

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD IN THE THEATRE ON TUESDAY 16th SEPTEMBER 2014

The Chairman, Peter Inglis, took the Chair in the presence of 24 members, welcoming them to this our 79th AGM.

Apologies – received from 19 members.

Minutes of the last AGM were approved and there were no Matters Arising.

Chairman's Report – 6 plays staged this year; “Curtain Up”, “Trying for the World”, “Blackadder – The Tudor Years”, “How the Other Half Loves” (postponed due to Jane’s broken foot) and “The Unexpected Guest” plus a stunning performance from Ron Dickens “The Ghost of Tommy Atkins” which raised funds for Royal British Legion and Help for Heroes. Congratulations to all actors, directors, stage crew and front of house volunteers. Particularly good to see new members taking part on stage and behind the scenes. Increasing number of other activities and groups using theatre as part of our deliberate plan to encourage wider community use to justify our Lottery application. Thanks to Paul Adams for bringing Jeff Barnhart back to our theatre and also for arranging the musical event by two talented young musicians Greg Russell and Ciaran Algar. Paul recently co-opted onto Council as Vice-Chairman, a new role created because of the increased workload. Social – barbecue in Ron Dickens’ garden and Morgan’s fine dining event. Technology – website being managed by Jenni Rushton and free wifi popular in theatre. Frustrations with casting and choosing plays; Play Selection Committee chaired by Brian Young often thwarted by unavailable licences and inability to find large casts. We could not manage without the stalwarts who step in at the last minute. In spite of this, programme for next year well in hand although dates remain uncertain until outcome of Lottery funding known. Provisional programme: “Ladies Down Under”, “When Did You Last See Your Trousers”, “Talent” (Victoria Wood), WW1 Review (CADS), “Entertaining Angels”, “Twelfth Night” and “The Vicar of Dibley”.

Lottery funding – recently obtained interim grant £21,515 to develop our plans to next stage. Now very optimistic that funding of almost £500k will be secured; full details in recent Newsletter to members. CADS have also secured Heritage lottery grant £9,900 to stage a WW1 production in our theatre and other venues next April.

Have we been concentrating too much on grant funding and do we need to refocus on future health and wellbeing of Playgoers? Informal evening for members to be held to discuss future direction of the Club.

Sad to record deaths of Sheila Jackson, John Holmes and Alan Line.

Thanks to all Council Members, Saturday Morning coffee volunteers, actors, directors, stage crew, Prompter Editor, ticket sellers and other volunteers who keep the theatre running, plus to our Auditor Glynis Hayton, James Watson (who worked tirelessly to obtain grant funding and will now act as Project Manager on the Big Lottery project) and to Gwyneth, Nicola and Amanda for their fund-raising walking.

Treasurer's Report – income decreased in most areas. Golden Jubilee profit similar to previous year. Performance account reduced due to a cancelled play but resultant reduction in licence fees and publicity costs helped reduce overall expenditure. Coffee Bar sales are concerning; gross margin dropped from 62.5% last year to 47.5% this year and will be looked into. Likewise, bar profit percentage reduced and will also be looked at. Sundry income mainly from raffles and book sales. Expenses similar although refund from United Utilities has helped by changing from a payment to a receipt. Legal and professional fees include project management fees for photovoltaic cells and lottery bid. Heating, lighting, insurance and maintenance costs all down. Final surplus £64,381 against £38,600 last year but includes grant monies received so is misleading. Discounting grants, profit would have been £5,101 (£8,064 in 2013). Thanks expressed to Council Members and especially Glynis Hayton, our Auditor. Acceptance of report proposed by Pauline Harkness, seconded by Pat Brinicombe.

Election of Officers, Committee and Council Members – the following were elected:

President	Geoff Hool*
Chairman	Peter Inglis*

Vice-Chairman	Paul Adams*
Secretary	Grace Walker*
Membership Secretary	Jenni Rushton*
Treasurer	Gilda Wells*
Assistant Treasurer	Gillian Scholey
Company Secretary	Geoffrey Hall*
Productions Director	Brian Young *
Technical Director	Geoff Brinicombe*
Maintenance Manager	Tony McGorrian
Properties Manager	Anne Chambers*
Wardrobe Manager	Helen Earl*
House & Social Committee Representative	Glynn Scurr*
Bar	Heather Scholey
Publicity Manager	Pat Brinicombe*
Prompter Editor	Gillian Scholey*

All above elected unopposed (proposer: Ian Chambers, seconder: Chris Jackson). Those denoted * serve on Council.

Any Other Business –

Properties Report (Anne Chambers) – to come from Anne but she has already emailed to Gill

Helen Earl – as Wardrobe rep – the team members, consisting mainly of Pat, Jenni, Gilda and Helen, have, with Council approval, tasked themselves with reducing the wardrobe stock by 50% to be ready to fit neatly into the revamped premises. Team totally committed to the new way of working and looking to members for support. Helen also trying to compile comprehensive list of email addresses for membership.

Jenni Rushton – report on progress of Wardrobe Committee – mantra is “Space, Money, Time! Some years ago a previous revamp of costumes had been carried out, sorting items and only hanging one item on one coat-hanger on newly-built rails but, as always, more items were donated and once again we had too much stuff! A couple of years ago Jenni contacted Ragbag, a recycling company, and so far we have sold £200 worth of clothes to this organisation. Other avenues for recycling/reducing stock are Vintage Fairs, eBay and Addisons (Auctioneers from Barnard Castle). Sue Hern, a contact made through vintage fairs, has helped us considerably and she presently has £2,000 worth of our jewellery, shawls, scarves and mourning jackets on her site. £66 from every £100 sold will come back to Playgoers. Addisons are to auction some of our clothes and will pay us £80 from every £100 worth sold. This all takes time and effort; a combined 109.5 hours so far. The final dream, when refurbishment is complete, is to have an area dedicated to making and fitting costumes.

Paul Adams has been concerned for some time that there is no pick-up/drop-off point outside the theatre and has now identified a contact (Mike Heaslip) who may be able to help and Geoffrey Hall has written officially on our behalf.

Pauline Harkness appealed on behalf of Golden Jubilee for new members to replace those who sadly die. This was started in 1985 and has therefore raised £50k over the years to help fund the theatre’s efforts. GJ pays annual prizes of £1,000, £500 and £250 x 2 plus monthly £12 for a very low annual outlay of £12.

Neil Richardson suggested blog/Facebook to help communicate our plans.

The meeting closed at 8.30 p.m.