

Wells Operatic Society Limited
Minutes of the meeting on
Monday 19th June 2017 at 7.30pm

COMMITTEE

Richard Wright (Vice Chair), Pauline Perrin, Ken Edmonds, Alisa Creaser, Graham Brown, Lyn Jones, Sharon Edmonds, Mike Scammell, Dave Collyer, Niamh McGrogan, Rob Trayhurn, Gerald Evers

Our President, the Mayor of Wells, Cllr John North joined us for this meeting.

Apologies – Graham Brown, Dave Collyer,

Chris Briton. Much has been written in the press and on social media about our Chairman and long standing member, Chris. On June 16th many members of the theatre attended his funeral at Mendip Crematorium and then at the Theatre for Afternoon Tea and Cake (lots of cake!). For the theatre, he was an inspiration to many, tireless in his enthusiasm to improve the lives of everyone he met, a great Chairman and immensely popular. An actor, director, producer and animated Front of House manager. He knew exactly the right time to be serious, and when he could get away with being alarmingly funny. Who could forget his response at the AGM in his mayoral year, when asked to give the Presidential address to the meeting - "You don't f****ing want to hear from me - move on!"

An Ordinary Man who we greatly miss.

Our thoughts remain with his family Sarah, Molly, Jesse and Kate

1. Minutes of the last meeting - agreed

2. Matters Arising

- a. The gas heater in Green Room. **DC** - The gas fire has been removed. The vent through the wall has temporarily been blocked up (with a towel) and must now be made good at some point. A DIY job. **GE to ask Angelo**
- b. The obvious gas tap in the rehearsal room is stuck in the 'on' position. In an emergency the supply could not be shut off by this means. The lever has therefore been placed inside the cabinet and closing the gas supply must be use of the lever on the front of the gas meter. **DC. SE** to purchase a notice 'Gas Shut Off Valve' to go up after the decoration.
- c. The gas engineer is not able to quote for the maintenance and repair of our heating system. He is based in Westbury which is too far for effective call outs. If the perception is that the system as a whole would benefit from improved service and maintenance then we must look elsewhere. **DC keep looking and find out about services.**
- d. Fire Safety update. **RW** full details below - ongoing. Old chair sales and the replacement with benches **NM**. The old chairs are on eBay and should be sold soon. **NM** to follow up possible benches from UR Church. Cleaning products to get box for them to store. Ongoing **MS. RT** to look into Fire Alarm System. Ongoing
- e. New signs and billboards at the front of the theatre and on Chamberlain Street **RW**, possibly around the tree or as part of the entrance. **RW** sent pre planning application to MDC, the reply is positive it was agreed to find a local architect who could produce suitable plans for an application. **AC** to talk to Tris Hann to see if he will support a working group on this. **GB** and **DC** have looked at running a mains cable to the area of the tree for lighting a new poster board. The route for the cable will not now cross the re-surfacing area and is not dependent upon planning permission.
- f. **RT** mentioned that his wife Sally would be happy to cover FoH and bar organisation in the future. **RW** to contact.

3. Correspondence

- a. Wells Comedy Festival. 2017 was very successful, they sold 5000 tickets, 93% capacity. Booked May 25-27th 2018, would like to run later performances - to midnight (check licence). Ben would also like

to fix a 'get in' on the Thursday and 'out' on the Monday. **GE** has booked it in the diary. **PP** to talk to MDC to check late licence.

- b. Molly Briton passed on this opportunity – 'SOUP' from her neighbour Ross Young-

'The best way for them to find out about it and how it operates is to visit our website

(www.wellsindependents.org/soup) but in a 'nut shell':

It [SOUP] will enable them [us] to alert people to the Theatre group and what it does, to forthcoming productions, to recruit new members and to earn up to £350 by giving a four minute presentation! What's not to like?

Once they have applied they will go into the mix for a forthcoming SOUP in which we try to get a good mix of the four charities presenting each time in order to make it as interesting and varied as possible for the audience. If not picked for the next they will go forward to the next and so on until they are picked - a guarantee they will eventually present.'

NM will investigate further. She is happy to organise the presentation.

