

THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF SEAFORD LITTLE THEATRE

HELD AT THE LITTLE THEATRE ON FRIDAY 24th MARCH 2025

The meeting commenced at 19.30 and the attendees were:

Phil Armstrong, Roland Boorman, Sue Boorman, Alan Clifford, Brenda Clifford, Louis Clifford, Ray Cox, Debbie Cox, Mandy Crnkovic, Alan Douglas, Diane Guyatt, David Hallett, Barry Hobbs, Josie Hobbs, Richard Honeyman, Jenny Humphries, Christyan James, Margaret Kennedy, Alan Lade, Sharon Olieff, David Parton, Tricia Pape, Cicely Ridley, Eloise Tebbutt, Sally Tebbutt, Roger Trace, Mike Truman, Sandy Truman, Graham Tubb, Gill Watson, Sue Williams,

Apologies received from:

Tanya Baxter, Don Faulkner, Clare Penfold, Dennis Picott, Wendy Picott, Trish Richings, Jon Terry, Raymond Tongue, Angie Wright, Mary Young

The minutes of the AGM held on the 22nd March 2024 were approved and signed.

Chairman's Report

It has been an eventful year.

Firstly, I want to speak about the four productions since the 2024 AGM: these made up a varied and interesting season.

A Chorus of Disapproval was a bold choice because it is difficult to stage, but with the usual SLT ingenuity and a willing cast and crew we were able to put it on, acting, singing, dancing and several scene changes all included! It was a very happy production with the large cast having a whale of a time together. This sort of buzz transmits itself to the audience.

A Doll's House provided a change of tone from lighthearted to serious and a classic script which called for a different approach from the actors. Emily Feist as Nora in particular had a heavy task of line-learning which she managed seamlessly.

See How They Run, and another change of tone, this time to outright farce with running in and out of doors, up and down stairs, dropped trousers – the lot! Of course, our loyal and cheerful regular audience loved it and so did the critic, who gave it a rave review.

Machinal and the final contrast of the season. This expressionistic psychological drama, made up of short scenes and many changes of character for the actors, was staged smoothly and slickly. It was a challenge for all involved, including audiences, and many of those who watched it received it warmly.

For some time the loose formula here was to produce a balanced season that included:

- 1) a comedy/farce
- 2) a period piece

3) a thriller/murder-mystery

4) “something for ourselves” that was likely to be a more unusual choice, less guaranteed to attract large audiences.

Sometimes the categories overlapped. Always we tried to consider our loyal following in the town and the necessary fact of life which is that we must make enough money to survive. The old formula will, perhaps, be modified to include more challenging pieces but it is still important to give Seafordians an enjoyable night out. Ticket prices generally are often beyond the reach of many people, but local theatre can provide access to plays that would otherwise be denied. Two for one on opening night has been re-introduced and is proving popular. We need to see its effect over several more productions.

In recent years it has been felt that, in addition to income from productions, frequent outside lettings are essential to our finances. This has tended to become more difficult to manage with occasional clashes of dates meaning that our own activities are affected. It is very difficult to say no to would-be lettings. We do need the money and there is a lack of venues in the town. I am reassured that in the capable hands of Ray and Phil a happy balance will be struck.

The next thing to talk to you about is the repair work that is now almost complete. We were faced with the daunting task of raising over £40,000 to get repairs to the roof, and elsewhere, carried out. Our fund raising, in the energetic and dedicated hands of Roger Trace has been phenomenal. Roger has left no stone unturned, no organisation unapproached, no rabbit-hole unexplored in order to help us reach our target. Couple this with the good-will donations from local groups and various fund-raising initiatives of our own and we have succeeded more quickly than any of us could have envisaged. There are too many awards, donations and fund-raising results to go into in any detail now. So, for a full list just go to the theatre’s website and follow the link.

And now we come onto our change of status as a charity. For many years it was assumed that all members of the management committee would automatically become trustees of the theatre. We had overlooked, however, the possible consequences for those trustees. Should there have been a disaster to the building (an old one), or an accident on the premises, the trustees were liable personally for any expense incurred. For a long time this inconvenience was dismissed by saying that we are insured against such events. Yes, we are, but in the real world insurance companies are often reluctant to pay out in full and will use any loophole to get out of it. This left our trustees in a difficult place and consequently most declined to be trustees at all. (Understandably – I am one of them!) The best and only way out of this corner

has been to put ourselves into the hands of solicitors who have been working with us to change our status from “A Charity” to “A Charitable Incorporated Organisation”. This has involved changing our constitution from a home-grown one to one steeped in legalese, but which covers how we wish to operate as a theatre. This new constitution has been circulated to the membership so that you all would have a chance to look at it in readiness for agreement tonight. I do hope you will vote to agree this new constitution. Once agreed the solicitor can send off our application to the charities’ commission and bring our new status into existence. Once we are a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) trustees will be liable to a maximum of £1 each.

