

# **Brass Bands England**

## **Chairs Report for the AGM**

### **Year ending 31 March 2023**

During 2022-2023, BBE has enjoyed the most active and successful year since its formation in 1968. Membership numbers have increased steadily, strategic partnerships have grown and strengthened. The proactive relationships with music hubs, government departments and NGOs have, in consequence, seen BBE grow in stature, visibility and influence. This aligns well with BBE's primary aim of supporting brass bands to become more robust and sustainable, and to be better appreciated by others outside of our immediate cultural sphere.

#### **Membership**

The impact of expanded operational activities and capacity has seen membership continue to grow steadily, despite issues created by the pandemic. At the end of March 2023, BBE membership stood at 503 organisations, comprising 568 brass bands, which contain in the region of 17,000 individuals.

This constitutes a significant rise over the past three years since the organisational restructure in 2017-2018. The increased membership year on year is demonstrated as follows:

- End March 2018: 181 Member Organisations
- End March 2023: 503 Member Organisations

#### **Members working group.**

In February this year a Members' Working Group was created, to encourage more proactive engagement with BBE and ensure that member's voices are heard. The first quarterly meeting of this new group took place in February 2023 and members were encouraged to contribute to the group's and BBE's future strategy.

#### **Board of Trustees**

The Board of Trustees continue to support the operational team in their work and has strengthened significantly in terms of diversity and skill set over the past 12 months or so. A new Trustees code of conduct has been developed during 2022/23 and will be adopted upon completion during 2023/24.

BBE Treasurer, Marie Bedford announced that she had taken the difficult decision to step down from her role. Marie has guided BBE to the excellent financial position we are in now through her experience and expertise, but the role has taken more time than she expected. Marie, a consummate professional, has been a joy to work with.

BBE Trustee, Paul Beaumont, who has an excellent record in corporate business and finance, is taking over the role of BBE Treasurer, supported by BBE's finance manager Bev Shephard.

#### **Key Funder**

##### **Arts Council England**

BBE's relationship with ACE is excellent and during this past year BBE has enjoyed the benefit of significant funding. Firstly, in April, 2022, £116,100 provided for the European Brass Band Festival Community Stage in Birmingham.

BBE's bid for 2023-26 Arts Council England funding was submitted on 16 May 2022. In early November 2022, we were delighted to be informed that BBE had been confirmed as one of ACE's Investment Principle Support Organisations (IPSOs). IPSOs sit within the Arts Council's National Portfolio, a core group of organisations recognised as of national importance to arts and culture. The new funding period will begin in April 2023 and will run until the end of March 2026 seeing BBE gain £405,809 per year funding support for its work supporting bands, an increase from its previous support of £210,809 per year.

### **In Conclusion**

This year has seen further significant progress made by BBE. The trustees are delighted with, and extremely proud of, the organisation's exceptional performance over the past year, delivering outstanding support and substantial benefits to the brass band community on a truly national basis.

The Staff and Trustees of BBE sincerely hope that even more brass bands, individuals and associated organisations will engage with the organisation now, and in the coming years, to help BBE and the brass band sector become further recognised as an important and vital contributor to art and culture in this Country.

Mike Kilroy  
Chair of the Board of Trustees