4. Treasurer's Report

- a. Carnival 'burger van' payment, CB contacted Nancy Dodd – **PP** is on the case.
b. Our House final figures. Income £10,313.50 Expenditure £6027.71, Surplus £4285.79. Excellent

5. Membership

- a. New members - none
b. Patrons leaflet. **LJ** ongoing
c. Friday Social evenings start 23rd June **NM** 7.30pm
d. Quiz Night in the summer. Date set 24th June **NM** 7.30pm
e. Social what's on and information pack. **NM** ongoing will also look at producing membership cards that double up as car park permits.
f. Theatre branded merchandise. **NM** - ongoing
g. Requests have been made for a paper 'What's on and newsletter sheet' **SE** agreed to produce the newsletter. Initially this will be as and when required. The newsletter will then be emailed to all members. **LJ** will take a copy and post to all Patrons and any others who have requested paper copies. (Any names of members who request this should be passed to **LJ**). **KE** will put printed copies to the Library (x25) and in our Foyer(x25).
h. NODA award – **GE**
a. Box Office. The arrangements for opening times were discussed. It was agreed that dates of auditions, readings and box office opening times etc should be added to the newsletter (g. above). Generally there should be 14 days between the casting of the show and the box office opening. On the first day **PP** was happy to open the Box Office and so facilitate personal bookings.

6. Publicity

All in hand. Waiting for Crucible details.

The Crucible Box office should open on the 8th July. **GB** to get **GE** the details so that the website can be detailed.

7. Theatre Renovations

- b. Maintenance plan-
- i. Quotes requested for work on the flat roof above the dock doors, and the removal of the concrete raised floor in the stage right wings. **GE** has asked Croscombe Roofing. The Committee had a look at the site. Agreed to go ahead. Cost £5395 +VAT
 - ii. Croscombe roofing will be asked to inspect and repair the central gully. And investigate the recent leaks. **GE** work agreed to go ahead soon.
 - iii. Redecoration of the rehearsal room. – **KE**, **SE** and **NM** are checking prices of blinds and flooring. Plan to have a 15th July paint party. Quote for new floor (vinyl on plywood) approx. £3300 Agreed to leave this for the time being. **SE** has a contact for 'charity paint' and will investigate.

iv. The replacement / repair of the auditorium seating. It was agreed at the last AGM that the committee could spend up to £20,000 on new seating. Options were discussed and it was agreed at committee to completely replace all seating with new 'Bristol' theatre chairs. *'This chair has the traditional look which we feel it is important to retain, but has the benefit of modern crown height (to allow improved comfort) and has no finger traps within the tipping mechanism of the seat bottom. We have made a number of the chairs removable to the front row to allow for both stage extensions when required and accommodation of wheelchair bound patrons. As a base to the cost we have allowed for the chairs to be covered using Covertex "Savona" Easy Care FR Velvet, we have provided additional costs should you wish the chairs to be covered the using the more durable "Lancona" range by Talbot Textiles. For this option offer is based on existing chairs being removed and disposed of by others. Patrick Donoghue, Managing Director, Audise by Frem Group Limited*
Total cost £30,000 + VAT. This is more than the target set but the committee were unanimous that this was the best option. **KE** will arrange a site visit where more of the committee can look at the seats and ask questions before making a final decision. **KE**

- c. Stage and Pit development **DC** - ongoing
- d. Bar lighting **MS and Angelo** to look at this in the next month
- e. PAT testing **MS** started - ongoing
- f. Insurance and tree. Pruning of the tree and the resurfacing of the tarmac is booked for the mid-September, 2 days. **GE** to be informed of specific dates. The damage to the cordon will be made good by Angelo. **DC**
- g. Fire Risk Assessment details as detailed below, **RT** will investigate further
- h. N.R.Bishop will carry out a full electrical inspection of the theatre on Friday 7th July, Beginning at 9am. **GB**
- i. The black curtains in SR and SL wings. Chris Spray has arranged for quotes from McDougall's

Option 1 is for Non-Durable Fire Resistant (fabrics are chemically treated with a water soluble solution and if wetted in any way it is essential to retreat the fabric to meet flammability requirements - this may also apply after cleaning or a long period of use in a high humidity atmosphere) "drill" with a net total of £341.88 (add delivery + VAT, likely to be £423.70).

Option 2 is for Durable Fire Resistant (fabrics are chemically treated to withstand a number of cleanings) "nulan" with a net total of £399.24 (add delivery + VAT, likely to be £492.59).

So the second option would allow us to wipe off any paint spills, etc.

Agreed to go ahead with Option 2. **GE** to ask Chris to place the order.

