

Whetstone Drama Group – EGM Minutes

July 22nd 2020

A “Virtual” Meeting due to the Pandemic

Present

Carl (Chair), Kate, Ben, Steve, Sandra, Jon, Nicky, Karen, Louisa, John, Spencer, Graham M, Mel, Sue, Carrie, Martin, Yvonne, Paul H, and Peter.

Apologies

Kaila, Penny, Trish, Charlotte, Val, Jean, Bernard, Richard, Alan, Graham W and Ben L.

A one item agenda – to accept the proposal that Whetstone Drama Group should become a charitable incorporated entity.

- Carl outlined the letter detailing the above proposal. *This letter was sent to all members prior to the meeting.*
- Steve took members through the proposals outlining a comparison between existing and possible new structures. The presentation covered specific actions that would be taken should the result be in favour of the action. Steve then explained the proposed four step plan:
 1. Registration with Companies’ House
 2. Adoption of a new constitution tailored for charitable companies.
 3. Registration with Charities’ Commission
 4. Ongoing reporting and operating requirements.
- Steve then outlined the Model Articles of Association for a Charitable Company – in other words the new constitution.
- *The four step plan and the Articles of Association were sent to all members prior to the meeting.*
- Carl reported that many local drama groups such as Kibworth have adopted this status. He also stressed that Charitable Status does not change anything we do now as a drama group.

Questions

- Paul asked if the URC and Hall are fully owned by the Church. Steve replied yes as far as we know and then went on to detail the use of village halls in the future. We do not know the future in terms of any sale of the Church and its land. Carl said that through Blaby District Council we may be entitled to apply for retained land for community use but would in this case need legal footing.
- John asked if the URC have freehold ownership. Evidently many years ago their members purchased the land for the present buildings. It could be the SYNOD that makes the decision re any sale of land and buildings, and the

Church therefore would not have a say in its dispersal. Steve said that from his recent research this would appear to be the case. Sandra will contact Jean Warner at the URC to find further details. John informed the meeting of a new minister joining the URC in September 2020. This would seem to secure the immediate future of the Church.

- John asked about the costs involved re legal advice for Charitable Status. Steve replied that at this stage research has been done. A fee of £12/£16 will be charged to see the Acts signed off.
- Jon asked if the newly adopted articles would make a difference to our present committee numbers and roles. Steve suggested our present committee would continue with little change.
- Kate asked if our links with the Co-op would be affected. Carl replied it would be positively received with no issues.
- John asked if hypothetically the Church was sold for housing would we still need to consider Charitable Status. Carl, Steve and Peter suggested that irrespective of the situation with the URC we would want to go ahead. If we had to consider new premises it would help with funding through the acquisition of loans and grants.
- Carrie suggested that although there will be more administrative work involved, her previous concerns when Charitable Status was discussed in 2017 have now been allayed.

Voting

- Voting was arranged secretly through the electronic “Zoom” method. Proxy votes had been received from 11 members. The result was 100% unanimously in favour of the proposal.

Whetstone Drama Group will become a charitable incorporated entity.

Name of the Group under Charitable Status

- Sandra. We do have to decide on this legally. Much discussion followed. It was agreed our legal name will be “Whetstone Theatre Company Ltd.” Our operational name will be “Whetstone Drama Group.”

AOB

- Sandra informed members of the monthly Murder Mystery rehearsals via Zoom.
- Spencer and Ben suggested similar Zoom rehearsals for their two plays. Watch this space.

- Sandra. Only fixed date is for Youth Group “Charlie and the Chocolate Factory” in the last week in August 2021. Jean is now taking bookings for 2021.
- Sandra. We need to do a rigorous health and safety risk assessment of the hall at the URC before we can resume activities.

Minutes agreed

Carl Smith - Chair