Wells Operatic Society Ltd.
AGM and Members Social Evening
Friday 27th March 2015

7.30 **Reception** of wine and nibbles in the bar. The Mayor, our President**, Cllr Chris Briton** attended.

8.15 **AGM** held in the theatre auditorium. **39** Voting members attended

1 **Apologies for Absence.** – Graham and Freda Brown, Anne Beechey, Jackie Young, Roger & Jean Reeson, Doreen Grant, Judi Neale, Sarah Neale, Lesley and Terry Ricketts, Nicky and Tris Hann, Penny Bonetti, Louise Baker, Katy Biggs, Sarah Briton, Jeanne Clogg, Nick Creaser, Gill Kerton, Sharon Upham, Mark Wall, Marcel Wills.

2 **Minutes of the 2014** A.G.M. held on the 21st March 2014. Agreed as a true record

3 **Matters Arising -** none

Proposed Sandra Marshall Seconded Sharon Edmonds

In the absence of a Chairman the Vice Chairman signed the minute's book

4 **Chairman's report**

This is the 113th 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, for the second year running, and the Committee has shared the function of Chairman amongst its members. Thanks were given to members of the outgoing committee for their continued hard work throughout the year. In addition Sarah Briton and Emma Longley were thanked for have running the bar, assisted by Jo and Mike Scammell who operate the bar stock levels. Sarah and Emma step down from that role at the end of this month, and we are looking for volunteers.

Chris Spray continues to help us with the website and all things IT. Norman Cowell who continues to run the Box Office and is this year stepping down from the committee. Thanks to Louise Baker and friends for arranging entertainment and social evenings, and Angelo for his continued maintenance and DIY help throughout the year.

The Vice Chairman reminded the society that we have had no youth theatre this year; he thanked Sarah Neale for her previous work and asked for volunteers.

Another thank you goes to the orchestra pit sub-committee, led by Nick Furze. A report will follow.

We continue to encourage new directors. For our pantomime this year we will be welcoming Matthew Maisey and those of you who saw the performance of 'Deckchairs' in the bar recently will know that Mary Hayter made her directorial debut. Our congratulations to both of them, and hopefully others will follow.

Many thanks go to Marcel Wills who is standing down from managing Front of House. He is, as you know, a founder member of the group that set us up in this building. He has made the boards as well as trod them, and was Vice Chairman and latterly keeping the public under control with his charming but firm manner, sorting out the mayhem that can be Front of House. Perhaps no more will we hear the immortal words "enjoy the show and photography is strictly forbidden" although we have thought of recording his voice. Marcel is not leaving us and we will see him on many an occasion and he will continue to help with Front of House as and when he can. The meeting applauded his contribution.

Ken Edmonds, Kate Lynch and Norman Cowell then presented a number of NODA long service Awards:-

Katy Biggs -10 years Vicky Orman – 10 years Charlie Watkins – 10 years Pat Watkins – 10 years
Sarah Neale – 10 years Nick Furze -10 years Graham Brown – 10 years
Jenny Hailes – 15 years Emma James – 15 years
Aileen Thomasson – 20 years Jackie Young – 30years Anne Beechey – 40 years

The Vice Chairman then presented the **Roy Bevan Award**, to Gerald Eyers.

He concluded that membership numbers are maintained and possibly increasing. The patron numbers have declined again slightly, however. 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**

Past and Forthcoming Productions – Sharon Edmonds

2014 started with the wonderful **Stepping Out**, moving, and funny production with some brilliant performances. Jenny Hailes really shone through with her haunting portrayal of Andy, Judy was great with her ballsy but vulnerable Mavis and I was especially haunted by the image of Emma in her cat suit. May had us going **Into the Woods** Lois, who is the most fearless person I know, convinced us all that we could pull this incredibly intricate and powerful show off. With her constant enthusiasm and Sheila's amazing dedication and encouragement we did it. To coincide with the WW1 anniversary Lois once again gave us **Accrington Pals** in June. This was a touching and poignant show that showcased the talent we have here at Wells.

December was Panto time once again and the unstoppable Vicky provided us with another fine show, **Snow White and the Seven Dwarves,** magnificently directed by Mr Ken we were transported once again to the thespian equivalent of pre-school and a marvellous time was had by all. The whole cast was magical and The UV scene continues to get better every year, can't wait for the next one.

We've just been treated to a new type of theatre in the form of **Deckchairs** which was performed in the Thirsty Thespian last week. Mary did a wonderful job directing this show and the cast and performances were wonderful. It was a really relaxed, enjoyable and successful two evenings

In a few weeks we have **Spend Spend Spend** where we welcome the charming Brian Epps to Wells with this great tale of winning and losing and gaining all in one evening. Sheila is once again doing a formidable job and the very patient Carol Applegate is endeavouring to teach us to dance. Sarah Neale will be bringing **The Wells Variety Show** in July. Tina Eyers is doing another **Little Lights Up** in September which is always so much fun and involves so many people that it is a real celebration of our theatre. Can't wait for this!

