

Wells Operatic Society Limited

Theatre Committee Meeting

MINUTES

9th January 2024

Committee members: Ken Edmonds (chair), Liz Carey (secretary), Bobby Bass, Graham Brown, Tom Creswick, Caroline Hoare, Natalie Hope, Dave Palmer, Pauline Perrin, Jo Scammell, Mike Scammell

Apologies: Bobby Bass, Dave Palmer

Minutes of meeting held 7 th November 2023	Agreed
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Matters Arising from meeting held 7th November 2023

Item	Actions/Outcomes	Person responsible
Committee members	Glynn Webster and Adam Lanfranchi stood down from the committee 31 st December. Notification has been sent to the Charities Commission.	PP
Tree of doom	Notice of proposed works has been displayed. Works are scheduled to start on 5 th Feb (subject to confirmation). KE will notify membership to keep the car park clear.	KE
Theatre admin - post show checks	Instructions sheet for what to check and turn off at the end of show weeks to be compiled (air con, boiler room heater etc) - Ongoing.	GB/KE
Fire Risk Assessment	Quote requested - Fire service are asking for an up-to-date floor plan of the theatre. Close layout copy provided by Mike but is not to scale. Tom offered to help add measurements to it. When Caroline spoke to the Fire service they thought a letter with recommendations/ suggestions had been sent in 2017 – copy cannot be located by current Committee. Visit to building by local fire brigade – to be arranged. Electrical insulation testing is done by Bishops – certificate should be on display. Pauline will check the invoice for when it was last done.	CH TC CH PP CH

	CH offered to compile a list of the key buildings risk assessments etc that we should have in place and list the renewal dates for our certificates. We have a standard insurance policy through NODA. PP will send a copy/link to CH to review.	PP/CH
Backstage show clear up checklist	Checklist/guidance to be compiled - ongoing	LC
Updated Health and Safety policy	Ongoing	KE
Replacement follow spots	GB got a quote to replace them but it would cost £3000 so is not viable at present. PP will send another message to Lewis regarding our refund.	PP
Safeguarding training	Long discussion held regarding Safeguarding and DSL's. View of the committee is that the NSPCC online safeguarding awareness training is sufficient and appropriate for committee members, with the DSL having the higher level of training. Agreed that all committee members who plan on standing for committee again at the AGM in March should complete the online training before the next committee meeting. Contact Pauline once you have completed it and she will reimburse the cost.	All PP

New items for discussion

Item	Actions/Outcomes	Person responsible
Replacement DSL	Adam Lanfranchi and Lucy Payne stood down as our Designated Safeguarding Leads on 31 st December. They asked for their resignation letter to be included in the minutes. This is included as an appendix below. Alisa Creaser has agreed to be our new DSL and has some safeguarding training through work but needs to do the correct level 3 training for this role. When the DSL's stood down it was flagged that in the absence of a DSL there should not be any under 18's on the theatre premises, other than at a fully public event (eg show	

	<p>performance) and a notification was circulated to the membership regarding this.</p> <p>It is confirmed that when something gets raised to the DSL, it does not need discussion by the full committee. It should be up to the DSL to decide on any actions required and respond, and also advise the County Safeguarding team as appropriate.</p> <p>It may be that all committee members also now need a DBS check if we are going to have under 18's involved in productions and on the theatre premises. Guidance is being sought.</p>	
Maximum cast numbers for productions	<p>This was discussed previously and the view is that there should be a limit of 40 onstage cast members.</p> <p>The maximum number of 13 to 17 year olds (intermediates) for a production such as the panto will need to be agreed with the DSL at the time, though we may wish to stick to 12 max based on chaperoning requirements.</p> <p>Query made whether there could be the option to split the inters into 2 groups for performances in the same way as we have 2 children's team? However, this could still be an issue for rehearsals. Agreed this will need to be considered on a show by show basis, but stick to an overall cast maximum of 40.</p> <p>It was noted that the number of chaperones involved (and required) for the panto this year also contributed to the large numbers of people backstage.</p> <p>Comment made that we may wish to reconsider where teas and coffees are served during panto so that the rehearsal room can be used as an additional dressing room.</p>	

