

Wells Operatic Society Ltd. AGM and Members Social Evening

Friday 21st March 2014

- 7.30 Reception** of wine and nibbles in the bar, The Mayor, our President, **Cllr Theo Butt-Philip** attended
8.15 AGM - in the theatre auditorium **Full members** total 45, others 5= attending 50
1 (GE) Apologies for Absence. - Maureen Brandon and Alistair Glandville (in Vietnam), Mark Hutchinson (Canary Islands), David and Annette Papworth (50th Wedding anniversary), Peter Wild (somewhere in Europe), Roger and Jean Reeson (Malta), Norman Cowell (Africa), Alan Hooley (Croscombe), Lisa Cope, Sylvia and Colin Guy, Penny Bonnetti, Sarah Briton, Gill Kerton, Carol Phillimore, Pip and Margaret Rice, Lesley Rickets, Jon Sansam, Georgia Wall, Pat Watkins

- 2 (GE) Minutes of the 2013 A.G.M.** held on the 24th May – they have been on the bar notice board
3 (GE) Matters Arising – none, agree that they are a true record of the meeting: Proposer - Marcel Wills, Seconder - Frank Bonetti
In the absence of a Chairman the Vice Chairman will signed the minutes book
4 (DG) Chairman's report
- This is the 112th year of Wells Operatic Society Limited. The Society is registered at Companies House (registered number 1377655) and is also a registered charity (number 276308). This year the Society has operated without a Chairman, and the Committee has shared the function of Chairman amongst its members. I have been asked to present the Chairman's Report as part of that process. The privilege and responsibility of this post needs to be considered again. It is our unwritten rule that each Chairman should not be in the position for more than four years. Any new Chairman does not have to be appointed for longer than one year, but clearly some consistency in personnel is of benefit to the Society. DG thanked the outgoing committee.

2013 has proved to be an astonishingly active year for the Society. There have been seven productions (Anything Goes, Beauty & The Beast, Mort, End Game, Pajama Game, Rumours and Goldilocks) and surely we must rank as the most active group in the whole of Somerset.

Gill Kerton stepped down from running the bar and Sarah and Emma Longley have taken on that mantle, assisted by Jo and Mike Scammell who operate the bar stock levels. The new tills for the bar have been bought and installed very successfully and we now operate a two tier price system (public and members) which appears to work very well. Thank you to Alan Hooley for his hard work in relation to that.

The website has been improved. We have progressed the project for the orchestra pit and stage improvements – more on that to follow. We have overhauled the auditorium sound system and there has been a remarkable improvement in audio quality as a result. Thanks to Rob Rogers and Graham Brown. We have registered ownership of the theatre and land. Another interesting and encouraging feature for 2013 has been the advent of new directors. Maria Oltenau- Furze, Sharon Edmonds and Doreen

Thanks also goes to Sarah Neale for her work with the Youth Theatre. Sadly she is having to limit this from now on, and her report follows.

Judi Neal – (10 year award)

Carol Phillimore (15 year award) awarded at the Dinner Dance

Peter Ross (15 year award)

Roy Bevan Award. This year the subcommittee of previous winners, and lead by Sharon Upham were unable to identify a recipient, mainly due to the very small number of nominations received, and so there will be no award this year.

I am happy to report that membership numbers are maintained and the decline in patron numbers has stopped. We continue to be extremely successful as a competitive society, both in terms of nominations and winners, in each of the three County competitions (Phoebe Rees, David Beach and Cinderella).

5 Members' Reports

- a) Past and Forthcoming Productions – Sharon Edmonds gave a report on the years' productions.
Beauty and the Beast directed by Sarah Neale; Mort by the rather fabulous Terry Pratchett and magnificently directed by the equally fabulous Mr Ken Edmonds. Endgame directed by Maria Olteanu-Furze. The Pyjama Game with Alan Hooley. Rumours by the ever brilliant Doreen Grant. Goldilocks and the 3 bears. By herself. Next: Stepping Out, Into the woods, Accrington Pals, Snow White.
The only definite for 2015 is the musical Spend Spend Spend where we will be welcoming Brian Epps in to direct. The membership are encouraged to volunteer to take an active role in future productions.
- b) Youth Theatre – Sarah Neale. This present Youth Theatre has run since January 2009. There have been many highlights and Awards, nominations and successes beyond our stage, but Sarah is unable to continue running it, and so we look for another team to take over the leadership.
- c) Entertainment and Social report – Louise Baker and Alisa Creaser. A full year of activities – Games night, Quiz nights, Halloween saw the Murder Mystery evening, annual Carnival Curry, Mince Pie and Mulled Wine evening and the introduction to Into The Woods...
On to the present; The Dinner Dance! 25th April at the Swan, buffet style dinner with the entertainment from Disco Dave!
- d) Orchestra Pit and Stage Improvements Project – Nick Furze and RW. An initial summary of the year's developments led to discussion and further details. Nick Furze then outlined the proposals. This led to a valuable and enlightening debate. Many words of support and interest from a variety of the membership. The proposal was then put forward.

