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Junior Band Musical Directors Report – AGM October 2011

Over the past few months the Junior Band has enjoyed some of the most rewarding experiences since we began together. In particular, our debut in Junior Band section at the National Youth Brass Band Championships was a very proud day on many different levels. On a personal note it fulfilled one of the long term visions I had for the Junior Band when I took charge in 2009. The Junior Band was awarded a bronze certificate, which I was delighted with as we were competing with an average age of around 11 years old in a section which allowed players up to 16 years old. We will return to compete in the Junior section again in 2012.

Perhaps the highlight of the year was our performance at the 21st anniversary concert in July. I received many positive comments following this event with many saying that it was the best performance ever given by the Junior Band in 21 years! Something that the players should be very proud of. We have also continued to perform alongside the other bands at a variety of events and will continue to do so in 2012 as well as fulfilling occasional performances in our own right.

I am pleased that the committee have taken steps to encourage all supporting Lions clubs to invite the Juniors and Beginners alongside the Youth Band to perform at their concerts in 2012. An increase in performance opportunities and exposure for us will improve our confidence on stage and encourage supporters to look beyond the Youth Band at what the organisation has to offer. However, in order to manage these increased opportunities to perform we must ensure that the schedule is not swamped early on in term time as our less experienced players require time to improve their abilities gradually and learn new repertoire at a sensible pace.

During the summer 7 junior players made a full transition to the Youth Band (after a period of switching between bands). Once again this transition period served a good purpose, ensuring the players can cope with the higher level of demand while maintaining the Junior Band standards. It is difficult for us losing so many good players at one time but the new term has began very positively with several promotions from the Beginner Band and several existing junior players stepping up to fill the void left by departed players. In addition we have been joined by a number of players from outside the organisation who were already proficient enough to join at Junior Band level; this is a good thing as it shows our presence is known to local schools and brass teachers. As I write this the Junior Band is carrying an impressive 35 members.

At the end of the summer term I was able to visit 3 local primary schools in order to promote Lions to their brass projects (run by Cheshire East Music Service). Although very positive and receptive at the time, uptake of new members has been slower than last year (when we were able to host a concert for these schools). It is my belief that we must aim to host a similar event for these schools in 2012 in order to attract the next wave of beginner players. Government funding for the Wider Opportunities Brass Projects in our area is likely to be cut in the next year or two, it is

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essential we make the most of the primary school interest in brass while it exists.

My thanks must go to Tom, Derek and Katie for their help and support in the Junior Band over the past year. Derek has recently moved his expertise to the Beginner Band where I am sure he will be a great asset to their team. I look forward to another successful year alongside Tom and Katie. As usual, without support from Jane and the Committee, the tutors and conductors of all of the bands and all of the parents we would not be able to run such a successful organisation.

In the coming year we are looking forward to our annual slow melody competition and concert, Christmas events (including the Junior's performance at Congleton lights switch on), a workshop with Fodens players, new performance opportunities alongside the other bands and of course the National Championships in April.

Many Thanks

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Website

The website has now amassed over 12,000 hits since January 2010 and continues to grow with news stories, pictures, videos and articles about the organisation. Many new members are attracted into the organisation (at all levels) as a result of the website. In recent months a Facebook page has been launched to complement the website and so far has 92 followers. We carefully monitor any pictures which are displayed online and refrain from using individual shots or adding names to group shots wherever possible.