, similar to that provided through Fèisean nan Gàidheal's Fèis Alba. Tutors work on their sets with them, as well as giving sessions on Dance Calling, setting up PA, general stage craft and presentation skills. Each tour is accompanied by a tutor or supervisor who acts as driver and provides feedback to the group.
- 3.4 One of the 2019 tours covered Ross-shire; a second the Borders and Orkney as well as the festivals in Cambridge and Sidmouth; and the third took in Dundee, Edinburgh and Glasgow as well as some more rural areas and performances at the Scottish Pavilion at the Lorient Festival in France.
- 3.5 Venues varied from village halls to museums, pubs and hotels, and arts venues. The Trails can also include playing at outside venues such as Scottish Natural Heritage (now NatureScot) sites and as part of the Under Canvas initiative in the grounds of Eden Court. Of the 56 performances in Scotland, 17 had an entry charge, but the majority were less formal with free admission and donations sought. Concert fees were charged where appropriate. Overall, in 2019 the Trails delivered 94 performances, with more than 6,000 people estimated in the audiences, whether at a concert or cèilidh, or as part of their day out at a Highland event.
- 3.6 One of the participants commented: *"I'm really looking forward to making a band and also playing for cèilidhs. Basically it's allowed me to progress to the next level so I can actually make something of my music", "It has also improved my public speaking and performing confidence. I had no confidence when performing for cèilidhs etc pre-Cèilidh Trail. Now I have a lot of confidence and feel relatively comfortable doing so".*
- 3.7 An audience survey showed that audiences rated their experience at an average 4.86 out of 5 stars (where 5 was excellent). 99% said they would like to attend another event, with overwhelmingly enthusiastic comments such as *"Uplifting, skilful and gifted musicians", "Inspirational. Our culture is in good hands", "Never heard Gaelic live. Now I want to learn it".*
- 3.8 The audience survey had 239 responses. 37% of respondents came from the local

community and 63% were visitors to the area (22% from within the local authority area; 12% from the rest of Scotland, 22% from the rest of the UK and Europe; and 7% international visitors from outside Europe).

3.9 The Cèilidh Trail programme cost £58,667, broken down as follows:

Fèis Rois Ceilidh Trails	Expenditure 2019
Tutors fees	£1,435.50
Tutors accommodation/subsistence	£275.02
Participants accommodation/subsistence	£13,087.48
Transport	£7,890.98
Freelance support	£11,640.50
Artist fees	£15,000.00
Advertising and Marketing	£2,276.22
Venue/hall hire and costs	£6,656.00
PA hire	£25.99
Miscellaneous/Other	£379.96
Total Expenditure	£58,667.65

3.10 Taking part in a Cèilidh Trail is an important developmental step for many young people interested in following a career in music, whether full time or playing in a band alongside another job. The Cèilidh Trails offer summer employment for young people and create opportunities for local people and visitors to enjoy high quality performances of traditional music. More importantly they are a first experience of professional performance and have been a route to a career in professional or semi-professional music for many of their participants.

3.11 Since Fèis Rois introduced its Cèilidh Trails, the model has become an established feature of the Fèisean programme, stimulating similar initiatives across Scotland. Each year a number of Fèisean – 6 in 2019 – organise a trail in their local area; providing the opportunity for young musicians to take the step from learning to performing.

Other International Work

3.12 Fèis Rois took its Cèilidh Trail to the Festival Interceltique de Lorient in France, Europe's largest Celtic festival, as part of its hosting of the Scotland Pavilion at the Festival in 2019. It had also hosted and programmed the Pavilion in 2018 and again collaborated with the Scottish Government to showcase emerging Scottish talent. 34 freelance musicians were contracted to provide 80 hours of live music performance, 15 hours of workshops and 3 panel discussions throughout the festival. 41% of the artistic team involved at Lorient in 2019 were Gaelic speakers.

3.13 Fèis Rois also developed a new creative partnership project which involved 6 musicians and singers from Scotland collaborating with 6 artists from Brittany to create a new 70-minute show in Gaelic and Breton. This work was premiered on the large Quai de la Bretagne stage at the festival and broadcast live on television across France. The show was then premiered in Scotland at Celtic Connections in January 2020. The Scottish Government hosted a reception for Fèis Rois at the British Embassy in Paris

to recognise the work. Fèis Rois’s delivery of the Scottish Pavilion at Lorient in 2019 was shortlisted as Event of the Year at the MG Alba Scots Trad Music Awards.

- 3.14 2019 was UNESCO Year of Indigenous Languages and, to mark this, Fèis Rois collaborated with Wales Arts International on a project called Mamiaith (mother-tongue), through which musicians from Scotland, Ireland and Wales collaborated in their native languages.
- 3.15 In 2019, Fèis Rois continued its partnership with Light into Europe, and 6 young musicians travelled to Bucharest in Romania to play for Caledonian Ball and Burns Supper events; whilst also having the opportunity to work with sensory impaired young people in Romania.
- 3.16 Fèis Rois also partners with the National Celtic Festival in Victoria, Australia. In May 2019, Duncan Chisholm led a group of seven artists who travelled to Australia to collaborate with musicians in Geelong to tell the story of Charlotte Ferguson, a Gaelic speaker whose parents had emigrated from Skye in the 1800s. They created the fifth film in the series of Fèis Rois Kin and the Community films, nominated as Community Project of the Year at the 2019 MG Alba Scots Trad Music Awards.
- 3.17 Expenditure on this international work totalled over £95,000, broken down as follows:

Fèis Rois International Work	Expenditure 2019
Artist fees	£34,042.56
Artist travel	£22,603.27
Artist accommodation/subsistence	£26,437.97
Freelance support	£11,150.41
Advertising and Marketing	£1,256.33
Financial charges	£27.31
Miscellaneous/Other	£442.25
Total Expenditure	£95,960.10

- 3.18 Expenditure included a significant amount for international flights and accommodation abroad.
- 3.19 Income to support this activity came from a variety of sources, including £30,000 from the Scottish Government towards the work at Lorient.

4. CORE COSTS

4.1 To develop and manage its core and other activities Fèis Rois employed 4 people in 2019/20. These posts were:

- Chief Executive
- Formal Education Portfolio Manager
- Community Classes Co-ordinator
- Office and Finance Manager

4.2 Total salary costs in the year were £136,462, with another £12,586 for related employer's costs. Staff expenses were £7,278.

4.3 Other costs in operating the organisation brought the total core costs to £207,129; made up as follows:

Fèis Rois Core costs – 2019/20	Core costs
Salaries	£136,462.00
Employer's NI and pensions payments	£12,586.00
Staff and Trustee expenses	£7,278.00
Administration (e.g. stationery, postage)	£19,906.00
Advertising and Marketing	£5,306.02
Rent	£12,290.00
Instruments (purchase/repair/other costs)	£829.00
Accountancy/book-keeping/financial management	£10,526.00
Miscellaneous/Other	£1,945.76
Total Expenditure	£207,128.78

4.4 These figures exclude accounting adjustments such as depreciation.

Training

4.5 To service its core activities and other programmes, Fèis Rois engages a substantial number of tutors. At the same time, its core activities help to generate a new generation of musicians and artists who, with training, can become tutors and help the organisation to grow and extend its activities. Such growth also creates a need for training, to provide new skills for existing tutors and for new tutors, including those based in other parts of the country as Fèis Rois extends its geographical reach outside Ross-shire.

