

Whetstone Drama Group – AGM February 2nd 2022

Present

Carl Smith- **Chairman**, Jon Sutcliffe- **Secretary** and Steve Cutler-Thomas-**Treasurer**

Sandra Sutcliffe, Paul Hurford, Carrie Peters, Ben Cutler-Thomas, Martin Peters, Nicola Voyle, Val Morgan, Louisa Rimmer, Alan Wilson, Peter James, Freya James, Kate Holyland, Peter Tovey, Ruth Lakin and Ben Love.

Also in attendance Carry-Ann Bugby and Hilary Allen from the Central England Co-op.

Apologies

Richard Sutcliffe, Yvonne Clayton, Jean and Bernard Warner, Mel and Sue Wale and Graham Muddimer.

Minutes of last meeting

Jon Sutcliffe read out the minutes of the last meeting held on 20th January 2021. All agreed these as a true record of the meeting.

Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes.

Whetstone Theatre Company

Steve Cutler-Thomas updated progress. As from January 1st 2021 we now have Charitable Status and have become a Limited Company. We are now better placed for obtaining grants and our new structure is on a firm business footing. Our activities remain the same although we do have more emphasis as a Charity to serve the public. Membership procedures and rules need to be more structured with an online system established. In addition to the usual membership, we also all need to pay a £1 joining fee. This covers us all legally if any problems were to arise.

Legal Structure: Before 2021 Members-Committee-Whetstone Drama Group. After 2021 Members-Trustees- Whetstone Theatre Company Ltd – Whetstone Drama Group.

Chairman's Report/Business Plan

As Chair Carl Smith welcomed all to the meeting.

The Covid 19 health crisis of 2020/21 has resulted in all proposed performances being re arranged. Come on Jeeves directed by Spencer Greasley had the longest rehearsal time in our history: almost 20 months to be exact. The play opened on September 23rd and this was our first production since December 2019. This was rapidly followed by the Youth Group production of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and the Christmas Show put together in 7 weeks. These two shows were the first productions to take advantage of our fabulous new projection facilities.

It is with great sadness that we must report the death of Margaret Brombley. Margaret joined the group in the early 1980's and not only performed on stage but also gave endless hours to costumes, ticket sales, raffles and in particular the Youth Group. We will miss her deeply

We have a full programme of productions planned for the future – The Lady in the Van, in April 2022, Oklahoma in October 2022 and an increasing number of bookings for our Murder Mystery programme.

*A full copy of the Chair's Report is available on our website.

Finance

Steve Cutler -Thomas provided a detailed update to the group on the current financial position as at 31/12/21.

In summary – a 2021 surplus of £1,385 and £6,885 in reserves.

Steve's report, available on the website, included detail breakdowns of costs/profits for last year as well as grants and purchases.

Vision and strategy –Legal Objectives

Our legal objectives: To advance the education of the public in all aspects of dramatic art and the development of public appreciation of such art by the provision of a theatre and facilities for the presentation of public performances.

Election of Committee Members

Committee Trustees are, under our new company, known as "Company Directors." Their roles are detailed in the 2021 Business Plan. Graham Muddimer has indicated he wishes to step down as a Trustee. Carl thanked Graham for his contribution to the Trustees. Graham will of course be continuing with his valuable leadership of the set design team.

Two members of the Group have expressed an interest in joining the Trustees -Paul Hurford and Kate Holyland. Paul is one of newest members and has particular expertise on the technical side. Kate has been a Little Theatre member and is an active member of our group performing in plays and murder mysteries. After voting Paul and Kate are duly elected as Trustees. All members voted unanimously for the re-election of existing Trustees.

Carl stressed the point that our core membership is rather thin. We need more members particularly those in the 20's and 30's age groups.

Response of Representatives from the Co-op

Hilary and Carrie Ann thanked Carl for the Report. They also thanked Steve for presenting a Treasurer's report we could all understand. Thanks were given to our group for promoting members social and mental health over the last two years. Hilary congratulated the group on reaching the 60th anniversary and commented on the quality publicity stand at the local Whetstone Co-op. Carry-Ann is looking forward to working with our group and continuing with the very good existing communication Carl thanked our Co-op friends and colleagues and underlined how they now feel very much part of our group.

Future productions

The Lady in the Van is being directed by Ben Cutler-Thomas – April 27/30 at the United Reformed Church Hall. Rehearsals now underway. NANDA has been contacted and will be adjudicated.

Oklahoma directed by Sandra Sutcliffe – October 5/8. This is our 60th anniversary production. After debate the venue will be the URC and a stage extension in the form of an apron will be necessary.

The script will be adapted with maybe 5 performances. Steve will help with finances and Sandra and Nicky will do costumes. Sandra has asked for help with singing and choreography. Rehearsals will start in May.

Christmas Show directed by Carl in December 2022.

Murder Mystery Group

The Murder Mystery Group has had a difficult two years due to Covid. A new full costume Murder Mystery "A Twist for Oliver" will be on stage in spring. We have been "zooming" for nearly a year but for various reasons the cast has had to change radically. Bookings have already been taken for a group in Glenfield (May) and Cosby Church (October). Our first performance in aid of our own group is planned for March 11/12 at the URC.

Any Other Business

Steve asked all members at the meeting to consider any areas for future focus. One particular area is new recruitment. Steve will gather suggestions and the Trustees will discuss them at their next meeting.

Steve outlined the plans for the Whetstone Co-operative Cinema. This will be a pull down screen at the URC probably showing films once a month. The aim is for family audiences with maybe local schools contacted. Funding support from the Co-op will be a major boost. Steve and Paul will manage this project.

Minutes agreed

Carl Smith (**Chair**)

Date