Mathew Maisey, who so brilliantly played the Baker in Into the Woods, has written this year's pantomime – **George and the Dragon**. Ably supported by Vicky we are all excited to have a new director and an original script. Just remember the fairy lights! Lois and Sheila (the dream team) are doing **Return to the Forbidden Planet** for the spring show in May 2016. For the September show, Richard has agreed to bring some culture with Twelfth Night.

Entertainment and Social report – Alisa Creaser

Almost a year ago now we enjoyed a well attended **dinner dance** at the Swan hotel. In addition to the wonderful food, poetic speeches and raucous raffle we were treated to some close up magic and some dubious photos! We opened up the theatre for members and guests on **Carnival night** – and whilst we didn't serve food this time we were certainly glad of a place to shelter when the heavens opened. We would welcome your feedback on whether the food is an important part of the evening for you on carnival night.
The **social nights** at the theatre have continued to run on the third Friday of every month giving an opportunity for members to gather together, catch up with one another and maybe play a game or two. On two occasions we have been treated to performances from Nick and Tina's Little Theatre. The Wells Little Theatre social page on facebook is a good way of keeping up to date with social goings on as is the theatre website. Lou is really keen to hear your ideas on what you'd like socially so please get in touch with her or any of the committee with your suggestions – wild or otherwise!

Patrons – Lyn Jones

There are currently 40 patrons of the society who enjoy the Little Theatre's productions. The patrons attended the spring show, most of them for the Civic Evening, when they enjoyed a glass of wine and canapés which were prepared and served by catering students from The Blue School. Although I have advertised in the programme for new Patrons to join there have been no takers and I would like to ask all the members, busy as we all are, to try to encourage friends, family or business associates to consider supporting the Theatre by patronage- leaflets are available in the foyer.

Orchestra Pit and Stage Improvements Project – Nick Furze

As part of Nick Furze's report, Nick Barlow showed a video that he and Adrian had made, this will go onto the fundraising (Indiegogo) website. There are 3 planned fund raising events at the moment – a **Quiz Night** on 9 May, the **Variety Show** on 11 and 12 July and a **Music Night** on 10 October. The tag line for the project will now be **'A Little Pit Bigger'**, and the launch date for major fund raising is to be 27th April 2015. This will be through the website and a printed brochure.

Publicity – Ken Edmonds

It was mentioned that some people found they were missing out on things because they didn't know about them. So - for information on our productions there is the **Trifold**, the **website**, **emails**, **posters**, **billboards** and all that fails a dirty **big banner** and goes across the High Street about a fortnight before the show starts. For other events - read throughs, social events, etc, there are the **emails**, our **newsletter** and the **notice board** in the bar. We have also recently set up a **Facebook** page; we have a closed group just for members and a now also a public page where we can promote ourselves to Facebook at large. We are also now on **Twitter**.

6 Treasurer's Report and Appointment of Accountants

The Treasurer recommends that Webb & Co remain as our accountants and business advisers.

Proposed Mike Scammell Seconded Sandra Marshall

All accounts are in credit with our overall reserves having gone up by £8766. Our financial year has run a full 12 months from January – December, as opposed to the 9 months we were looking at last year. In those 12 months there were 4 productions which together made a magnificent profit of £16,400 with the pantomime deserving special credit for keeping costs way down and ticket sales at maximum. Theatre hire brought in a further £5100 and subscriptions a further £4800. The overall bar profits were just over £1000 down on 2013 but this will be due to the lower number of productions (there were 7 in 2013). Percentage gross profit remains at a very healthy 48%.
The general costs of running the theatre (heat, light etc) have increased by just over £2000 on the 2013 costs but this is mainly due to not being able to reclaim as much VAT as we have done in the past.
Subscriptions were last increased in January 2012 and the Committee would now like to propose that an increase of £5 should be made to Ordinary Membership and to Patron subscriptions in January 2016 and that for the first year this additional £5 be passed directly to the Pit Development Fund. Vote

For 38 against 1 - carried

Full details of the accounts are on the notice board in the bar and members are encouraged to read them
I commend the accounts to the meeting and propose that they be adopted. This was unanimously agreed.

7 President's address.

The Mayor, our President, Cllr Chris Briton gave a brief address of support for the society

8 Election of officers and Committee. GE reported that all positions on the committee are open to election each year. At the meeting Chris Briton and Gina Cleverley offered their support. The following committee was elected unanimously and without the need to vote.

Chairman	– Chris Briton
Vice-Chairman	– Richard Wright
Treasurer	– Pauline Perrin
Secretary	– Gerald Eyers
Patrons Secretary	– Lyn Jones
Publicity Officer	– Ken Edmonds
Stage Representative	– Graham Brown
Theatre Administrator	– position vacant
Committee members	– Alisa Creaser, Sharon Edmonds, Gina Cleverley

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

9 Any Other Business

Thanks to Ken and Sharon for organising the food for tonight.
Lyn Jones reported that The Long Paws Comedy Club offer profits of one of the comedy nights to the support of the Pit Fund. This was gratefully received, with many thanks to Ben Williams and The Long Paws Comedy Club

The meeting finished at 21.30