

Wells Operatic Society Ltd.
Minutes of the AGM Friday 13th May 2011

A Reception of wine and nibbles in the bar was followed at 8.15 by the AGM in the theatre auditorium

Attendance Full members– total 43 others total **6 total 49 attending**

Ladies and Gentlemen welcome to the Annual General Meeting for Wells Operatic Society. Welcome to our President, the Mayor of Wells Cllr Tony Robbins.

1. Apologies for Absence.- Roger and Jean Reeson, Anne Beechey, Elspeth Salmon, Mark Hutchinson, Mary Hayter, David and Annette Papworth, Penny Bonetti, Kate Lynch, Marcel Wills, Jackie Young, Alison Leyland, Paul and Lisa Willetts, Lesley and Terry Ricketts, Pete and Jill Taylor, John Clogg, Gill Kerton, Ken and Mel Mahoney
2. Minutes of the 2010 A.G.M. held on the 14th May, these have been on the bar notice board
3. Matters Arising- none. Do you agree that they are a true record of the meeting? Proposer -Chris Spray, Seconded-Norman Cowell
Chairman signed minute book
4. Chairman's report

a) Proposal to increase membership fees. At the October 2010 committee meeting it was agreed to propose changes to the membership fees. The Committee discussed the various membership classes and fees. It was also agreed, to propose to the membership that as from January 2012 the cost of full 'Ordinary' membership should be £25pa. We also propose to finish offering both 'Social Membership' and 'Subscribers'.

Proposer - Mark Wall, Seconded Sharon Edmonds

b) Proposal to change 'the election of Life Membership' rule (in the Society rules) At the November 2010 committee meeting it was agreed to propose changes for the election of life members. According to our rules we should 'elect' life membership at a general meeting – i.e. the AGM. The committee felt that the discussion and decision to present Life Membership to a member was the role of the committee, rather than a general forum such as the AGM or an EGM. Original rule: Rule 16. On the recommendation of the General Committee full members may in special circumstances be elected life members at any General Meeting of The Company and shall thereafter be entitled to all the privileges of membership without paying the annual subscription or any special payment for such life membership. A two-thirds majority of those present and voting shall be necessary to insure election

Suggested change to Rule 16. *'The committee may choose to award the special privileges of Life Membership to a member of the society. The presentation of this award shall be at a suitable membership event, i.e. the AGM, Dinner Dance or other special social gathering. The individual shall thereafter be entitled to all the privileges of membership without paying the annual subscription or any special fee, the details of which will be made known to them at the presentation of the award. A two-thirds majority of those present at the committee meeting shall be necessary to insure election.* Proposer - Sue Scott, Seconded - Chris Spray Carried unanimously

Chairman's Report

This is the 109th year of Wells Operatic Society Ltd. The Society is registered at Companies House (registered number 1377655) and is also a registered charity (number 276308).

'This is my third AGM report as Chairman and it has been my custom on these occasions to thank the committee for their hard work throughout the year, and I do not intend to break with that tradition. If you read the minutes of committee meetings posted on the notice board in the bar (and I very much hope that you do) you will appreciate that there is a lot of work going on behind the scenes to ensure that the Theatre itself as a building is maintained and improved and that the productions and social activities that we arrange are successful and rewarding. Thanks to all of those dedicated people and I would like to just run through briefly for you what they do.'

The Chairman continued to outline the tasks undertaken by members of the committee, and thanked them for their dedication and commitment to the society. In particular he drew attention to Gordon Scott who after 20 years is stepping down as Treasurer, Chris Spray who has committed vast amounts of time into the new box office system and Lisa Cope who is stepping down as Patrons Secretary. He also thanked several non-committee members; Sarah Neale for her continued hard work with the Little Theatre's Youth Theatre, Norman Cowell for his duties as Box Office coordinator, Vicky Orman, Katy Biggs and Mark O'Callaghan for the Newsletter, plus Marcel Wills and Jackie Young for their continued and constant running of the Front of House.