- j. Stage lights need a new 15A breaker to stop the system tripping out. **GB** to cost. ongoing

8. Productions/Trifold/Hire

- **June 13th 2017** BOVTS - Dylan Thomas' *Under Milk Wood*. **GB** or **RW** in charge Tickets **£10 & £8** Review. Excellent, Full House.
- **September 27-30th 2017** - *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller. Director - **Lois Harbinson**, Producer - **GB**. SM – **Charlie Watkins**, Set Design – **Armani**, Props – **Lesley Ricketts**, Lighting – **GB**, Sound – **Adrian Mitchell**, Costumes – **Lesley Ricketts**, Prompt – **FB**, Make up – **Julie and Helen Makin**, Budget – **tba**, Publicity -?, Ticket Price – ?, Rehearsal schedule – **agreed**. FoH manager – **Sally Trayhurn**
- **December 9th-16th 2017** - *The Three Musketeers*. Director - **Ken Edmonds**, Writer and Producer – **Vicky Orman**, SM – **Sarah Galton**, Choreography – **Julie Webster**, MD - **Nick Barlow**, Sound - **Adrian Mitchell**, Lighting – **Graham Brown**, Properties – **Sue King**, Prompt – **Freda Brown**, Costume - ?, Make up – **Julie and Helen Makin**, Photographs – **Adam Lanfranchi**, Tickets – **tba**, Budget – **tba**, Rehearsal Schedule – **done**, Publicity and Programme – **tba**, FoH manager – **Sally Trayhurn**
- **March 2018?** – **NM** suggested Steel Magnolias either for this slot, or the following year (she would direct). Doreen Grant will be arranging some play readings to look at options.
- **May 15th (Tuesday) -19th 2018** (with a 3pm Matinee on Sat 19th i.e. 6 performances) – *Little Shop of Horrors*. Director – **Nick Barlow**, Choreography - ?, Rights received, MD – ?, Producer – ?, SM – ?,

Props – ?, Lighting – **GB**, Sound – **AM**, Costumes – **Louise Baker**, Prompt – ? Props - **Vicky Orman, Jo Scammell, Sandra Marshall**, Make up – ?, Budget – **tba**, Publicity - **KE**, Ticket Price – **tba**, Rehearsal schedule – **tba**. Vocal Coach - **Kate Lynch**, FoH manager - **tba**

- **September 19th -22nd 2018** William Shakespeare's *The Merry Wives of Windsor* Director – **RW**, Lighting - **GB**, Mediaeval Musician - **Jonathan Weeks**, Costumes – **Louise Baker**, Stage manager – **Charlie Watkins**, Properties – **Pat Watkins**, Choreography – **Tina Eyers**, Prompt – **Freda Brown**, FoH manager – **tba**, Budget – **tba**, Publicity - **KE**, Ticket Price – **tba**, Rehearsal schedule – **agreed**
- **December 8th-15th 2018 – Panto.**

9. Training

DG – chaperone training to be arranged as needed. Ongoing

GE - to look into First Aid Training. Ongoing

RW & GE to meet initially with Sally Trayhurn to arrange FoH training. Then Sally to meet and train volunteer staff.

10. Show Reviews

Barnum – **AC**, **PP**, **GE**. Strode, the lead was excellent, very good, lavish production.

Sergeant pepper's lonely hearts club band at the Royal Albert Hall. **RW** – very good, excellent great fun

Love in Idleness by Terrance Rattigan. Directed by Trevor Nunn at the Apollo Theatre. Helen George (Diana Fletcher) and Eve Best (Olivia Brown). Spell binding **RW**

Merry Wives of Windsor – touring production, 6 actors doing all the characters, a good romp, good fun, **RW**

Rex the King (Owbeon production here) really great story telling, fun and very engaging. **PP**

11. Any Other Business

- a. Heating and Air Cooling systems. Neither are very efficient. We should look at these in the future. Possibly getting some professional help. – **GE**
- b. Security – there have been time recently when windows and doors have been left open. **RW** to remind membership of everyone's responsibility.
- c. **MS** to arrange for a lock up reminder notice for the bar.
- d. Committee agreed that we would like to hold an annual event in Chris' name. Something like a cake competition? 'The Great Briton Cake Competition? Or an award for outrageous performance of the year? **SE** to talk to Sarah and the family.
- e. **PP** will investigate the purchase of a trolley to help move the rehearsal room chairs.
- f. **PP** will investigate the cost of cleaning the bar carpet.