4.6 Freelance musicians working for Fèis Rois participate in a wide range of professional development opportunities, including activities such as first aid and child protection, as well as Gaelic language, teaching artistry, and international knowledge exchange projects.

4.7 In 2019, 2 Gaelic language courses took place in Dingwall, attended by 11 people, with a further course in Moniaive in Dumfries and Galloway attended by 6 people. Comments included: *"I had such a wonderful and inspiring time at the Gaelic language day. My brain was on fire but it was such a good and positive atmosphere to learn in."*

I've already got my wee Gaelic card in my guitar case."

- 4.8 9 people took part in a certificated first aid course in Dingwall, and 8 freelance artists took part in a full-day course on 21st November with input from University of Aberdeen and Carnegie Hall, New York. 4 Friday open office training sessions also took place in the Fèis Rois office in Dingwall for freelance artists, covering topics such as creative entrepreneurialism, financial systems and using Sibelius, the music notation software.
- 4.9 2 freelance musicians, who regularly work for Fèis Rois, took part in the Traditional Music Forum's (TMF) mentoring programme, where they were training to be mentors within the music sector. A further 2 Fèis Rois tutors took on the role of mentees in this project and were paired up with one of the trainee mentors.
- 4.10 Fèis Rois also took on 3 YMI graduate trainee tutors, as well as supporting a new trainee weekly class tutor; and provided training sessions in Highland and other local authority areas through their YMI partnerships, and core programme, for both tutors and teachers. As well as whole team training events, this included offering bespoke opportunities such as shadowing, 1:1 sessions, and small group support/training.
- 4.11 Training is also supported for the Fèis Rois staff and Board. A member of staff attended a week-long Gaelic language course at Sabhal Mòr Ostaig and was supported to take a distance learning course throughout the academic year 2019/20. The Board had an Away Day with a facilitator from Arts & Business Scotland. The Chief Executive participated in The Gordon Cook Conversations, a 3 day development programme for young leaders.
- 4.12 Two young people completed work placements: an S5 pupil from Dingwall Academy, completed 3 days paid work experience; a 1st year university student worked with Fèis Rois on both Cèilidh Trail administration and a 21st anniversary CD project for seven weeks. A student at Cantraybridge College volunteered in the Fèis Rois office on Tuesdays and was accepted onto a music course at the Alness Campus of North Highland College UHI. 5 Royal Conservatoire of Scotland students were also lined up to complete placements before the financial year end.
- 4.13 Training costs were as follows:

Fèis Rois Training expenditure 2019/20	Tutor Training	Staff Training	Total
Expenses		£652.10	£652.10
Tutors fees	£2,271.00		£2,271.00
Tutors travel	£123.05		£123.05
Participants accommodation/subsistence	£118.80		£118.80
Venue/hall hire and costs	£110.00	£140.00	£250.00
Miscellaneous/Other	£362.55	£795.00	£1,157.55
Total Expenditure	£2,985.40	£1,587.10	£4,572.50

- 4.14 Training was also provided for tutors taking part in the Youth Music Initiative programmes delivered by Fèis Rois in Aberdeenshire, Angus, and Dumfries and Galloway. Information on this is included in Section 5 below.

5. SCHOOLS PROGRAMME

- 5.1 In 2019, Fèis Rois delivered programmes under the Youth Music Initiative (YMI) for a number of local authorities. In the Highland Council area it worked in partnership with Fèisean nan Gàidheal to deliver 8 hours of traditional music provision in 98 of the authority's 170 primary schools. This involved 19 tutors delivering to 2,847 children. This contract is delivered on behalf of Fèisean nan Gàidheal and a fee of £34,255 was received in 2019/20.
- 5.2 Aberdeenshire Council's YMI programme of work was a 10-week project delivered in the Banff Academy ASG area and taking in Banff Academy and 8 primary schools. 4 musicians, a film maker and a sound engineer were engaged, delivering 110 sessions over 10 weeks to 238 pupils. In addition 170 new S1 pupils came together at Banff Academy as part of a transition day.
- 5.3 Fèis Rois also delivered YMI classes for Angus Council through a programme of work with 5 primary schools (24 classes) over a period of 5-weeks. 2 tutors were engaged in delivering 120 sessions to 590 pupils.
- 5.4 In Dumfries & Galloway, Fèis Rois was engaged to deliver 12 hours of traditional music tuition to P5/6 classes in 96 primary schools in the region. This was delivered in the winter term by a team of 16 freelance tutors, while in the spring term 28 freelance musicians worked on the project. A total of 1,382 sessions were delivered for 2,618 pupils.
- 5.5 Fèis Rois also delivered after school classes in Dumfries and Galloway, with 4 fiddle classes in Dumfries and 5 fiddle classes, 1 cello class and a ceilidh band project in Stranraer. 5 tutors delivered 275 sessions of these classes, involving 68 young people.
- 5.6 Through its work in Dumfries & Galloway, Fèis Rois also provided transport and supervised support for 5 Stranraer participants to attend the Fèis an Iar Dheas festival day in Dumfries. Also, it delivered a project involving 46 pupils from Dalry, Kells and Carsphairn primary schools coming together for a musical afternoon – a partnership project delivered by 2 musicians from the Oran Bagraidh project and 3 Fèis Rois YMI tutors. As part of this event pupils learnt a Gaelic song.
- 5.7 Training and support was provided for tutors taking part in YMI activities in Dumfries and Galloway. Two tutor team gatherings took place, with four additional informal support sessions for new YMI tutors. Continuing Professional Development and Sustainability sessions were delivered for teachers in Dumfries & Galloway and Angus, with 43 teachers taking part.
- 5.8 This activity in total involved almost 70 tutors and delivered YMI sessions engaging with over 6,200 young people. Each of them received 8-12 hours instruction in traditional music, giving them a grounding and introduction they could then take on into other settings.
- 5.9 Fèis Rois's work in Dumfries and Galloway has led the community to set up Fèis an Iar Dheas, the South West Fèis, in 2016.
- 5.10 Expenditure on YMI activities in 2019, excluding those in Highland, is shown below:

Fèis Rois YMI expenditure 2019/10	Aberdeenshire YMI	Angus YMI	Dumfries &Galloway YMI	Total
Administration			£2,750.00	£2,750.00
Tutors fees	£12,993.52	£5,467.00	£112,791.24	£131,251.76
Tutors travel	£5,515.89	£1,195.06	£28,396.09	£35,107.04
Transport	£795.00			£795.00
Freelance support			£950.00	£950.00
Advertising and Marketing			£265.80	£265.80
Venue/hall hire and costs			£240.00	£240.00
Instruments			£4,127.88	£4,127.88
Resources			£7,573.24	£7,573.24
Miscellaneous/Other		£40.00	£2,878.90	£2,918.90
Total Expenditure	£19,304.41	£6,702.06	£159,973.15	£185,979.62

6. OTHER INITIATIVES

- 6.1 In addition to its core, touring and educational YMI provision, Fèis Rois designs and delivers a variety of other projects and initiatives creating additional opportunities for participation. These are generally subject to funding availability and in some cases are directly commissioned by partners. Such activity can change from year to year, so that shown below is a snapshot of what took place in 2019/20, but it is representative of what takes place in a typical year.

