

Wells Operatic Society Ltd.
Minutes of the AGM Friday 11th May 2012

A reception of wine and nibbles in the bar followed at 8.15 by the AGM in the auditorium

Attendance 59, 49 members and 10 non members

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced our President, the Mayor of Wells Cllr Danny Unwin.

1. Apologies for Absence.- Alan and Irene Hooley, Peter Rice, Jackie Young, Jeanne Clogg, Sharon Upham, Sarah Neale, Kate Lynch, Penny Bonetti, Rob Rogers, Sylvia Guy, Anne Beechey, Lynn Waldron, Darren Kerton, Graham and Freda Brown, Gordon and Sue Scott

2. The Minutes of the 2011 A.G.M. held on the 14th May have been on the notice board for some time.

3. Matters Arising none agreed as a true record. Proposer - Chris Spray, Seconded - Marcel Wills. The Chairman signed the minute book

4. Chairman's report

This is the 110th year of Wells Operatic Society Limited. The Society is registered at Companies House (registered number 1377655) and is also a registered charity (number 276308).

We had centenary celebrations when we were 100 and now that we are 110 we thought it would be a good idea to have a big photograph of as many people in the Society as we could get together at one time in one place. So on 20 May we are gathering at the Theatre for the Big Snap and we will have a photograph of as many people as we can get into the frame. This is my penultimate report as Chairman. I will be doing one more year and then both the privilege and responsibility will pass to another. It has been my custom on these occasions to thank the Committee for their hard work throughout the year. I know that you all realise that there is a massive amount 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.

The Chairman thanked all the members of the outgoing committee for their hard work and dedication throughout the year.

The Chairman praised the work and enthusiasm of a number of other non-committee members: Sarah Neale runs the Youth Theatre with her constant efficiency, organisational skills and talent, and the fantastic way in which she is able to communicate with our youngsters. Vicky Orman, Katie Biggs and Mark O'Callaghan provide us with the newsletter every quarter, Angelo Gianetti who looks after the maintenance of our building in his cheerful and helpful way, Sharon Upham organises the Roy Bevan Award. Chris Spray who has been responsible for our electronic Box Office and the on-line booking system that we now have and which is working extremely successfully. For The Sound of Music 70% of our ticket sales were on-line and that has made the life of the Box Office staff a lot less stressful.

The Chairman also said that the year had been tinged with sadness as well because we have lost someone who was a member of the Theatre for a number of years and had taken part in productions and supported us wholeheartedly. Frank Thomasson sadly passed away on 5 March after a long illness. He had been very active with the Theatre Guild Playhouse in Guyana before joining us here in Somerset and in fact had written a book on the history of Guyana theatre from 1800 to 2000 which was published in 2009. Our thoughts have been with Aileen and the family.

There were 5 NODA long service Awards given

Bob Collins – 10 years, Sandra Marshall – 15 years, Julie Makin – 20 years, Ben Williams – 30 years, Jeanne Clogg – 55 years

The Roy Bevan Award was presented to Nick Barlow as recognition of his an outstanding contribution to theatre life, musical director, actor, dancer, organiser of social events etc etc! 'Nick is one of a kind and has the ability never to say NO!'

So really the theme for this year is celebration. We can celebrate our successful productions; we can celebrate our very substantial reputation in the community, and can celebrate our friendship and common love of the theatre in all its forms.

5. Members' Reports

a. Past Productions – **Sharon Edmonds,**

Sharon reviewed the full range of successful shows achieved by the society in the last year – Pirates of Penzance, Our Country's Good, Brenda Bly, Robin Hood and our new venture – the two one act plays in February. Each proves that we are a very hardworking, not to mention talented society. Well done to all involved and we are looking forward to the next 12 months.

b. Forthcoming Productions – **Doreen Grant,**

Each year when I listen to the report on past productions I wonder how we can we top that. It looks like in the next year we are going to have a good try.

The theatre is now alive with grunts, moos, clucks and baas. In rehearsal is Animal Farm adapted from George Orwell's book into a fast moving musical dramatization for the stage by Peter Hall. It is being directed for us by Lois Harbison. The show runs from the 4th to the 7th of July.

From the 5th to the 8th of September with an introductory evening on Tuesday 7th June is A Little Night Music by Stephen Sondheim and again directed for us by Lois Harbison. This is a wonderfully witty piece following the foibles of the rich upper classes in love. Sondheim is quoted as saying '*Art in itself is an attempt to bring order out of chaos*' which I thought was quite an apt description of early rehearsals in the Little Theatre.

Panto this year is Rumpelstiltskin, directed by Richard Wright and written by our very own resident playwright Vicky Orman.

Last year we showed it was possible to fit in a bit of drama between the Pantomime and the spring show as well as between the Autumn Musical and the Pantomime. We really would love this to continue but need to encourage more of our members to have a go at directing – if anyone is a teeny bit interested rest assured you wouldn't be on your own.

We still don't have a director or a musical for the Spring Show – is this another first as it is usually well in hand by now.