Sharon Upham was thanked for her work as the Roy Bevan Award coordinator. The Chairman (after a dramatic pause) announced that this year's winner would be presented with the award at the Dinner Dance. (The winner was Tina Eyers, presented at the DD on 28th May at the Swan Hotel, Wells.)

There were two NODA long service awards to present, and one of them will be presented at the Dinner Dance but the other one is for tonight and is a 10-year award to Pauline Perrin. (The second award, presented at the Dinner Dance was to Marcel Wills for 60 years service to the Society (diamond bar)).

The Chairman concluded by reminding the membership of our history of very high standards in the production of dramas, musicals and pantomime. Not only should we be proud of our entertainment, but also the building that we maintain, improve and develop.

5. Members' Reports

Past Productions – Sharon Edmonds gave a review of the shows during the last year. 'The King and I', this was a fabulous production with everyone pulling out all the stops to produce a lavish and spellbinding show. The ballet, performances and direction was excellent, and although not award winning there were several highly commended aspects, 'a truly magical spring show'. 'Silhouette' came next in at the end of June, brilliantly directed by our own King Rat himself, Mark, with excellent performances by John Howden, Frank Edgeller, Emma James and Tris Hann. 'The shooting of the award stands out in my mind as one of our best moments!' September saw us jetting off to pastures new with 'Little Lights up 2'. This show was a testament to the hard work and dedication of Tina, who, despite endless obstacles being thrown at her, managed to bring a huge, raggedy cast together and produce a slick and entertaining variety show. Pantomime, 'Dick Whittington' directed by Richard, was another masterpiece created by Vicky Orman, Katy Biggs and Mark O'Callaghan. We were introduced to a new talent in Ashley Watson who was brilliant as Tommy the Cat. Once again, so many fabulous performances combined to make this a great production and a huge success. So many people now come to Wells instead of seeing professional productions in Bath and Bristol as they know the standard will be just as high and we did not disappoint. Sharon recommend highly to all that having a go at being a member of the crew it very rewarding. The recent production of 'Pirates of Penzance' was praised as 'yet another fabulous production from the truly talented group of people we have here at the Theatre'.

Forthcoming Productions – Chris Spray. Chris outlined the year ahead. 'Our Country's Good', directed by Lois Harbinson – to be performed from Wednesday 6th - Saturday 9th July 2011. A true story of convicts and Royal Marines sent to Australia in 1787/88 as part of the first penal colony. 'It is a moving and funny play and a cry of triumph for the power and enduring worth of theatre.'

'Brenda Bly – Teen Detective' a musical that lands somewhere between 'Scooby Doo', 'Grease' and 'Happy Days'; great fun, fabulous music with high energy dance and movement. Directed by Alan Hooley and runs from Wednesday 15th to Saturday 17th September.

'Robin Hood' Our pantomime directed by Tina Evers, is going to be another action packed effort of monumental silliness from the creative minds that inflicted "*Dick Whittington and his Cat*" on an unsuspecting world. "Robin Hood" is a roller-coaster ride of adventure, magic and ridiculous shenanigans. Saturday 10th to Saturday 17th December.

'The Sound of Music' is an iconic film and although the stage version is different it has such memorable songs as "Edelweiss", "The Lonely Goat Herd" and "Climb Every Mountain". Gill Kerton's direction will bring this show to our stage from Monday 16th April to Saturday 21st April – 2012.

Theatre Improvements – Mark Wall. The much anticipated foyer, bar & inner foyer carpet has been laid & is looking resplendent. Orchestra pit area is the focus of improvements led by Alan Hooley. Raising the main mirrors in the Green room done and plans are afoot to renew the poorly fitting workshop door, & bar store doors. Heating & ventilation system for the dressing room areas is to be investigated. The possibility of having solar electric panels installed on the theatres roof has been muted, thereby providing us with limitless free electricity during daylight hours, excellent news for the summer BBQ bouncy castle! A yellow hatch box has appeared in front of divers' garage. 'Regardless of how much or little we the committee & volunteers have achieved this year, be aware of your surroundings, don't take it for granted, & assume somebody else will do it, it is your building, your theatre, it is unique, use it, appreciate it.'