Tuition and Education Projects

- 6.2 Complementing its core classes programme in 2019, Fèis Rois provided bespoke one-to-one tuition for Care Experienced Young People in Ross-shire and Inverness, along with a music hub which began as a weekly session before moving to fortnightly. Classes were provided for 7 young people by 5 tutors.
- 6.3 Through a partnership with Barnardos, a weekend residential music making course took place at The Old Brewery in Cromarty, aimed at 18-25 year old care experienced young people. 6 young people took part, including a young person currently placed outwith the local authority returning for the weekend. The young people recorded 8 tracks, including two original songs, over the 3 days with support from 6 tutors.
- 6.4 A weekly programme of music making sessions was delivered at Obsdale Primary School in Alness, supported through Pupil Equity Funding. The programme included tin whistle classes for P5 and their teacher, and two after school clubs in ukulele and general music making, followed by beginner classes in guitar and accordion. There was an end of term ceilidh in June 2019, with the music provision returning in August 2019 for another academic year. The music group and ukulele club grew each week, with the following beginner accordion & guitar classes also full.
- 6.5 A Gaelic Conversation Circle, an opportunity for Gaelic learners to come together fortnightly to increase their vocabulary and confidence when speaking the language, was delivered in Dingwall. Sessions were held in the evening and ran for 1.5 hours. As well as general conversation, each session had a different theme, such as climate change, the FilmG films or games. Between 5 and 12 participants attended each session.
- 6.6 In addition to its YMI activity, Fèis Rois delivered a number of bespoke projects for individual schools. In Angus, Fèis Rois engaged a Musician in Residence to work in one Primary School funded directly through the school's Pupil Equity Funding.
- 6.8 DIGIT involved 2 tutors delivering two 2-hour music workshops at Tain Royal Academy for DIGIT (Dornoch, Invergordon, Golspie In Transition), which brought together young people from St Duthus School in Tain, Golspie High School, Invergordon Academy and Dornoch Academy.
- 6.9 SOAR (Socialisation, Opportunities, Activities, Recreation) involved 2 tutors each delivering a 1-hour music session as part of the SOAR summer programme at St Duthus School in Tain.
- 6.10 Fèis Rois worked in partnership with Dingwall Academy, Eden Court, Highland Council and Who Cares Scotland to deliver 4 creative workshops. These sessions were aimed

at P7 care experienced children and those on the fringes of care who would be going to Dingwall Academy after the summer. The aim was to use music, film, art, and sound engineering as a tool to explore the theme of transition; for the pupils to make new friends; to become familiar with the academy space; and to help ease any anxieties about starting at the academy.

Masterclass Level Tuition

- 6.11 A 4-week Fiddle Immersion Course was held to provide Masterclass level tuition aimed at taking intermediate players through to a higher standard of fiddle playing. The course was led by Charlie McKerron, with input from Duncan Chisholm, Aonghas Grant and Louise Mackenzie. 3 of the 6 participants came from America to take part in this opportunity, and one has since moved to Benbecula to study traditional music full time at Lews Castle College. This project made a surplus of £2,000 for Fèis Rois, which was reinvested in other programmes
- 6.12 A Guitar Colloquium Weekend gave musicians the opportunity to work with Innes Watson and the musicians involved in his guitar colloquium project, with high quality tuition and training leading to a public performance after the 2-day workshop. Originally aimed at young people, the project became inter-generational and exceeded its target of 12 participants. A concert took place at Strathpeffer Pavilion on 23rd June.

Collaborative Projects

- 6.13 Under Canvas was a partnership project with Eden Court Theatre, with Fèis Rois programming 62 performance slots for emerging traditional musicians over an eight-week period in a pop up bar and performance space on Eden Court's lawn. Over 100 musicians performed, giving circa £25,000 to artists. Audience comments included, "*Great music and food. Thanks for sharing your traditions and culture*", "*It made my first ever day in Inverness*", "*Fantastic music, great atmosphere, excellent service with very tasty food*". The project brought in £27,000 for Fèis Rois. The project was nominated in the Event of Year category at the MG Alba Scots Trad Music Awards.
- 6.14 In 2019, Fèis Rois delivered two projects in HMP Inverness. The first was a 2-day family learning project where fathers and their children (early years through to teenagers) came together to make music. A tutor commented: "*It was really lovely seeing the children with their dads. One of the dads gets out in six weeks, so to have extra (quality) time with family is a really good way for him to bond with his young child. Jenny (prison officer who was fab) gave us the percentage of guys who are less likely to reoffend when they have good family time while they are in prison - it was high and gives strength to our project. One of the guys commented that it had been ages since he got to sit on a sofa with his son, in just a normal situation - lovely bonus which I hadn't thought of, but they sit in hard plastic chairs during normal visits*".
- 6.15 The second was a 5-day "fèis week" in the prison for offenders to develop new skills in music, as well as wider life skills. Led by experienced tutors, the project involved 6 prisoners who had the opportunity to learn skills in ukulele, guitar, accordion, vocals, percussion and electronic music-making. Although only one of them had ever played music before, the participants arranged and recorded 5 tracks by the end of the week. Through their participation in the project, all of the young men who took part received a number of qualifications in core skills through Fife College. These included SVQ

Level 4 qualifications for listening, problem solving, working with others, etc.

- 6.16 With funding through the Carers' Music Fund which targets women and girls who are isolated because of their caring responsibilities, Fèis Rois began to deliver its Lullaby Project in 2019, which targeted mothers of infants under the age of 3 in rural locations outside Inverness, including recently arrived Syrian refugees. Delivered in twelve weekly 2 hour sessions the mothers were supported to develop their confidence and skills in singing, music making and song-writing through practical activities which they could then do at home with their infant. All mothers were supported to write a personal lullaby for their infant which could then be professionally recorded. Due to the pandemic only one of the intended 4 cohorts happened in 2019/20, with 7 participants being involved supported by 3 tutors. The project then moved to online delivery through Zoom.
- 6.17 In 2014, Fèis Rois led on a bid for Highland to establish the Highland Youth Arts Hub, securing £400,000 for a project from 2014 to 2016 delivered in partnership with High Life Highland and Youth Highland. The project engaged 5,000 young people in new opportunities, provided more than 22,000 hours of engagement for these young people and provided paid employment for more than 200 freelance artists. The partners went on to work with young people to write an ambitious 10-year *Youth Arts Strategy for Highland 2017-2027* and deliver projects as part of the Scottish Government's Year of Young People in 2018. Although there was no expenditure in 2019/20, further projects have been delivered in 2020 and 2021.
- 6.18 Fèis Rois is also key in the Highland Youth Music Forum, which it manages on behalf of Creative Scotland, High Life Highland and Highland Council. The Forum brings together youth music providers in the Highlands through its website, www.highlandyouthmusic.org.uk, and social media sites. Its private Facebook group, with 111 members, connects Youth Music Providers and offers an online space to:
- share good practice
 - share resources
 - ask questions
 - make new connections and contacts
 - share any relevant opportunities.
- 6.19 Another partnership Fèis Rois has been instrumental in delivering is in bringing together cultural leaders in the Highlands to network and share plans and practices. This event, held in Skye, involved 8 arts organisations from the Highlands.