Sue Williams

The new constitution was unanimously agreed.

Hon. Treasurers Report

The accounts have been completed and approved by our Examiner Stewart Fuller.

I would like to thank him for this work that he does thoroughly and very professionally and for free.

I would also like to thank Tanya Baxter for helping me finalise the figures before presentation to Stewart.

The accounts, following this meeting’s approval are then ready to submit to the Charity Commission along with the Trustees report for the year.

- i) On Stewart’s advice we have separated the figures relating to the roof fund to enable comparison of 2024 with 2023. Regarding the roof fund, suffice it to say we entered the year 2024, with quotes for the repairs amounting to £51,000, which initiated the committee ring fencing £10,000 per year and the beginning of the fund - raising campaign. From the accounts you will see that some £13,000 was raised and banked by December 2024, and we paid out £14,250 in that year. Regarding the Raise the Roof campaign, I will leave a fuller report to Roger, our fund raiser and other officers.
- ii) 2024’s income you will see shows a modest but healthy increase in income arising from our 4 productions and both regular and one-off hires. The four productions generated audiences ranging from 53% to 80%, averaging 69%. I think this is a small decrease in numbers over 2023, but I would suggest an increase in the range and ambition of our productions. The income benefited from a small increase in our seating costs following 2023’s AGM, just as 2025 finances will reap the benefits of the decision a year ago to increase our hire charges this year, and our membership fees. We are already seeing the rewards of that, but one or two of our regulars have

expressed some concern over the hire charges, with one organisation leaving us after many years. However other 'regulars' have continued to stick with us and even made some very generous contributions to our roof fund. We are conscious of the huge increases in recent years of our energy costs in particular, and so, must review these hire and membership charges periodically. We believe we remain competitive.

- iii) Finally thank you, the members, and the committee, and our users, for bearing with me as I've attempted to keep on top of these accounts for the last 3 years. It has been a busy time for me, because it has been a busy time for the theatre, particularly the last year, and if there has been any occasional confusion over costs and invoices all has been resolved amicably and satisfactorily.
- iv) And so finally I will attempt to answer any questions you may have regarding finances; but also ask you to approve these accounts.

David Hallett, 24 March 2025

The accounts were unanimously approved.

As the price of electricity is high, Philip Armstrong asked whether other providers had been looked into. David Hallett said he had not been able to do this at this time, but that the next treasurer might consider taking this on.

Margaret Kennedy asked whether it might be worth giving regular groups, such as the Quakers a special rate, but it was felt that this could lead to problems in future and that it was fairer to have a one-price-fits-all. In fact, the Quakers had found that prices and facilities elsewhere did not match ours and had returned to the theatre.

Sue Williams thanked all those who had so generously donated to the roof fund and offered special thanks to Roger Trace for all his hard work in raising funds. Finally she offered grateful thanks to David Hallett for all his work as Treasurer over the years.

**THE SEAFORD DRAMATIC SOCIETY (SEAFORD LITTLE THEATRE)
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR TO 31 DECEMBER 2024**

Income and Expenditure Account for the Year

	YE DEC 2024	YE DEC 2023
<u>Income in pursuit of the Charities objects</u>		
Donations	102	718
Membership (2024) Subscriptions	499	570
Productions	<u>23,628</u>	<u>19,343</u>
	<u>24,229</u>	<u>20,631</u>
<u>Fundraising Activities</u>		
Social Events	1,181	536
Theatre Lettings	7,206	6,594
Other Income	<u>1,586</u>	<u>1,844</u>
	<u>9,973</u>	<u>8,974</u>
Total Income	<u>34,202</u>	<u>29,605</u>
<u>Direct Charitable Expenditure</u>		
Productions	<u>6,248</u>	<u>5,803</u>
<u>Other Expenditure</u>		
Bank Charges	112	117
Donations & Gifts	105	116
Insurance	<u>3,369</u>	<u>2,929</u>
Photocopying & Stationery	67	84
Post & Phone	560	496
IT Software	158	139
Social Events	23	94
Sundry Expenses	<u>1,811</u>	<u>1,898</u>
	<u>6,205</u>	<u>5,873</u>
<u>Premises</u>		
Cleaning	450	225
Refuse Collection	369	345
Repairs	<u>1,364</u>	<u>2,272</u>
Roof Repairs - costs in year	14,250	
less donations received	<u>13,027</u>	<u>1,223</u>
	<u>3,406</u>	<u>2,842</u>
<u>Utilities</u>		
Gas & Electricity	6,852	3,610
Water	<u>483</u>	<u>293</u>
	<u>7,335</u>	<u>3,903</u>
<u>Non Cash Items</u>		
Depreciation Charges	<u>3,878</u>	<u>4,538</u>
Total Expenditure	<u>27,072</u>	<u>22,959</u>
Net Surplus for the Year	<u>7,130</u>	<u>6,646</u>

