

Grassington Festival falls victim to COVID-19

In the year which would have seen the acclaimed Dales cultural summer event, Grassington Festival, celebrate its 40th year, organisers have had to take the reluctant decision to cancel 2020's festival.

The board of trustees along with the team of volunteers who stage the event scheduled to run from June 12th – June 27th have decided, following consultation and professional advice regarding the anticipated spread and peak of the Covid-19 virus, that it is not viable to proceed with the Festival for 2020.

All the artistes who had been booked to perform at this year's event have agreed to re-schedule their performance slots in the programme to 2021, so Festival Director, Penny Hart-Woods is relieved that the eclectic programme which had been planned will effectively be postponed and replicated next year.

Chairman of the trustees and long-time Festival organiser, John Jameson said "It is extremely disappointing that we will not be able to stage an event this summer. It's the first time we have had to cancel but we must put our audiences and artistes' safety first and foremost, while also being mindful of the financial vulnerability of the Festival. With the Government deliberately aiming to spread the peak of the epidemic over several months, we could not risk the longer term future of the Festival by attempting to proceed with substantial expenditure on publicity and next week's proposed launch event while faced with the prospect of possible enforced cancellation or very poor ticket sales."

Penny Hart-Woods also spoke with deep regret of the impact the difficult decision is likely to have on local businesses already suffering as a result of accommodation booking cancellations and fewer day visitors, saying

"This is not a decision which has been taken lightly and our hearts are with everyone in the local community in the days and weeks to come."