Youth Theatre – Sarah Neale. This continues to grow in popularity attracting currently 50 members aged 5-19, and another 25 on the waiting list. Sarah shared with the society the names of individuals who have extended their theatrical skills beyond our youth theatre, from stage schools to recorded programmes. At the moment the group are working on two numbers that will be part of the 'Have a Heart' charity production later this month. She announced that in 2012 the Youth Theatre will be presenting 'The Wiz'. The invitation to support, help contribute or just find out more about the activities of the Youth Theatre is always open.

Entertainment/Social report – Alan Hooley. The regular and now well established round of social events were again very successful this year – the mulled wine and mince pie evening in December, summer BBQ, November carnival curry, dinner dance and pre show party, all were well supported by members. Anyone who is keen to get involved with the organisation of this sort of event should talk to Alan.

6. Treasurer's Report and Appointment of Accountants

The Treasurer recommended that Webb and Company remain as our accountants and business advisers, this was formally proposed by Julie Makin, and Seconded by Norman Cowell. No objections.

The Treasurer gave his final (after 20 years) report to the society. All accounts are in credit and the general financial situation of the society is healthy. The society produced five productions during the last year, all of which produced a profit. Sadly we have lost our grants from both MDC and The City Council, and our Concessionary Business Rates Rebate has been removed, so we now have to 20% of the rates – approx £270. Full details of the accounts have been pinned to the bar notice board and members are encouraged to read them. The Treasurer commended the accounts to the meeting and proposed that these be adopted. Proposer, - Alan Hooley, Seconded, - Mark Wall

7. President's address.

The Mayor of Wells, Cllr Tony Robbins addressed the meeting. He praised the society for the large amount of the work that we do and valued position that the society holds in the community. He recognised the strong and long standing relationship that the Little Theatre and its patrons and members have with the City Council, and this is even more so due to the recent election of Chris Briton (applause from the members).

Our President thanked the Society for the production of our Spring Show, 'The Pirates of Penzance', commenting that it was a most professional performance and a very memorable evening. He concluded that the City of Wells has a real jewel in the Little Theatre, second only to the Cathedral, and that we should be really proud of the work we do and the enthusiastic, dedication and hard work of it's membership and committee.

The President then read out the nominations for the new committee officers and membership.

8. Election of officers and Committee

This year it was not necessary to hold a vote having received one nomination for each of the places on the committee. However there have been no nominations for the position of '**Publicity Officer**' and so, if the membership is happy, and we have no late volunteers, that position will be left vacant. A show of hands indicated approval of each nomination and subsequent election.

There has been one nomination for the post of -

Chairman	Richard Wright <i>who is duly elected</i>
Vice-Chairman	Mark Wall <i>who is duly elected</i>
Treasurer	Pauline Perrin <i>who is duly elected</i>
Secretary	Gerald Evers <i>who is duly elected</i>
Theatre Administrator	Gordon Scott <i>who is duly elected</i>
Patrons Secretary	Elly Milln <i>who is duly elected</i>
Publicity Officer	Position left vacant
Stage Representative	Graham Brown <i>who is duly elected</i>

There have been four nominations for the four **committee members** - **Norman Cowell, Alan Hooley, Doreen Grant and Sharon Edmonds**, *all are duly elected*

Date of the next committee meeting Monday June 13th 7.30pm in the Little Theatre Bar

9. Any Other Business

There were no issues raised in writing to the secretary.

The Chairman briefly outlined the new Box office system shortly to come into use, many thanks to Chris Spray.

Thanks to Alan and Irene Hooley for organising the food for tonight.

The Chairman thanks all those who attended and encouraged them to stay for a chat and a drink. The meeting finished at 9.16