Traditional Music Agency

- 6.20 Fèis Rois acts as a traditional music agency, sourcing musicians to perform for a variety of events across Ross-shire, the Highlands and more widely. In 2019 these included:
- Road Scholar, a Kent based company providing educational travel for adults
 - The Gathering, a one day festival in Inverness
 - Artysans Café Supper Club, a social enterprise in Inverness
 - Highland Cross
 - Stewart Society Piping Competition and gathering
 - Highlands and Islands Airports
 - Saffery Champness

- National Festival of Youth Theatre
- Impact Arts
- HebCelt - Calmac Ferry

6.21 A total of 46 musicians performed at such events, earning in excess of £4,600.

Total Expenditure

6.22 Total expenditure on projects and initiatives in 2019/20 is summarised below. This excludes any management fee charged by Fèis Rois which, along with any surpluses, contribute to core costs and other activity which incurred deficits.

Fèis Rois Projects and Initiatives Expenditure 2019/20	Total
Administration	£383.66
Tutors fees	£34,535.93
Tutors travel	£3,225.38
Tutors accommodation/subsistence	£180.35
Participants accommodation /subsistence	£6,594.00
Transport	£279.02
Freelance support	£8,651.10
Artist fees	£55,524.82
Artist travel	£674.42
Artist accommodation	£2,425.19
Equipment	£324.55
Venue/hall hire and costs	£6,500.51
PA hire	£264.00
Resources	£391.00
Miscellaneous/Other	£42.14
Total Expenditure	£119,996.07

7. FINANCIAL SUMMARY

7.1 Total expenditure in 2019/20 is summarised in the table below. Note that this will differ from the figures in the published accounts as it relates to cash expenditure in the year with no allowance for factors such as accruals or depreciation. It also excludes any management fees levied.

Fèis Rois Expenditure 2019/20	Total
Salaries	£136,462.00
Employer's NI and pension payments	£12,586.00
Expenses	£7,278.00
Administration (e.g. stationery, postage)	£21,937.66
Training	£1,587.00
Tutors fees	£231,547.94
Tutors travel	£48,396.61
Tutors accommodation/subsistence	£19,791.06
Supervisor fees	£8,775.00
Supervisor/Volunteer expenses	£979.70
Supervisors accommodation/subsistence	£11,424.85
Participants accommodation/subsistence	£35,173.24
Transport/Participants travel	£11,509.73
Freelance support	£40,368.51
Artist fees	£104,567.38
Artist travel	£23,277.69
Artist accommodation	£41,950.64
Equipment	£324.55
Advertising and Marketing	£6,438.50
Venue/hall hire and costs	£18,834.11
Property costs	£12,150.00
Insurance	£1,102.00
PA hire	£1,259.59
Merchandising (e.g. T shirts)	£0.00
Instruments (purchase/repair/other costs)	£4,956.88
Resources	£7,964.24
Accountancy/Financial management/Governance	£10,553.31
Website	£2,665.87
Subscriptions	£928.00
Miscellaneous/Other	£11,610.92
Total Expenditure	£836,400.98

7.2 Between them, tutor and artist fees account for over 40% of total expenditure. Freelance support, including services such as artistic direction and sound engineers, account for a further 5%. Analysis of accounts show that these payments were spread across 210 individuals; showing how widely Fèis Rois activity invests in the

traditional music community.

7.3 Payments for accommodation and subsistence, largely spent in the Highlands, accounted for almost 13% of expenditure.

7.4 Income comes from a variety of sources and can vary from year to year depending on the development of projects and the success of grant applications. The Fèis Rois accounts for 2019/20 show income as follows:

Feis Rois Income 2019/20	Total
Creative Scotland	£220,945.00
Highland Council	£34,255.00
Dumfries & Galloway Council	£206,864.00
Aberdeenshire Council	£21,491.00
Angus Council	£14,462.00
Scottish Government (Lorient)	£30,000.00
Fèisean nan Gàidheal (Highland YMI)	£14,260.00
Scottish Natural Heritage	£16,656.00
Historic Environment Scotland	£27,350.00
Lullaby Project (Spirit of 2012)	£16,968.00
Classes, activities, instrument hire	£145,391.00
Concerts and events	£101,626.00
Other grants	£8,667.00
Donations	£3,331.00
Sponsorship	£1,731.00
Bank interest	£33.00
Fundraising	£1,298.00
Total Income	£865,328.00

7.5 Core income was received from Creative Scotland as Foundation funding of £220,000 and from Highland Council under a Service Level Agreement for £29,121. All other income came from contracted work, such as YMI, work relating to specific project grants (such as the Lullaby Project) and earned income from sources such as the fèisean, classes and events. Fèis Rois aims to charge a minimum management fee of 15% for services delivered and this can be added to reserves. Reserves in turn can cover any unplanned expenditure and be used as working capital; bridging any gap between delivery of services and receipt of income. The Board can also plan to use a proportion of reserves to take forward particular projects or to cover any gaps that arise in project budgets, although the reserves policy seeks to ensure that 3 months operating costs are held at any time. Unrestricted reserves in March 2020 were £244,101.

7.6 The core funders, Creative Scotland and Highland Council, are very supportive of Fèis Rois, seeing it as delivering good value for money both in financial terms and in terms of what is delivered thanks to their funding. The quality of their output, the community links, the efforts made to ensure access, the employment generated and the training provided are all valued, along with the work they do to protect and promote Scottish and Gaelic culture in the Highlands, nationally and internationally.