So while you are thinking about it I leave you with a quote from an unknown source

"Never be afraid to try something new. Remember, amateurs built the ark; professionals built the Titanic."

c. Theatre Improvements/Stage and Orchestra Pit – **Mark Wall,**

There were been several developments this year including:

Investigating the installation of solar panels; increasing the size of the orchestra pit; installing an air conditioning system in the auditorium at a cost of approximately £5.500. We are grateful to the City Council who very kindly allocated a substantial amount toward this installation.

Plans are coming together for the re-decoration of the bar area and possibly changing of curtains to blinds over the window have been considered, Mendip District Council gave permission to remove the fire safety curtain, before you could shout drop the curtain, it was gone, in not so much as a puff of smoke!

A larger Lighting desk window is being looked into. The costume and properties store is being rationalised & re-organised by Sarah Briton and team

The old piano has been repaired thanks to Darren Kerton. Mothproofing the costume store has been undertaken.

Big thank you to Angelo, & other people for the empty bottles as in to the bottle bank! Thanks also to Sandy our cleaner & especially Marcel for cleaning & sweeping the auditorium, after most shows.

d. Entertainment/Social report – **Sandra Marshall**

We now have a well established group of entertainment activities that follow the pattern of Dinner Dance, Summer BBQ, Carnival Curry and Xmas Mulled Wine and this year we intend to follow a similar pattern. Of course if you wish to add something to that pattern then feel free to approach us and we will try to help. So, to 2012 events . . .

On Friday 25th May 2012 we bring you the 2012 Dinner Dance. Again we are holding it at The Swan Hotel taking over their Oak Room and Garden Rooms for a very special evening with good food, live entertainment, and of course our presentation of awards. This is quite simply our main event of the year and we hold it at The Swan Hotel because it provides the best venue in the city! By chasing cost saving measures such as moving the event to a Friday evening, changing the style of the evening and the use of a theatre subsidy we have managed to reduce the cost of this evening to £17.50 per head. We hope that this will encourage more of you to attend.

Given the events planned for early summer such as 'The Big Snap' on 20th May and 'The Big Lunch' on 3rd June we have not yet planned a date for a summer BBQ but we will go for it sometime in late summer

In November we will bring you our traditional Carnival Curry night. If you haven't been to one of these then you are missing out! It's a great way to watch Carnival! Last year over 70 attended and took advantage of great viewing facilities, a cheap bar, good company and a warming curry to take the sting out of what is traditionally a cold, wet November night! This year we will be controlling the numbers through a 'ticketing' system so towards September watch the notice boards and make sure you are on our 'mailing lists' . . . then get in quickly!

Then round the corner comes Christmas and in that lull following the comic and hilarious antics of our wonderful Panto team, and as a precursor to the read through for the Spring Show, you are invited to put a 'glow' on your faces with a free Mulled Wine and Mince Pies evening.

6. 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 proposed by Sandra Marshall, Seconded, Sharon Edmonds

All accounts are in credit and the general financial situation is healthy. Subscriptions were up by nearly 20%.

We made a small operating loss of just under £3000. Our biggest single expenditure for the year was for the new website which has been a great success, particularly the online booking facility with 70% of ticket sales for Sound of Music being taken online. There were 5 productions during the last year, 4 of our own plus the Young Vic's production of Tom Jones. All of these made a profit with the One Act Plays in February positively excelling themselves. The bar made its usual valuable contribution to the funds with a gross profit of £3600.

The Treasurer commended the accounts to the meeting and proposed that these be adopted. Proposer, Jenny Hailes, Seconded Marcel Wills

7. President's address.

The Mayor of Wells, Cllr Danny Unwin congratulated the Society on a humorous and entertaining AGM; he has taken a few pointers to use at future council meetings. On behalf of the Council he thanked the Society for the invitation to watch the Sound of Music, which he thoroughly enjoyed. He commented on the success of the Society and its contribution to the City of Wells, he recognised that this was down to the hard work of a dedicated and enthusiastic 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 **Theatre Administrator**, that position was left vacant.

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	– there are no nominations for this position - left vacant
Patrons Secretary	– Lyn Jones <i>who is duly elected</i>
Publicity Officer	– Ken Edmonds <i>who is duly elected</i>
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 11th 7.30pm in the Little Theatre Bar

9. Any Other Business

- Thanks to Ken and Sharon for organising the food for tonight
- Gill Kerton asked for some help, running the bar, she is likely to be less available during the next few months
- Wells Museum is holding an exhibition 'War in Wells'. The museum is offering free tickets as a thank you to the society for our loan of costumes and props.
- There were several other notices that were read out-*

The Big Lunch - Sandra Marshall

Cold Comfort Farm – Richard Wright

Black Chair – Gerald Evers

Hiring and bar – Gerald Evers

Bicton weekend – Gerald Evers

Simon and Garfunkel singing – Tina Evers

Cinderella Awards evening – Gerald Evers

The meeting closed at 21.15