12. Fire Risk Assessment - Summary – used as checklist. Any improvements / changes please let **RW** or **GE** know

Summary of points arising out of consideration of the Fire Risk Assessment of Mark Evans

1. His assessment is valid for 12 months. The building is classified as a **medium hazard**.
2. There should be a review of the assessment annually. **Agreed to be 1st June.**
3. Simultaneous evacuation of the building is the principal strategy. **A fire drill should be arranged.**
4. There should a valid current electrician's certificate in place. **Inspection arranged for 7th July then every 3 years.**
5. Portable appliances should have annual checks. **MS - ongoing**
6. Need signs in changing rooms, green room, and costume area warning of the need to check appliances before use. **Done**
7. The air-conditioning service/maintenance needs regular check. **RW**
8. There should be no smoking signs in changing rooms, green room workshop and costume store. **Agreed to put signs at all the entrances to the building 'this is a no smoking site'. RW**
9. Gas appliances should be checked annually. **Arranged for 1st Nov 2017**

10. We should re-cover the damaged corridor chairs. A discussion followed and it was agreed to sell all the old bar chairs on e-bay and research cost/type of permanent benches to go along each side of the corridor

NM ongoing

11. Move over to LED lights in the auditorium. As and when possible.

12. Storage of cleaning products should not be in the cleaner's cupboard because there is no ceiling there. They should be kept in a metal cabinet somewhere else. We decided this should be a single drawer filing cabinet in the bar store area. **MS to arrange**

13. 'Rubbish bags are a hazard when left outside the Chamberlain Street door. A lockable refuse bin should be elsewhere at least 6m from the main building.' - This was discussed at length. Because the building isn't continuously occupied, locking a bin would be self-defeating – Veolia would not be able to take the refuse away. Putting a bin in the front of the building was just as inviting to an arsonist, perhaps even more so to passing members of the public. The bags are only left for a few hours overnight once a week, in the porch off the pavement. **It was decided there should be no change to our existing arrangements.**

14. Smoke alarms should be tested weekly.

15. Fire extinguishers need to be positioned as shown on pages 38 and 39 of the report. To be checked. **RW Annual Inspection by Bristol Fire on July 7th to look at extinguishers.**

16. The acceptably safe evacuation time appears to be 2 minutes for our building. The fire drill took longer than this. We will discuss improved procedures at a later meeting. A second fire drill should be arranged.

17. Maximum safe capacity numbers are- bar 100; rehearsal room 60; backstage 60; first floor 60
It was agreed that only exceptionally would those numbers be exceeded slightly, and that by and large we comply. The exceptional times would occur for a very short period of time and very infrequently.

18. The outside escape route at the back of the building is hazardous and needs re-surfacing. **Done**

19. There needs to be a disabled evacuation strategy notice, with later FoH training for evacuating wheelchairs. **RW**

20. There should be 'keep shut' signs on internal doors and cleaners cupboard. **Done**

21. There should a Fire Assembly Point notice. It was decided that the churchyard was not suitable. The new muster point will be identified as at the front gate. **Done**

22. There should be fire action notices at each storey and final exit point. **RW** to check what is actually meant by this. **Done**

23. A copy of the fire evacuation procedures should be displayed at reception, the bar, and each changing room. **Done**

24. Emergency escape lighting should be checked annually.

25. Secondary escape lighting is inadequate and the current fire warning system is inadequate. **RW** to go back to Mark Evans for clarification and proposals. **RW, TR to investigate further**

26. There should be a fire safety policy document. It was agreed that this should NOT be complicated or lengthy. It should invite readership rather than deter it. **RW**

27. Fire safety drills should be carried out before every performance. **It was agreed that this was not practical given the current FoH requirements. But the main FoH officer for the evening should run through with each FoH staff and (if necessary) bar staff what their stewarding duties would be in the event of a fire. AC put this into practice for Our House.** Bar supervisor is responsible for dialling 999. **RW** would draft up a preliminary checklist. It was agreed that Front of House management and procedures need reviewing.

28. Training in all aspects of fire safety is needed (to include the use of extinguishers).

29. The box office receptionist should call the fire service. - Surely inappropriate as he/she not here for bulk of time after performance starts. Suggest FOH manager. Responsibilities should be made known to the FoH coordinator.

30. The convection heaters should be removed/disposed of and oil filled/water filled sealed heaters purchased to replace. **Done**

Everyone agreed that it was very important we get this right for our theatre. A big thank you to RW for the time he has already put into this work. Improvements will be ongoing, tasks to be reported at the next meeting.

13. Date of next meeting – 24th July (apologies – GE, AC to take minutes) and then Monday 4th Sept.