

THE MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF SEAFORD LITTLE THEATRE

HELD VIA ZOOM ON FRIDAY, 26th FEBRUARY 2021

The meeting commenced at 7.05pm.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE were received, Alan & Deborah Lade, Josie & Barry Hobbs, Douglas Wragg, John Hamilton, Cicely & Stuart Ridley, Jenny Humphries, Garry Fowler, Gillian Watson, Debbie & Ray Cox & Sharon Olief

There were 16 members present and 2 non members

The Meeting was opened by the Chairman, Margaret Kennedy, who welcomed everyone.

2. MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD 1st NOVEMBER 2019

The minutes were agreed by those present and will be signed as a correct record

3. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

We started the year in Nov 2019 on a high with an excellent production of "On Golden Pond". Well done to Trish Richings and her whole team. The year was completed with our Christmas meal at Diela's organised by Ray when we took over the whole restaurant and a good time was had by all. This gave us the opportunity to thank Cicely for her years as Friends secretary and award her Life Membership and then to thank Mary for taking back the Committee Secretary role, after stepping down from her three years as Chairman and then to accept our request to be our President, which I am very happy to say, she accepted. 2020 started with another enjoyable February production of "There goes the Bride", by first time Director, Phil Armstrong and his team. It was so good to sit in the coffee lounge and hear gales of laughter coming from the auditorium, which subsequently felt so fitting that this was the last sound heard from an audience to date. Of course this was another first as we had just gone on line for our bookings with the Tourist Information centre, thanks to Alan & Deborah Lade and we were expecting to get even better for the next play having had Wifi installed and you can see Alan's update at the end of the minutes. But it was not to be. Rehearsals were well under way for "Ladies in Lavender", with the majority of the complicated set already built, with the cast just starting to rehearse without books, when the first lockdown hit us and rehearsals came to a halt. Even so we managed to get the electrics for our proposed aircon system carried out and a small but intrepid band, led by Alan, used the opportunity to get all of the jobs they were itching to do done. The full details are in Alan's update at the end of the minutes. Meanwhile play readings which was now in the hands of Deborah had to move to Zoom with Jon as our host. Various members took on the role of organising plays and giving out the parts of something old, something new, something borrowed and something blue, literally. Also the quizzes, organised by Roger & Karen, with various members taking the lead and here we are with no idea of when we can open again and under what conditions, but this has happened to our society before and like a phoenix we have risen from the ashes and I am confident we shall do so again. It will be so good to go back to Monday morning coffee, our monthly tea and toast, evening rehearsals, workshop Wednesdays and our ever popular social events. Not to mention the very useful "Lets" that help boost our income. My thanks to everyone who worked so hard to make productions successful. Liz & Len who with

Phil Jenner are the first people the audience sees. All of the members who take on the stewardship duty, programmes drinks and ices. For our housekeeper Cicely, who keeps all of our basic needs stocked up and who will be standing down and goes with our grateful thanks. For Ray our Business and lettings manager who deals with the financial side each evening, to the Directors and their teams making it an enjoyable experience for themselves as well as their audiences. For the production team of myself, Deborah, Sharon, Sue & David, who read and suggest future productions. For the workshop team under the leadership of Alan, who continue to build impressive sets. For all of the other members of the Management Committee not mentioned so far, Gill, our Premises Manager, Dennis who keeps us up to date with LTG information, Debbie our tea and toast queen and social events secretary, Garry and Kate and last but by no means least to Jon for bringing our accounts into the 21st Century and for Roger who goes above and beyond as Committee Secretary, as well as looking after the Friends and to our President Mary, for her support. And finally to those who are stepping down from the Committee, Sharon, Kate & Phil but we shall see you again on our return. And to our current Vice Chairman and Membership Secretary, Penny who's family started Seaford Dramatic Society, who will be moving away shortly and we offer our very grateful thanks and life Membership. That is my report for the year on this evening of a full moon and a day when I am celebrating my 50th year in Theatre. I started in 1971 and did 22 years with St. Peters Players Watford and I have done 29 years here with Seaford Little Theatre.