Correspondence

Item	Actions/Outcomes	Person responsible
Letter from Vicky	New boxes requested for in the costumes store as the cardboard archive boxes are getting very	

	<p>battered. Agreed can be purchased. JS to notify Vicky.</p> <p>Would also like some additional recycling bins for upstairs so we can split the rubbish better to save the bin bags having to be opened up and sorted as they were following the panto.</p>	JS
DofE volunteer	<p>A members' daughter has been doing her DofE volunteering helping sort costumes at the theatre with her mother and Vicky. Confirmed that she will not be able to come into the building until our replacement DSL is in place. It was noted that her mother could collect some of the boxes and take them home to sort for now. JS to let her know.</p>	JS

Treasurers report

Item	Actions/Outcomes	Person responsible
	<p>Panto income £19,000 expenses £3,500 so a very good profit.</p> <p>PP is prepping items to go to the accountants.</p> <p>It was noted that we had £64,000 in our two bank accounts at start of 2023, but end of year it is now £51,000. (There has been substantial expenditure on sound and electricals this year).</p>	
	<p>Our cleaner is currently paid £12 per hour. Agreed to increase to £14 per hour</p>	PP
	<p>Website has been updated – front is displaying well but background admin bits cannot be accessed easily. May still be being formatted.</p> <p>Will need to speak to Nick Barlow regarding administrator access to be able to upload minutes and documents to the website.</p> <p>Also need to know how to amend access to the committee sharepoint site. CH to speak to Adam.</p>	LC CH

Membership and Events

Item	Actions/Outcomes	Person responsible
Open Day	<p>We may want to consider another open day this summer. Also need another sort out of the costume store, so potentially would be able to do</p>	

	a costumes sale again. Would also like to do a sort out of the props area and surplus items from there could also be sold. Propose aim for early July. Discuss further at next meeting.	
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Publicity

Item	Actions/Outcomes	Person responsible
The Glass Menagerie	Tickets went on sale on Saturday (6 th Jan), 73 sold so far. Flyers will be distributed with the Feb edition of Wells Voice.	
Sister Act	Tickets are going live on 3 rd Feb. (Seats to be reserved for the opening performance for Patrons and the Mayoral party). Tom noted that the Facebook post releasing the cast details was widely shared and reached 14,300 people. Wells Little Theatre Social page has 1800 followers on Facebook.	LC

Theatre maintenance and renovations

Item	Actions/Outcomes	Person responsible
General clear-up of theatre premises	It was identified during the general site inspection that we need to clear out cupboards and areas around the theatre where things are being stored. Aiming for day during February half term. Decision made to go with Saturday 10 th . Skip to be hired. 6 yard skip – hire for 1 week. PP to let Liz know who we have hired from previously – to be delivered on Fri 9 th) Inventory of electrical items for PAT testing to be compiled as part of this. Note if the new Designated Safeguarding Lead has not completed their training before 10 th February then we will not be able to have any under 18's involved in the clear up, even if they are with their parents.	LC PP
Roof of outbuilding	To be discussed further April/May 2024	

Training

Item	Actions/Outcomes	Person responsible
First Aid	Nat completed the First Aid training in December. Bobby and Sally Trayhurn are booked in to complete it this month. JS also noted that the First aid kits have been checked and are up to date.	
Safeguarding	See item earlier in meeting	
Legal requirements for Trustees	Pauline is attending a course later this month covering the legal requirements for Trustees and will report back at our next meeting.	PP

Hirings

Item	Actions/Outcomes	Person responsible
Cosmo group	Ongoing	SE
Wells Comedy Festival	Have booked the theatre again 23rd to 26th May. Hiring costs will be reviewed nearer the time.	PP
Ukrainian dancer	Is running two small classes a week.	PP
Monthly choir	Sarah Briton – hiring of rehearsal room Sunday afternoons once a month 3 to 5pm when the room is available.	KE
Monthly meditation	First Thursday of the month	JS
Wells Theatre Festival	They have asked if they could hire some of the theatre from 20 th to 23 rd June. For this year Adam has indicated that he wants to start set building as soon as Sister Act is finished. KE will check details with Adam and respond to the enquiry accordingly. Going forward it is felt we should consider the length of time that each production has the stage for to prepare their set so that we can have some time available for potential hirings, particularly in the period after the Spring show.	
Enquiry from Drag Show	Sharon did reply for them but has not had a further response.	