8. RECENT EVENTS

- 8.1 The Covid-19 pandemic and the resulting lockdowns and restrictions that have taken place in 2020 and 2021 had a major effect on the business model of Fèisean nan Gàidheal, Fèis Rois and the activities of individual Fèisean. Face to face contact, gatherings of people and the provision of workshops or performances all became either impossible or severely constrained. Clearly the pandemic also has had a major impact on the work possibilities for tutors and performers.
- 8.2 Fèis Rois initially postponed or cancelled activities. The Junior Fèis, Fèis Rois na h-Òigridh, was cancelled in 2020 and 2021 but was reintroduced in 2022 with 65 attending. The Senior Fèis, Fèis Rois nan Deugairean, was cancelled in 2020. In 2021 the Fèis was delivered as a non-residential delivered across three different sites across Ross-Shire. Between Tain, Dingwall, and Ullapool, 46 young people took part. 8 musicians as tutors and 4 supervisors were engaged and attendance was free of charge.
- 8.3 In 2020, the Adult Fèis, Fèis Rois nan Inbheach, was replaced with a successful Virtual event, delivered through Facebook Live from 1st - 3rd May. More than 50,000 people from 50 countries accessed the events, and BBC Alba produced and broadcast a one-hour television programme using the content from the event, *Fèis Rois: Bheir dhomh am fonn*. A similar online event was delivered in Spring 2021, with 41 musicians taking part in 12 workshops, three lectures, four sessions and three concerts, including a 2 hour Tutor Concert on the Sunday evening. There was a total of 16,400 views on Facebook and YouTube of the workshops and Tutor Concert, with people from 52 countries accessing the site.
- 8.4 As well as the virtual Fèis, Fèis Rois held a one-off winter Adult Fèis in Ullapool in November 2021. 118 people registered for this weekend event and 24 tutors and three freelance staff were engaged, with support from two volunteers. As well as workshops at the Macphail Centre, there were sessions across Ullapool, a Cearcall Còmhraidh for Gaelic learners and speakers, tutor concerts, and the world premiere of Iain Fraser's commission 'Gneiss' supported by the Blas Festival. The Adult Fèis returned to its normal May dates in 2022, with 150 attending.
- 8.5 With the weekly classes, from April to June 2020, Fèis Rois created 84 pre-recorded tuition videos with accompanying sheet music and materials to share with class participants so they could learn at a time that suited them at home. This was blended with 40 live lessons on Zoom. The uptake was significantly lower than for the live tuition, with 48 people taking part.
- 8.6 Classes returned to face to face delivery in October 2021. There are now 15 classes; 10 aimed at young people and 5 at adults, in fiddle, guitar, accordion, clarsach, groupwork & slow tunes. There are 25 youth participants, 16 adult participants and 5 tutors teaching. This is considerably lower than pre-pandemic levels and illustrates the challenge in building participation after 2 years with no face to face Fèisean.
- 8.7 Not surprisingly, much of the activity in projects and partnerships went into abeyance through the pandemic, but Fèis Rois took an important role in developing and delivering two major partnerships.

- 8.8 Creative Scotland directed £6 million of Scottish Government emergency COVID-19 funds to support creative practitioners, organisations and communities to work together across Scotland to help shape the future of local cultural life. 64 applications were made to the fund, with 26 projects being taken forward. One of the successful projects, receiving an award of £300,000, was a partnership project to deliver the Highland Culture Collective.
- 8.9 Fèis Rois is the administrative lead for the Highland Culture Collective, working with the Highland Third Sector Interface, Eden Court, Highland Print Studio, Lyth Arts Centre and North Lands Creative. The project has led to a project manager and 5 new full-time artist in residence jobs in the Highlands, bringing experience in various disciplines, including art, photography, film, sound and Gaelic drama for a period of 15-months from 1 July 2021 to 30 September 2022. Funding has recently been secured to extend the project to August 2023.
- 8.10 The project targets:
- People impacted by the pandemic, including, for example, older people, their families and carers.
 - Women, children and young people affected by domestic abuse.
 - Those affected by the justice system, including offenders, those at risk of offending, and those with a family member in prison.
 - Gaelic learners who have struggled with language acquisition over the past year, e.g. children and young people who attend GME but who do not have Gaelic at home
- 8.11 Alongside this, Fèis Rois, working with Aproxima Arts from Glasgow, developed and secured funding of over £7 million for the Dandelion programme. This is a multi-partner project commissioned by EventScotland and funded via the Scottish Government. It is one of ten major multi-site and digital creative projects commissioned as part of UNBOXED, a £120 million UK-wide programme celebrating creativity in the UK. The successful projects were chosen from almost 300 submissions. The Chief Executive of Fèis Rois is acting as Futures Director for the event and will commit significant time to its delivery over 2022.
- 8.12 Dandelion aims to feature Unexpected Gardens, vertical farms, free music events and plant giveaways to reimagine the annual harvest festival for the 21st Century. It follows the arc of the growing season, from April to September 2022, and will culminate in hundreds of Harvest Festivals across Scotland. The gardens featuring will use currently unused spaces or forgotten land, and each will host seasonal events and installations, and grow herbs and vegetables for the whole community to share at a local Harvest in September 2022. A Musician-in-Residence will also connect with each garden to create brand new work. Fèis Rois will develop a space in Alness, with other gardens being:
- Argyll – Cove Park will use tidal sites in Loch Long and Gare Loch to investigate links between coastal communities and agriculture.
 - Caithness – Lyth Arts Centre’s touring garden will roll off a trailer to become a performance and workshop space.
 - Falkirk and touring around the Union and Forth & Clyde Canals – our Floating Garden will tour Scotland’s canal networks from June. It will then dock at the Helix, Falkirk until September.

- Forres – Findhorn Bay Arts’ garden will promote the growing of mushrooms in the alleyways of the town centre.
- Edinburgh – Edinburgh Agroecology Co-op at Lauriston Farm, in partnership with North Edinburgh Arts, will experiment with farming practices that engage the local community.
- Greenock – RIG Arts will take over the scrub site behind the South West Library; creating a valuable shared space for meeting, reading and growing.
- Leven – The Leven Programme will convert the car park of Leven Community Centre into a sustainable market garden.
- Stranraer – The Stove, Dumfries, and Stranraer Development Trust will develop a vibrant garden that overlooks the former ferry terminal.
- North Uist – Taigh Chearsabhagh’s garden in North Uist will respond to the unique ecosystem of the island.

8.13 Creative in Your Community 2020 was a project delivered through the Highland Youth Arts Hub, supporting 19 emerging artists with an award of £1,000 each, 12 hours of mentoring from a professional artist and the opportunity to take part in a series of Creative Conversations. The young people supported included writers, actors, musicians and visual artists. This was followed in 2021 with a project supported by the Youth Arts Fund to bring Highland Youth Arts Hub partner organisations together to deliver an Artist in Residence embedded in each of the 9 Community Planning Partnership areas of the Highlands.

9. ECONOMIC IMPACTS

- 9.1 The employment and income impacts by category of expenditure by Fèis Rois (FR) in the 2019 calendar year or the 2019/20 financial year (pre Covid impacts) are given or estimated below, and relate to the activity information given in Sections 2-7 above and the expenditure table at 7.1 (totalling £836,401).
- 9.2 In some cases, earnings per full time equivalent job year (FTE) are estimated from the rates of pay that particular work would be expected to pay; in others (e.g. FR's direct employment) actual earnings are known. Indirect impacts relate to purchases other than payments to staff, musicians, tutors, etc time that generate employment impacts (including supply chains); and induced impacts relate to expenditures from people's additional direct and indirect earnings.
- 9.3 The impacts in Scotland as a whole include those from activity supported by FR funding in parts of Scotland other than the Highlands and Islands, as well as the indirect and induced impacts elsewhere in Scotland from activities taking place within the Highlands and Islands (e.g. tutors resident elsewhere in Scotland teaching at FR Fèisean in the Highlands and Islands). Impacts are broadly by residence of the individuals benefitting from the employment.
- 9.4 The estimated employment impacts below are given to the nearest 0.5 of an FTE, and earnings to the nearest £1,000. A high proportion of the impacts attributed below to the Highlands and Islands will have been generated in Highland Council's Ross & Cromarty area.
- 9.5 Not all impacts are 100% attributable to FR's expenditures and support as other public funding, e.g. from Local Authorities, was also provided towards activities. However, overall economic impacts will be greater than shown in the table to the extent that private sector suppliers will benefit from expenditures by audiences, performers, tutors, the families of participants, etc that are not related to FR or public sector supported provision or payments.
- 9.6 Estimated impacts from non-employment categories of spend include "direct" plus "indirect impacts" – i.e. they include supply chain expenditures in the impact areas as well as attributable employment provided in the businesses and organisations providing the services paid for.
- 9.7 Expenditures outwith Scotland that do not accrue to Scotland or to people normally living in Scotland are excluded from expenditures by category prior to assessing employment and earnings impacts.