4. HON. TREASURER'S REPORT & ADOPTION OF ACCOUNTS

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31st DECEMBER 2020

Jon Terry presented the accounts and shared the figures on the screen and explained the figures on the two sheets. This year the accounting year end changed. Previously was August and we have changed to the calendar year now, so this set of accounts covers 16 months and runs from 1st Sept 2019 to 31st Dec 2020. Because of that, it is not quite so devoid of income as shown, as for most of 2020 the Theatre was "dark", but it does include income from "On Golden Pond" and from "There goes the Bride", both of which were successful productions and we had income of £13,252 from those two productions. Membership subscriptions are much the same as usual, but with only 12 months subscriptions, as we took the decision that whilst we were extending our accounting year end that we would waive the additional months. The donation is from the group from the Crypt who were impressed, particularly with Ray, being able to use the Theatre and decided to support us. Other fundraising, Theatre lettings, (Quakers being the main one), bridge club and knitting circle and various others. The social events included the Christmas activities from 2019. The other income is from various things, the main one being the in house play reading group and also when we went to online ticketing sales there was a float that was kept out of the bank and was no longer required and therefore paid in. We have also received a £10,000 grant due to the pandemic. Income £28,441 for the 16 months. Down from a normal 16 months period due to the pandemic. Expenditure, all are showing for 16 months. There will be at least a 10% reduction on our insurance going forward. IT costs include the cost of installing a phone line and broadband and hence higher than previously. Repair work £5,857, includes a lot of the work that was carried out whilst the Theatre was closed and also £2,500 for electrical work carried out and for getting fire extinguishers up to date. Energy is higher than expected for a 16 months period and we are currently in discussions with the energy company to obtain money back for overpayment during the period, once meter readings are submitted. The balance sheet is at the 31st December 2020 and shows the assets and liabilities of the Theatre and as at that date we had £12,771 in the bank. Assets mostly as previous years. The Freehold

property as per the accounting convention is shown at the historical costs plus any structural additions since ownership, which is looking at 50 years plus and not shown as current value of the property. The Theatre has nett funds of £77,266. Because the property is at original cost rather than current value, it significantly understates the assets of the Theatre. The independent examiner of these accounts will be Mr Fuller from East Dean. There were no questions following the Treasurers detailed explanation of the accounts.

5.RESOLUTIONS:

Jon explained that we have been trying to amend the constitution signing rules so that we can proceed with internet banking with HSBC. At our last submission, they advised us that we needed a single designated person to authorise payments and hence why we have moved to a single signatory on cheques and bank payments. However, the Committee will still require 2 authorisations for payments over £1,000.

The proposed amendments to the Constitution are as follows:

- 17b. Change to: The funds of the Society, including all members' fees, donations, box office income and bequests, shall be paid into an account operated by the Management Committee in the name of the Society at such bank as the Management Committee shall from time to time decide. All cheque, card and online payments can be signed/approved by a single authorised signatory. However, for any amount over £1,000, 2 Committee members must approve the transaction beforehand.
- 18. Change of the financial year, to start on the first day of January, instead of Sept and the balance sheet to be prepared within three calendar months instead of two.
- 19a. AGM to be held in the month of February instead of October. This can be held virtually, if circumstances does not allow members to meet in person.
- 19e. In the event of a virtual meeting, nominations for Management Committee can be accepted electronically by the Hon. Secretary

The resolutions were approved un-opposed and the Constitution will be amended accordingly.