Productions in progress

The Glass Menagerie by Tennessee Williams		6th - 9th March 2024	
<i>Director</i>	Kevin Hardacre	<i>Producer</i>	Adam Lanfranchi
<i>Set design</i>	Emma Lanfranchi	<i>Sound</i>	Adrian Mitchell
<i>SM</i>	Emma James	<i>Lighting</i>	Graham Brown
<i>Costumes</i>	Liz Carey	<i>Props</i>	Doreen Grant Carol Phillimore
<i>Prompt</i>	Freda Brown	<i>Makeup</i>	
<i>Budget</i>	Agreed	<i>Publicity</i>	Tom Creswick Adam Lanfranchi
<i>Photos</i>	Greg Trezise	<i>Programme</i>	Adam Lanfranchi
<i>Ticket prices</i>	£12	<i>Rehearsal schedule</i>	Agreed
<i>FoH</i>	AL will ask Sally Trayhurn	<i>Tickets go live</i>	6 th January

Sister Act by Cheri Steinkellner and Bill Steinkellner		6th - 11th May 2024	
<i>Director</i>	Tom Creswick	<i>Producer</i>	N/A
<i>MD</i>	Nick Barlow	<i>Choreographer</i>	Elisha Webster
<i>Set Design</i>	Emma Lanfranchi	<i>Sound</i>	Adrian Mitchell
<i>SM</i>	Ollie Tatar & Phil Vivash	<i>Lighting</i>	James Linham
<i>Costumes</i>	Louise Sansam	<i>Props</i>	Jo Scammell, Vicky Orman & Julie Webster
<i>Prompt</i>	TBC	<i>Makeup</i>	
<i>Budget</i>	Reviewed and agreed	<i>Publicity</i>	Tom Creswick
<i>Photos</i>		<i>Programme</i>	Elisha Webster
<i>Ticket prices</i>	£16	<i>Rehearsal schedule</i>	Auditions 7 th Jan
<i>FoH</i>		<i>Tickets go live</i>	TBC
<i>Casting done</i>	20 total in cast, 9 new to Wells Little Theatre There were also others who came along to the workshop who have indicated they would be interested in helping backstage in some way.		

	They have the budget for 7 musicians, however Tom reported that Nick has decided to pay for an additional 5 musicians himself to have a full band. Band will be based in the rehearsal room. They will be hiring 16 microphones (has been included in the budget)
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Witness for the Prosecution by Agatha Christie		16th - 21st September 2024	
<i>Director</i>	Adam Lanfranchi	<i>Producers</i>	Adam Lanfranchi Doreen Grant
<i>Set design</i>	Emma Lanfranchi	<i>Sound</i>	Adrian Mitchell
<i>SM</i>	Kate Lynch	<i>Lighting</i>	James Linham
<i>Costumes</i>	Louise Sansam	<i>Props</i>	Liz Carey, Sue King, Joanna Scammell
<i>Prompt</i>	Doreen Grant	<i>Makeup</i>	Helen Makin
<i>Budget</i>	Work in progress	<i>Publicity</i>	Tom Creswick Adam Lanfranchi
<i>Photos</i>	Greg Trezise	<i>Programme</i>	Adam Lanfranchi
<i>Ticket prices</i>	£16	<i>Rehearsal schedule</i>	Agreed
<i>FoH</i>	AL will ask Sally Trayhurn	<i>Tickets go live</i>	TBD

Confirmed productions

Production	Proposed dates
Nativity! The Musical by Debbie Isitt and Nicky Ager Director Sharon Edmonds	14th - 21st December 2024 License has been purchased
Equally Divided by Ronald Harwood Director Jackie Watts	March 2025

Show Reviews

Item	Actions/Outcomes	Person responsible
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	None this month	

