

## **NMF Directors Report, November 2023**

**Patty Doran**

After the AGM this time last year, the NMF Directors decided to appoint a consultant to undertake activities to better engage the community of New Mills in the running of the organisation longer term. The consultant, Kate Badger, was contracted from the start of January to the end of March and paid £200 plus expenses each month. Kate carried out a public consultation on the future direction of New Mills Festival, and set out a plan for future delivery, which was presented at a Town Hall event in March.

Kate dedicated much time, energy and rigour to the consultation process, which we thank her for. There was a focus on "bringing back the lanterns", and a demonstrated commitment from the community to support the festival going forward. At the Town Hall event there was a vote in favour of a ticketed model for the lantern procession (approx. £5 a ticket), that would fund a paid festival co-ordinator going forward and many of the other costs associated with NMF.

At the start of April, we started to put in place a plan to appoint a festival co-ordinator, but it was clear that we would not have the time needed to deliver a lantern procession in 2023. We advertised for a festival co-ordinator to be employed 15 hours a week for nine months, and received several applications. We were happy with the high quality of applications and very delighted that Helen Wright took up the position in June.

As demonstrated in Helen's report, in a relatively short period of time, a comprehensive community festival was co-ordinated and delivered. The Directors would like to thank Helen for taking on a difficult brief and successfully working with local volunteers to produce New Mills Festival in September 2023.

The remainder of Helen's contract will focus on the sustainability of New Mills Festival, both in terms of securing funding for a co-ordinator going forward and in organising the internal infrastructure of NMF (including managing volunteers and ensuring clear systems are in place for managing our documents and processes). Although the sustainability and future of NMF is unclear, we believe that going forward it is essential to have a paid festival co-ordinator.

I would also like to thank my fellow Directors for the time and commitment they have shown to NMF, to Sara-Jayne Slocombe for her impeccable book-keeping, to the many volunteers who have given many hours to the New Mills community: Alison via communication and the newsletter, Sarah for the Duck Race, Melody for strategic support and helping with many other things including the Proms in the Park with Annie, who has also offered consistent support over the year. Jamie, Russell, Tina for their experience and reliability.

Thank you.

Patty