Table 9.1**Impacts from Fèis Rois's Operations & Supported Activities in 2019**

	HIE Area FTEs	Scotland FTEs	HIE Area Earnings (£)	Scotland Earnings (£)
(1) Fèis Rois Staff	4	4	136,000	136,000
(2) Other Core Costs (including training)	1	1	25,000	30,000
(3) Tutors	4	9	100,000	232,000
(4) Supervisors	0.5	0.5	9,000	9,000
(5) Freelance Support	1	1	22,000	30,000
(6) Artists	3	4	73,000	95,000
(7) Travel, Accommodation & Subsistence	1.5	2.5	43,000	75,000
(8) Other Event-Related Costs	0.5	0.5	8,000	10,000
(9) Other Expenditures	-	-	3,000	6,000
Total (1) to (9)	15.5	22.5	419,000	623,000
(10) Induced Employment from (1) to (9)	3	7	78,000	169,000
(11) Tourism-related Employment Impacts	1.5	2	42,000	55,000
TOTALS	20.5	31.5	539,000	847,000

Notes on the Impacts**(1) Fèis Rois Staff**

These impacts relate to the core costs shown at 4.1-4.3 above; with staff also benefitting in the future from the £13,000 paid by Fèis Rois on their NI and pensions.

(2) Other Core Costs (including training)

These totalled £60,000 as shown in the tables at 4.3 and 4.13 (excluding tutors' fees and other costs included in other spend categories below).

(3) Payments to Tutors

Across the Fèis Rois activities over the year, tutors assumed to be based in Scotland were paid a total of £232,000. Allowing for teaching rates to be up to £35 per hour, some tutors being assistants, and unpaid time spent at Fèisean and other events and travelling to and from their tuition locations, it is assumed that tutors earn the equivalent of £25,000 per year.

(4) Payments to Supervisors

Supervisors assumed to be based in Scotland were paid a total of £9,000 over the year; and it is assumed that their pay averages the equivalent of £25,000 per annum.

(5) Freelance Support

Of the £40,000 paid for freelance support in the year, it is estimated that £30,000 is paid to people who normally live in Scotland; and it is assumed that their pay averages the equivalent of £25,000 per annum.

(6) **Artists**

Of the £104,567 of fees paid to artists, it is estimated that £95,000 is paid to people who normally live in Scotland; and it is assumed that their pay averages the equivalent of £25,000 per annum.

(7) **Travel, Accommodation and Subsistence**

Of the £193,000 total expenditure over the year on these categories relating to tutors, supervisors, participants and artists, it is estimated that £136,000 will be paid to businesses in Scotland and £95,000 to businesses in the Highlands and Islands.

From Input-Output tables relating to activities of these types, it is estimated that direct plus indirect impacts (through supply chains) will support 1 FTE (full time equivalent job year) per £50,000 spent in Scotland, and 1 FTE per £60,000 spent in the Highlands and Islands, with average earnings of £27,500 per FTE.

(8) **Other Event-Related Costs**

These expenditures total £31,000 over the year, and it is estimated that £10,000 of this will accrue as direct plus indirect earnings in Scotland, and £8,000 in the Highlands and Islands; with FTEs assumed to pay an average of £27,500 per annum.

(9) **Other Expenditures**

These total £11,600 over the year, and it is estimated that £6,000 of this will accrue as direct plus indirect earnings in Scotland and £3,000 in the Highlands and Islands; with 0.2 of an FTE supported in Scotland, and 0.1 of an FTE in the Highlands and Islands at an average rate of pay of £27,500 per annum per FTE.

(10) **Induced Employment from Categories (1) to (9)**

Induced impacts, from Type 2 Input-Output multipliers for Scotland, and estimated multipliers for the Highlands and Islands, based on the types of direct and indirect jobs generated are assumed to add 0.3 FTE to each direct plus indirect FTE in Scotland, and 0.2 FTE in the Highlands and Islands. Taking account of the types of induced jobs that will have been generated, the average induced FTE is assumed to earn £25,000.

(11) **Tourism-related Employment Impacts**

These impacts are very approximate and relate mainly to overnight stays in local areas by audiences at events attributable to these attendances, as well as by participants at these events whose expenses are not covered in category (7) above, plus the partners of participants who would spend money in the local area during the day. These expenditures are estimated to total c£110,000 in Scotland and c£100,000 in the Highlands and Islands, with 1 FTE (direct plus indirect plus induced) supported by £60,000 spend in the Highlands and Islands, and 1 FTE by £50,000 of spend in Scotland; and with the average FTE earning £25,000 per annum.

10. OTHER IMPACTS

- 10.1 As well as economic impacts, Fèis Rois generates significant impacts across Scottish and Gaelic culture, although by their nature these are difficult to quantify. As part of our wider study into the impacts of Fèisean nan Gàidheal and the Fèisean movement we also carried out a survey of tutors and performers and we have isolated responses from artists who indicated an involvement with Fèis Rois. We have also interviewed a number of Fèis Rois "graduates" and have brought their responses into this section as appropriate to illustrate the impacts on individuals.
- 10.2 Fèis Rois is one of the major promoters of Scottish traditional music, with its core activities playing a large part in encouraging and enabling the transfer of the culture to the next generation and providing the learning and training required to make music a source of enjoyment for many and a career for some. In 2019, 238 young people took part in the Junior and Senior Fèisean and weekly classes. Almost 3,000 schoolchildren in the Highlands received an introduction to traditional music through YMI, as did almost 3,500 young people in other parts of Scotland.
- 10.3 For adults, there is the adult Fèis, attracting 275 people in 2019 and with weekly classes to advanced level, signed up to by 62 people. For those wishing to take things further, Fèis Rois offers access to masterclasses and advanced tuition. In 2019 it also offered high level training at a Fiddle Immersion Course and a Guitar Colloquium. It provides opportunities for training and experience through its Cèilidh Trails and showcasing opportunities, including at national and international events such as Celtic Connections, the Cambridge Folk Festival and the Festival Interceltique de Lorient. In due course there are opportunities to take part in the activities organised by Fèis Rois as a tutor or performer and, in 2019, 210 people were engaged in that way, many of whom started their journey by attending a Fèis.
- 10.4 Although the core of its activity is in Ross-shire the reach of Fèis Rois is well beyond the local area. Musicians and artists from across the Highlands, Scotland and even further afield can point to the influence of Fèis Rois and its impact on their lives. Young people attending the Senior Fèis especially may have earlier attended their local Fèis elsewhere in the Highlands or Scotland and those taking part in the Adult Fèis and other activities can come from around the world.
- 10.5 Megan MacDonald from Lairg is an accordionist with a diverse repertoire from Scottish and world traditions. This, combined with her sensitive and assured playing, has made her much in demand as a band member, session musician and tutor in Scotland's traditional music scene. Megan says: *"I think that seeing so many people of a similar age to me interested in traditional music really encouraged me to keep going with music myself, and then seeing/meeting so many great tutors who were professionals made it seem achievable. When I did a cèilidh trail with Fèis Rois I decided I definitely wanted to pursue a career with music as it gave me an idea of touring."*
- 10.6 Megan feels that Fèis Rois expanded her musical horizons by giving her opportunities to perform and play in various different settings with many different people. *"Through going to Fèis Rois it gave me opportunities to play at other festivals where I saw music from different Celtic nations, and with the group work at the Fèis itself I learned more of a contemporary style of traditional/folk music."*

