

Levin Folk Music Club

As Chair of our club, I am happy to report that our club has worked hard this year to improve the venue and to offer as much variety as possible

As in past years we have a small number of volunteers to take on jobs like setting up the hall for the concert night, taking on the music sound system when required, welcoming people at the door and organising supper. It does tend to be the same people who regularly take on these jobs and we would dearly love to have other members who might take on one of these duties now and then. Just speak to any of the committee if you feel you can offer a hand, or take on a specific task. You do not have to be a committee member to do these jobs, and may only need to offer your help on one or two concert nights in a year.

The stage furniture has been improved recently, especially with the beautiful backdrop curtain provided by Katy Horwood. We are very grateful to her for taking so much time to get it just right, and also to Don Stratton for assisting with the wiring needed to hold the curtain. You will also have noticed that we have removed all the heavy shabby chairs which used to be very difficult to move and stack, let alone looking rather tired. Guests have also made positive comments about the blue velvet stage stool, the lightweight folding tables which have made set-up much easier, and the new poster board displaying the posters of guests over the year.

While some members find the raffle a bit of fun in the evening, the cost of prizes is not always covered by the sale of tickets. We need to consider whether to continue with raffles.

As a result of the hard work done by Dale Webb and Dianne Madill, over the past year the committee has frequently been contacted by musicians seeking to perform at our club. Dale is thanked for her readiness to post information about upcoming events on the LFMC Facebook page which tends to be the first source of information for many people these days. Her regular notes to the Chronicle have also provided very welcome publicity for our club and for others in the community. We have had a total of nine concerts with guest artists, and two with our own members providing all the music in December 2020 and July 2021.

As all financial members are now aware, following the pre-AGM letter which was sent out in mid-July, the Horowhenua Scottish Society have increased the rental that they charge us by more than 100%. The Chairperson, supported by the committee, had lengthy negotiations with the laird, Chris Hartwell, and did manage to make some changes, but the reality is that we are now paying much more for the use of the hall. Although the subscription for members will remain the same, \$25 per annum, we cannot afford to charge only \$5 entry for members and \$10 entry for visitors. This is unchanged since 2014 – 8 years. There is a motion relating to this to follow in the meeting, and the committee hope you have all seriously considered what the club must do to remain viable.

In spite of the rental increase, however, Dianne has succeeded in negotiating with the Horowhenua Scottish Society for the club to have a larger and more secure space to store sound gear and other equipment.

We have continued with the club night on the fourth Friday of each month. This gathering was originally intended to help newer musicians progress towards being sufficiently confident to join the Blackboard list at the main concert night. Sadly the numbers have dwindled over the last year, and we are trying to come up with some options to bring in more participants. When only 6 – 8 people attend, we are not covering the hire or supper costs for the evening. We would appreciate any ideas members may have for improving the club night.

The club committee has finally arranged to use internet banking. This makes it possible for most members to pay their subs easily and for club accounts to be paid efficiently. Val and Dianne are to be thanked for their perseverance in getting this organised.

Cavan and Dale have managed to keep our newsletters coming out each month. We thank them for picking up this task as the newsletter is appreciated by both our club members and the general public.

Following on from the changes we were forced to make in 2020 under Covid restrictions, we have continued to vary the time at which the Blackboard is presented on concert nights. We had begun to do this to fit in with guest artists who were travelling from further afield. Often they have had a lengthy trip to get to Levin and by having their performance at the beginning of the evening they are less tired and can give a top performance. We are aware that

this changing time does not suit all of our local performers. When we invite the visiting musicians, we offer them a choice of time for their performance.

Our club has also benefitted from other festivals in our region such as the Himitangi Hootenanny and the Mid-winter Holler. These events are usually limited a little by the size of the venues, and if members plan to attend they are advised to book in as soon as possible once the event is announced.

Many thanks to the small committee for their hard work and support over the last year.

As most people know, behind every woman, there's a good man. Thank you Peter!

Dianne Morris-Madill