6. ELECTION OF EXECUTIVE OFFICERS OF THE

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE Mary said she was honoured to be President and will support the Committee for the next few years, but not necessarily for life, like Valerie did. She said that for the position of Chairman, the only nomination we have is Margaret Kennedy and Mary asked for agreement and this was carried. The following people were nominated and had agreed to stand for election and the positions were uncontested and approved by all members present at the meeting:-

Chairman: Margaret Kennedy nominated by Mary Young, seconded by Roger Trace

Vice Chairman: Currently vacant due to Penny moving

Hon. Treasurer: Jon Terry, nominated by Roger Trace, seconded by Margaret Kennedy.

Hon. Secretary & Friends Secretary: Roger Trace, nominated by Margaret Kennedy, seconded by Mary Young

Premises Manager: Gillian Watson, nominated by Roger Trace, seconded by Jon Terry

Membership Secretary: David Williams, nominated by Margaret Kennedy, seconded by Jon Terry. Note that David does not want to be part of the Committee, which was accepted in this instance.

Business Manager: Ray Cox, nominated by Roger Trace, seconded by Mary Young

Social Secretary: Debbie Cox, nominated by Jon Terry, seconded by Roger Trace

Public Relations Manager: Deborah Lade, nominated by Margaret Kennedy, seconded by Mary Young.

7. ELECTION OF MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Dennis Picott was nominated by Roger Trace, seconded by Margaret Kennedy

Garry Fowler was nominated by Roger Trace, seconded by Jon Terry

Both positions were uncontested and approved by all members present at the meeting.

8. TO CLOSE THE AGM

The Chairman closed the Annual General Meeting at 7.55pm with thanks to everyone for attending.

9. QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

- Update from Alan Lade:

In case you missed it there has been a bit of a pandemic knocking about which has caused a slight inconvenience to our usual activities. This came just as we were finally in a position to implement our new online booking system in all its glory. We had had a partial introduction for There Goes the Bride, utilizing the new booking office at Seaford TIC which had gone very well but Ladies in Lavender would have seen the full system in use including FOH. Alas that was not to be but we are all in place as and when we can re-open.

Elsewhere the start of 2020 saw a new and revamped Newsletter with a more compact design, something I had been trying to find time to implement for quite a while. Despite the lack of productions this has continued to be compiled and distributed, albeit only online as an electronic copy, and hopefully has kept people in touch with what is happening.

With all set building on hold, I thought it would be a good opportunity to sort out some of the outstanding plans for alterations to the theatre, including extending the men's dressing room, as well as providing additional storage space and a general tidy up of the props, set furniture and the green room. So the last year has seen a bigger and revamped dressing room, a new storage area for the lighting, renewed tormenters, lots of additional shelving and rearrangement and refreshing of the green room and a new brick lean-to for storage of set doors. With regard to this latter construction, we were blessed to have the considerable skills of Frank West, one of the workshop team, who undertook the building of the main structure. So a huge thanks to him as well as Ray Cox and Garry Fowler who put in a lot of hard work too. At the same time Gary English and Phil Armstrong have been overhauling and testing all the lighting equipment.

There are still some additional bits and pieces on the to-do list which include overhauling the big shed and re-roofing the small lean-to which has suffered in the recent

strong winds, plus a bit of a penetrating damp problem in the corridor by the stage door, but these will have to wait for better weather.

- Suggestion from a new member, Lesley Drew regarding a Zoom workshop, which had been run by a member of her previous group and related to developing character. Cost is £100 and for a maximum of 10 people for approximately 2 hours. She shared the screen and the following slide was shown:

Drama Workshop using Guided Visualisation

This is a workshop for willing participants who would like to do some characterisation work on a character of their own choosing from a play that they know. The format will be something like:

1. Introduction of workshop/ hypnosis
2. Introduction of members around the group and the characters they will be working on
3. Go into break out rooms of 2/3 people with the short scripts that I have prepared and shared and have a quick 5-10-minute practice of familiarising themselves with the script and reading it aloud in the manner of their chosen characters.
4. The group comes together. I conduct 30-minutes of hypnosis (or guided visualisation - I'm not precious about what it's called), inviting the imagination to create the character in question.
5. The break-out groups then, each in turn perform their scripts, in character to the rest of the group.
6. Group discussion to share how people found the experience. What differences they noted between their first practice reading and the readings after the hypnosis.
7. Final relaxation hypnosis to file the character away and end the session with a lovely warm feeling.
8. End of workshop.