- 10.7 Robbie Greig, an award-winning fiddle player and sought-after freelancer is also in high demand as a session musician, soloist and teacher, as well as being a member of three busy folk bands. Robbie believes that his attendance at Fèis Rois and participation in a Cèilidh Trail encouraged him to pursue a career in music. He said: *"Absolutely. Performance opportunities, meeting like-minded people of similar age, and demonstrating the value of a career in music were integral parts of my Fèis experience, and all of these elements contributed to my pursuing a career in music."*
- 10.8 Findlay Napier who grew up in Grantown-on-Spey, is a well-known Scottish singer-songwriter and host of Celtic Connections' Late Night Sessions. He says that Fèis Rois did most definitely encourage him to pursue a career in music with the greatest impact of coming from the people he was able to meet and create music with. He remembers *"hanging out with Jim Hunter and Phil Cunningham and realising that I could do this for a living."*
- 10.9 Attending the Fèis also impacted Findlay's emergence as a songwriter and his appreciation of other music genres apart from Scottish traditional music. *"I discovered what I think of as the singer-songwriter genre, country music, blues, other folk styles, punk and post-punk through tutors and other participants at the Fèis."* He mentioned the immersive experience of the Fèis, with learning not only during the lessons but also during breaks and sessions after the classes.
- 10.10 Findlay also said: *"I went on a Fèis wide teaching weekend run by Ishbel McAskill and Andy Thorburn. To this day it's the best "how to run a teaching workshop" teaching I've ever had. Skills I learned there kept me going for years. I think seeing how great the adults were at playing and singing songs drove me to find my own cover versions of songs and eventually gave me the confidence to write and share my own songs. Even when I was a tutor at Fèis Rois I learned loads from the other tutors not just about the music and culture but even tricks in how to teach my instrument. The other tutors were so generous about sharing teaching techniques and little tricks."*
- 10.11 Rachel Walker is a singer, songwriter, arranger and educator based in Lochaber. Rachel regularly tours and performs with Skippinish and is the conductor of Lochaber Gaelic Choir. When she was young her family moved from Lincolnshire in England to Kinlochewe in Wester Ross. Rachel says had she not gone to the Fèis it's unlikely that she would have gone on to study music. She was planning to study science and biology, but after being involved with Fèis Rois it made her more confident in music and she decided to try to study it; initially graduating in classical music at Napier University before going on to the Scottish Music course at the conservatoire when it started.
- 10.12 Laura Wilkie from Tain is a fiddle player with a unique style which has roots in the Highland fiddle traditions but is influenced by an eclectic range of music from all genres. Laura has toured across the world in various different groups and is a founder member of Fat Suit, a 14-piece ensemble which delivers a fusion of jazz, rock, and folk. Laura was a regular attendee of Fèis Rois and says: *"Some of the tutors were very inspiring and were playing music as their full-time job. That really made me think it might be possible."* She also highlighted female role models within the traditional music scene when she was at Fèis Rois: *"I think seeing females like Anna Massie, Mairearad Green, Jenn Butterworth and Sarah Jane Summers helped me to imagine myself doing what they were doing, or something along those lines."*

- 10.13 Laura strongly feels that attending Fèis Rois expanded her reach and appreciation of what was possible with traditional music, giving and taking from other musical concepts and genres. Group work classes opened her ears and eyes to what was possible, how music could be presented, and how different instruments could have different roles and voices. She also mentions that being at the Fèis *"really improved the strength of my ear training and ability to play in a group with others."*
- 10.14 Fort William's Megan Henderson is a multi-instrumentalist and singer who has studied Classical Violin at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. Megan attended Fèis Rois nan Deugairean through her teenage years, and traditional Scottish music always remained a strong passion. Shortly after graduating she joined highly respected Scottish folk group Breabach, and Megan is a much in demand session musician, performing and recording artist and has played with many bands. She told us: *"My time participating at Fèis Rois definitely encouraged me to pursue a career in music. Meeting other like-minded people, who many I can call my musical colleagues and more so friends to this day, was fantastic. Having the same interests with other teenagers in playing and singing music was great fun and made me think this is maybe what I could do full time as a career. Also, spending time as a teenager arranging music was very influential on my now musical ability and career, often working and collaborating with other musicians."*
- 10.15 Rachel Newton has been awarded Musician of the Year at both the Scots Trad Music Awards and the BBC Radio 2 Folk Awards. Rachel attended the junior and senior Fèisean from age 9 to about 16 and says her experience at Fèis Rois *"has had a huge impact on my group work skills, listening to and playing with others. Also learning by ear was a big takeaway."*
- 10.16 Fèis Rois has also had an important impact on the arts, and especially youth arts in the Highlands through its development of partnerships and networking within the sector. This includes the Highland Youth Music Forum, bringing together youth music providers; the Highland Youth Arts Hub, working with partners and young people to deliver projects and develop a 10 year Youth Arts Strategy; and its bringing together cultural leaders in Highland to liaise, discuss and share plans. In all of these, Fèis Rois has taken the lead, sourced funding and managed delivery.
- 10.17 With regard to the Gaelic language, Fèis Rois promotes language learning - with all participants in the Junior Fèis taking part in 3 hours of tuition. 41% of attendees in 2019 had no Gaelic before attending the Fèis and only 11% described themselves as fluent. The Adult Fèis includes a daily Gaelic conversation circle. This has developed into a regular Cearcall Còmhraidh meeting in Dingwall, attracting 5-12 participants. A guest speaker begins the session, with participants then joining in with questions. During lockdown the circle went online and grew to a mailing list of 70 with a growing geographical spread including log ins from America, Canada and Germany. For fluent speakers and learners this provides an opportunity to mix and use the language in a relaxed setting.
- 10.18 NatureScot's support for the Cèilidh Trails links both to performances at their sites and to the use of Gaelic content in the performances. During lockdown, when no performances were possible, NatureScot continued its funding with it supporting the creation of new Gaelic songs.
- 10.19 Rachel Walker says that: *"Fèis Rois is the reason that I am a Gaelic singer today. Had*

I not had the support and encouragement to learn and sing Gaelic songs and such a positive experience from the tutors and other participants I wouldn't have even considered being a Gaelic singer. It has enabled me to study and ultimately to have a career that I love. I came to Gaelic through the songs. Without the experience at Fèis Rois I wouldn't have continued on to learn Gaelic. I learned a few words and phrases as part of the Fèis, but the experience it gave me made me much more interested in the language and inspired me to learn more."