Any Other Business

Item	Actions/Outcomes	Person responsible
Mailchimp	Adam has passed on the details to Tom for how to access MailChimp, so we can contact Tom if there are any emails to distribute to the membership.	TC
Future show proposals	<p>Proposals received:</p> <p>1) Spring Show Tom Creswick – Guys and Dolls 2025 or 2026 Lucy Plant – may be interested in doing West Side Story or Legally Blond (however these may not be suitable cast we have available here) Jonathan Sansam – Musical of Jeckyl and Hyde</p> <p>2) Plays Jonathan Sansam – A Midsummer Night’s Dream Bobby Bass – Little Women, 39 Steps Charlie Blanning – 39 Steps Sam Elsby – 3 suggestions of plays: A Women in Kind, An Hour and A Half Late (comedy) and a play they have written themselves. Noted that 39 Steps is going on Tour so license may not be available. It is just a 3 person cast so would be suitable for our March production. Sarah Galton may also be interested in directing a play, but has not provided details.</p> <p>3) Christmas Vicky has indicated she is happy to write another panto for Dec 2025. No Director as yet, but this is a while ahead.</p> <p>Agreed will invite Jon in re: Jeckyl and Hyde, Bobby re: Little Women, Charlie for 39 Steps and Sam to talk about all 3 plays to get more info and also invite them to get involved in a show this year as they are new to the Society.</p>	KE

Fundraising Gala	<p>It was noted that a lot of people have been coming to workshops for the last few productions and expressing interest in being on stage. Running a Gala/Review show would give more people a chance to get involved and be on stage. This could be workable if we costume it from our store. We would need a person to direct and coordinate it. Could be a mix of sketches, smaller musical numbers/solos and a few bigger song and dance numbers, but needs some thought. Could aim to try and organise something for June or July 2025.</p> <p>Suggestion made that we might want to try a karaoke or open mic night first (or as an additional social night).</p>	
Library subscription	Play reading group has not materialised so no plans to renew the library subscription.	
Date for AGM	<p>AGM will be held on Friday 22nd March (March 29th is Good Friday so people are likely to be away).</p> <p>Liz to send AGM invite to the mayor.</p>	LC

Date of next meeting: Monday 12th February

Apologies from Natalie

Appendix: copy of letter from Adam and Lucy

December 2023

Dear committee members,

Following a discussion with Ken, it is with regret that we have both decided to resign as DSLs for the theatre. Further to that, Adam will also be resigning from the committee. Due to the nature of our professional careers, it is our opinion that it is no longer safe for us to be the DSLs, or in Adams case on the committee, who are ultimately responsible for any safeguarding breaches that may occur.

We both love the theatre very much and wish to continue to be members. However, the role of DSL has put huge pressure on both of us and become increasingly frustrating. We no longer want to be seen as the “bad guys”; all we are trying to do is conform to safeguarding laws. Both of us are safeguarding trained, with one of us (Lucy) being an experienced DSL professionally. We have used our knowledge and experience to advise the committee, so that the theatre becomes a safer place for children, and so adults are more aware of what is required of them. Unfortunately, it has come to a point where we feel like our advice is not being heard or understood by some members of the committee who have no training, with dangerous and uninformed

comments constantly being made. If a safeguarding breach were to happen at the theatre because of ignorance it could result in gaining a criminal record, something neither of us want for ourselves or others.

The last thing we must do as DSLs is pass on to Somerset County Council that we are resigning and why we are doing so. We must also insist that this letter is added to the next committee minutes in full. This is so we can protect ourselves in the event of anything happening in the future, which we believe will, unless there are changes.

The theatre now needs a new Nominated Child Protection Lead, although we'd suggest two. A Nominated Child Protection Lead is the point of contact for anyone in an organisation who is concerned about a child and is responsible for creating policies and procedures, like a DSL would do. They must also have DSL safeguarding training, either through a school or the NSPCC, to hold the position. If the new Nominated Child Protection Lead has no prior safeguarding training or experience, we would also recommend that they do the introduction to safeguarding training first before doing the DSL training. According to safeguarding law, without a Nominated Child Protection Lead, it is not possible for the theatre to produce any shows with children in. Children are defined as under 18s.

We would both like to thank the committee members who have always supported us as DSLs on safeguarding matters and are sorry that we must resign. We look forward to and will continue to support the theatre in other areas as ordinary members.

Kind regards,
Lucy and Adam