My background is in hypnotherapy, psychotherapy and drama.

Cost: £100 per workshop. Max. 10 participants

Workshop lasts 2 hours

Contact: Symantha Simcox connect@symanthas.com

<https://symanthas.com/>

Each person to pay their own £10. Some interest was shown and we would probably get enough to fill 10 spaces and possible 2 sessions may have to be run. This needs to be put to the wider membership via the next newsletter. Obviously will be only people who are willing to use Zoom. To be mentioned at the next play reading and quiz. If anyone attending the meeting are interested, they should e mail Roger.

- Air Con/Ventilation System/Funding

Estimates received for Air Con and the electrics have already been installed. However, it looks as if the air con on its own is not enough to re-open, as it just moves the air around. A rough idea of price for a ventilation system was obtained and £18,000 quoted, making the air con + ventilation system roughly £35,000. Gill was also currently obtaining a price from her daughters brother-in-law, as he works for a company who installs ventilation systems and this can be compared with the quote we have so far. Roger had rung a couple of companies and was given ball park figures for a Theatre of our size and it was a lot more expensive than Climachill. Guidelines have been obtained from Eddie Redfern from LTG for our Theatre size. Roland put forward the idea of having performances outside. We do require the air con due to the heat generated within the Theatre during the summer months and of course with Covid and potentially other virus's, a ventilation system is a real necessity. We had applied for grants from the Arts Council and the Theatre re-opening fund, to no avail. This originally was for the air con and we were advised subsequently that this would chill the air, but only move it around, hence our now reviewing a ventilation system as well, in view of Covid. We are going to re-submit to both schemes for a ventilation system. The time frame for a ventilation system is around 6-8 weeks. However, we do need to obtain funding. As well as putting in for grants, including one Jon is to apply for from the local government, we need to fundraise and Dennis mentioned a just giving page could be a good idea. Jon stated that we need to be clear what we are aiming for and this should be discussed at the next Committee Meeting. Sarah mentioned she was happy to set up a just giving page if necessary.

- Tide Mills Project. Margaret introduced this project and detailed what it entailed. Actors are required to take on characters during a period in Sept. All agreed that this is something we should be involved in. Details of this will go out in the next newsletter. It is all about promoting Seaford and of course our Theatre.
- Re-opening. Margaret asked do we carry on with our programme, "Ladies in Lavender", "Shock" and "See how they run". It was suggested we start with a comedy. It does of course depend on what the government dictates regarding social distancing etc. Margaret suggested two one act comedies. There is also a proposal for Graham to put on a Music Hall event or small variety show. Singing could be a problem of course. If we have to have just a 50% audience seated, then we may have to perform for more evenings. We need to work on how we open, entrances, exits etc and the stewards would have to advise people when they should exit etc. It was put forward that it seems a shame to pull down the current set and perhaps a comedienne could perform in front of the set, so we do not have to break it down. The set has not been dressed. Margaret to discuss with Graham regarding a possibility for Sept and we could bring it forward if we are able to open up earlier. A small group needs to meet to review options. Dennis and Roland mentioned again the potential of an outdoors production of some sort and they are to liaise together and advise back. Roland also mentioned that he could give a talk on the history of the society, potentially to new members. He also put forward the potential of a lottery scheme to raise money. Margaret mentioned that we need to put to Seaford Town to help us raise money. This has to be done legally and will be discussed at Committee. David and Jon will be discussing how they collect membership fees and will advise how this is to be done. Phil mentioned that when doing this, perhaps members could be asked to donate further funds.

The meeting finally closed at 20.12