- 10.20 Megan MacDonald also believes that being at the Fèis has had a positive effect on her Gaelic language skills. *"I hadn't been exposed to many people speaking/singing Gaelic a whole lot until going to both Fèis Rois and Fèis Chataibh, where I'd learned some basic beginner phrases. I think hearing Gaelic spoken from the Gaelic speakers at the concerts/Ceilidh trails was beneficial too, in being more familiar with the language."*
- 10.21 Megan Henderson says that: *"Fèis Rois encouraged me to want to learn the language, especially through Gaelic song, and although not a fluent speaker, I still use it in my job as a musician and everyday life almost every day."*
- 10.22 As part of our work for the Fèisean nan Gàidheal impact study we carried out a survey of all the musicians and artists on their tutor database. Of the respondents to the survey, 11 specifically indicated they had been engaged by Fèis Rois in 2019. This is only a small proportion of the 210 tutors engaged by Fèis Rois that year, but it does give a flavour of their experience. Of the 11, 5 had attended a Fèis when they were young and 3 had attended follow on classes. Asked to rate on a scale of 1-5 how their involvement with the Fèisean has influenced their musical/artistic development, 9 of the 11 rated it as 4 or 5. Asked to rate how involvement with the Fèisean has helped them gain skills which have been of use in their chosen career, 9 of the 11 rated it as 4 or 5.
- 10.23 With regard to the Gaelic language, 10 of the 11 said that involvement with the Fèisean has enhanced their language skills (the exception being one who is fluent), and all 11 said that their involvement has encouraged them to use the language more often. All 11 also said that their involvement has made them believe more strongly that Gaelic is important to Scotland; with one adding: *"I love seeing so many school children speaking small amounts of Gaelic in Fèis classes. Many would never have had the opportunity to learn it elsewhere"*. All 11 feel that their involvement in Fèis activities has had a positive effect on their wellbeing, with one saying: *"Music has brought me joy since the age of 10 when I was handed a fiddle. Traditional music has a major positive impact on my mental health as well as the enjoyment of being in the company of like-minded individuals"* and another adding: *"I feel I'm doing something good for the area and the young people living here"*.
- 10.24 Comments from respondents included:

"I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now without the Fèisean, and as a professional musician, the work opportunities provided by the Fèisean is vital in terms of both income and professional development. Massive influence for me personally. I owe them an awful lot of thanks and appreciation".

"I am so grateful to the Fèis. I would not be doing what I do now as a Highland based folk musician, composer and educator if it wasn't for those special years as a teenager"

at the Fèis. I met my lifelong friends at the Fèis. I learned my first words of Gaelic. Margaret Bennett taught me Gaelic songs, I played my first ever tune on the tin whistle, did my first Scottish step dancing steps, tried a wooden flute for the first time, and learned my first accompaniment skills on the piano from Andy Thorburn. Some of my first full-on 5-day teaching music cameos were with Fèis Rois and Fèis Latharna. I have been offered transcription work, composition commissions and advanced level group work weeks with Irish participants”.

“Attending Fèisean as a child instilled a love of traditional music in me and I feel quite honoured getting to witness the same happening to children at the Fèisean. Thanks to my work with Fèisean I have been learning tin whistle”.

- 10.25 Wider impacts also apply beyond Scotland. For example, Trac Cymru, which is responsible for folk arts development in Wales, has told us that Fèis Rois has been an inspiration to them for many years; with the first actual collaboration being between their Youth Folk Ensemble and Fèis Rois youngsters at this year’s Celtic Connections.

11. CONCLUSIONS

- 11.1 Fèis Rois has proved itself an innovative and nimble organisation, building on its core activities to access funding and lead the delivery of an extensive range of projects and initiatives. It is also adept at building partnerships and networks which enrich and strengthen its own activities, promote Scottish traditional music and provide significant opportunities for the young people and artists it works with.
- 11.2 As well as significant economic impacts we have found that Fèis Rois delivers substantial benefits in softer areas such as culture, language and skills development. Although not quantifiable these add to the importance of Fèis Rois as a leading arts organisation in the Highlands and Scotland.
- 11.3 Although it has taken a positive attitude towards the challenges of Covid-19 and has moved forward with new and major initiatives such as Dandelion and the Highland Culture Collective, it is important not to underestimate the fragility of the core activity caused by the interruption of in regular programming as well as recognising the opportunities which emerge from new ways of working.
- 11.4 With no Junior or Senior Fèisean in 2020 or 2021 a certain momentum has been lost. The Junior Fèis in 2022 had 65 attendees, although only 45 were residential. Many of the others chose to live in holiday accommodation with their families. The Adult Fèis in 2022 also had a lower attendance than pre-pandemic at 150. It will take time for confidence in attending residential events builds and numbers get back to previous levels.
- 11.5 The Fèisean provide the natural pool of young people from which participants in the weekly classes are recruited. Although an online alternative for the classes was put in place, numbers have declined through the pandemic and it will take time to build again.
- 11.6 At the same time, online solutions have been particularly successful for the adult Fèis and for events such the Cearcall Còmhradh; opening up opportunities for even wider participation, including internationally. Reintroducing face to face events should not mean the end of online delivery and there will be challenges in delivering both and in introducing charges for the online versions.
- 11.7 While tutors and performers have adapted to online delivery it will be important to ensure that their skills in this area are further developed and that they have access to high quality equipment. Training and access to equipment may also help artists to explore new markets for their output, such as in film, television and computer games.
- 11.8 It may be that support for this could be accessed through Highlands and Islands Enterprise (HIE). Although account managed, Fèis Rois does not receive regular funding from HIE. HIE, though, is supportive of the organisation, seeing it as having high ambitions and delivering strong impacts. It is seen as performing well, growing jobs and turnover while delivering environmental impacts through local employment and decentralised delivery. HIE puts particular emphasis on growth and recognises the achievement in bringing projects such as Dandelion and the Culture Collective to the Highlands, as well as the progress in using online and digital solutions to meet the challenges of Covid-19.

11.9 Bòrd na Gàidhlig is another potential funder which has not regularly funded Fèis Rois, although we understand it has now agreed to fund a Gaelic Officer. As part of that it may be willing to support the expansion of Cearcall Còmhraidh to complement Fèisean nan Gàidheal's Cafe Bheairteis initiative. Finding opportunities to use Gaelic is a challenge for many Gaelic learners and Cearcall Còmhraidh would seem an excellent solution.