THE SEAFORD DRAMATIC SOCIETY (SEAFORD LITTLE THEATRE)
STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR YEAR TO 31 DECEMBER 2024

Balance Sheet as at 31 December 2024

	YE DEC 2024	YE DEC 2023
Current Assets		
Cash at banks	39,323	27,353
Cash in Hand	248	1,177
Prepayments (2025 scripts and play licences, sets etc)	1,079	711
Inventory (wine, ices etc)	850	341
	<u>41,000</u>	<u>29,582</u>
Fixed Assets		
Freehold Property		
Cost Brought Forward	61,945	61,945
Additions in year	0	0
Depreciation - Accumulated prior years	(26,343)	(25,104)
Depreciation - Current year	(1,239)	(1,239)
	<u>34,363</u>	<u>35,602</u>
Furniture, Fixtures & Fittings		
Cost Brought Forward	80,818	79,536
Additions in year	0	1,282
Depreciation - Accumulated prior years	(70,876)	(68,391)
Depreciation - Current year	(1,988)	(2,485)
	<u>7,954</u>	<u>9,942</u>
Stage Lighting & Equipment		
Cost Brought Forward	36,938	36,938
Additions in year	0	0
Depreciation - Accumulated prior years	(33,682)	(32,868)
Depreciation - Current year	(651)	(814)
	<u>2,605</u>	<u>3,256</u>
Creditors		
Friends - seats	(1,096)	(331)
Other creditors	(15)	(370)
	<u>(1,111)</u>	<u>(701)</u>
Total Assets Less Current Liabilities	<u>84,811</u>	<u>77,681</u>
Accumulated General Fund		
Balance brought forward	77,681	71,035
Surplus for the year	7,130	6,646
Balance carried forward	<u>84,811</u>	<u>77,681</u>

David Hallett
Trustee

Margaret Kennedy
Trustee

I have completed my examination and no material matters have come to my attention giving me cause to believe that accounting records are not kept as required by the Charities Act or the accounts do not accord with those records

S Fuller
Hon. Examiner

Date

19/02/2025

Election of Executive Officers of the Management Committee.

Position	Nominee	Nominated by	Seconded by
Chairman	Sue Williams	Mary Young	Graham Tubb

All members voted in favour.

Hon. Treasurer	Tanya Baxter	Margaret Kennedy	Debbie Cox
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All members voted in favour.

Sue Williams then took over the meeting as she had been voted in as Chairman.

Position	Nominee	Nominated by	Seconded by
Hon. Secretary	Sandy Truman	Josie Hobbs	Barry Hobbs

All members voted in favour.

Business Manager	Ray Cox	Dennis Picott	Mary Young
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All members voted in favour.

Premises Manager	Angie Wright	Peter Barnes	Roland Boorman
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All members voted in favour.

Membership Secretary	Trish Richings	Sue Williams	Dennis Picott
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All members voted in favour.

Friends' Secretary	Roger Trace	Sue Williams	Mary Young
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All members voted in favour.

Social Secretary	Debbie Cox	Mary Young	Isobelle Matthews
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All members voted in favour.

Public Relations Secretary	David Parton	Margaret Kennedy	Graham Tubb
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All members voted in favour.

Lettings Secretaries	Phil Armstrong and Ray Cox	Roland Boorman	Sue Boorman
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All members present voted in favour.

Little Theatre Guild Rep.	Mike Truman	Barry Hobbs	Josie Hobbs
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All members present voted in favour.

There were no other members put forward for election.

Restructuring of Play week.

Sue Williams went through the two options, which were:

- a) keep the performance dates as they are currently, i.e., Friday and Saturday then Monday through to Saturday,
- b) change to Friday, Saturday, Sunday, then Tuesday through to Saturday.

35 votes were cast (some being from members who had sent apologies)

23 voted to maintain the status quo (Option A) and 12 voted for change (Option B). There were no spoilt ballots. Consequently, play week will remain in the same format as at present for the foreseeable future.

There being no further questions from the assembled members, Sue declared the meeting closed at 8.15 p.m.

Signed.....

Sue Williams – Chairman

Date.....

Signed.....

Sandy Truman – Secretary

Date.....