PROPOSAL FROM STAGE & PIT PROJECT SUB-COMMITTEE

"That this Society shall proceed with plans as outlined in the document entitled "Briefing Document for Society Members Prior to AGM: Stage and Pit Project" attached hereto, subject to appropriate funding being approved by the Committee with a maximum commitment by the Society of one-third of the total outlay".

A show of hands indicated Yes – 17 No – 19. As a result the sub-committee did not gain the backing of the membership to proceed. RW then asked those present to indicate if they would like the subcommittee to continue with their work and come up with alternative solutions. This was strongly agreed by those present. The suggestion is then that the subcommittee prepare (an)other proposal, hold an open / information evening so allow more questions from the members and then arrange an EGM to present findings to the membership. All those present recognised the considerable effort that the subcommittee had gone to, and thanked them for their work. Thanks to Kathryn and visuals, Nick Furze for chair, RW and Dave Collier for technical details.

6 (PP) Treasurer's Report and Appointment of Accountants

Appointment of Accountants - the Treasurer recommended that Webb and Company remain as our accountants and business advisers, this was formally Proposer Graham Brown Seconder Richard Wright

Treasurer's report

1. All accounts are in credit and the general financial situation is healthy with our overall reserves having gone up by about £3500.
2. We have changed our financial year to end in December which fits in with our pattern of productions and the annual subscriptions that begin in January each year. Because of this the accounts presented tonight only cover a period of 9 months.
3. In those 9 months there were 7 productions which cost £34,000 and brought in an income of £38,500. Theatre hire brought in a further £2300.
4. The new bar pricing has resulted in a net surplus for the 9 months of £3400 as opposed to £1900 surplus for the whole of the previous 12 months. Percentage gross profit has gone up from 37% to 48% - so keep on drinking!
5. On the down side, our accountants have been looking at the way we treat VAT in the light of recent legislation relating to theatres and have come to the conclusion that we should only be claiming a refund of about 25% of what we have been claiming in the past and that anything relating to productions, including the stage, auditorium, lighting etc. cannot be included in the claim. This will have a big implication for the pit project and any other future improvements or repairs.
6. Full details of the accounts are on the noticeboard in the bar and members are encouraged to read them
The Treasurer commended the accounts to the meeting and proposed that these be adopted
This was seconded by Graham Brown

7 (DG) President's address.

The Mayor, our President, Cllr Theo Butt-Phillip

The Mayor said he was really pleased to return again to our AGM, and recognised that this was a unique situation due to our change of financial year; he suggested that should we revert to the original date we work avoid completely the next Mayor (Chris Briton) attending! Our President spoke of the incredible effort the society goes thorough to put on a good range of shows each year, he has attended; Mort and was pleased to see so many young people in the cast, Pyjama Game, and Rumours – which he felt was the highlight. He is looking forward to Stepping Out next week. His abiding Memory of being Mayor was the realisation that throughout Wells there was an abundance of enthusiasm, effort, energy, passion and willingness. He said we were among those that were particularly special because not only were they able but they were talented as well. We set an excellent example to the City. He wished the society every success in the future, and promised to keep returning to our productions.

8 (GE) Election of officers and Committee

There have been no nominations for the position of Chairman, and so the outgoing committee propose to continue with a 'floating' chair where the tasks of the **Chairman** are divided up and the committee meetings are 'chaired' by different members of the committee. There have been no nominations for the position of **Theatre Administrator**. All other titled roles have received one nomination. There have also been 5 nominations for the 4 positions of 'committee member'. With the lack of committee nominations (no Chairperson or Administrator) it is proposed we elect all 5 willing volunteers.

There has been one nomination for the post of -

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| Vice-Chairman | – Richard Wright who is duly elected |
| Treasurer | – Pauline Perrin who is duly elected |
| Secretary | – Gerald Evers who is duly elected |
| Patrons Secretary | – Lyn Jones who is duly elected |
| Publicity Officer | – Ken Edmonds who is duly elected |
| Stage Representative | – Graham Brown who is duly elected |

And Committee members (alphabetical order) - **Norman Cowell, Alisa Creaser, Sharon Edmonds, Kate Lynch, Sarah Neale** all are duly elected

Date of the next committee meeting - Monday April 28th 7.30pm in the Little Theatre Bar

9 (DG) Any Other Business

1. Anne Beachey - could we have more Play readings
2. Graham Brown - plea for more stage crew support / help
3. There was also a request to follow up more offers from volunteers
4. Mark Wall – could the committee look at replacing auditorium seating?
5. The Secretary thanked Doreen for her support over the years as a committee member, and especially her 'Charing' of the meeting tonight. He also thanked Mark Wall who, for many years has been a strong and guiding influence on the committee and we will miss him.
6. Thanks to Ken and Sharon for organising the food for tonight

Meeting finished at 9.55