

Whetstone Drama Group – AGM 20th Jan 2021

Present

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

Mel Wale, Sandra Sutcliffe, Paul Hurford, Carrie Peters, Ben Cutler-Thomas, Martin Peters, Sue Wale, Graham Muddimer, Nicola Voyle, Spencer Greasley, Val Morgan, Louisa Rimmer, Lara Wilson, Peter James, Karen Williams and Ben Love.

Also in attendance Karen Bevan and Hilary Allen from the Central England Co-op.

Apologies

Kate Holyland, Trish Kenyon, Richard Sutcliffe, Alan Wilson, Yvonne Clayton, Kaila Handley, Jean and Bernard Warner.

Minutes of last meeting

Jon Sutcliffe read out the minutes of the last meeting held on 23/01/20. All agreed these as a true record of the meeting.

Matters arising from the minutes

There were no matters arising from the previous AGM 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. 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 on line 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. Carrie Peters thanked Steve for all his hard work over the last year.

Chairman's Report / Business Plan

As Chair, Carl Smith welcomed all to the meeting. Carl gave a detailed presentation of the updated Business Plan. The report and BP was sent out to members prior to the meeting. We now have a Charitable Objective: " to advance the education of the public in all aspects of the 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. " We also embrace the seven co-operative principles.

The Covid-19 health crisis of 2020 has resulted in all proposed performances being cancelled. Future revised dates have been pencilled in for 2021 but at the time of writing a return to normality is unclear. Steve and Ben Cutler-Thomas have valiantly kept up group participation and interest with a series of weekly quiz sessions. Social events, play readings and murder mystery rehearsals have continued virtually and kept us all involved. Our superb

marketing, led by Ben Cutler-Thomas continues to go from strength to strength as does our ability to attract new funding to improve the infrastructure. This year our aim remains to continue a more business-like approach to ensure that we continue to thrive and prosper and to fully embrace our association with the Central England Co-operative.

It is with great sadness that we have to report the death of Graham Ward. Graham lost his battle against stomach cancer last summer. Graham was for many years a leader in our set design and construction. He also ran and organised the bar for all our performances as well as distributing posters in the neighbourhood for forthcoming productions. Graham will be sadly missed. We also pay tribute to any of our audience members who may have tragically lost their lives to Covid-19. Martin Lee, Norma Lawrence's son-in-law unfortunately passed away last autumn. Our sympathies go out to Norma and to Paul.

Finance

- Steve Cutler Thomas provided a detailed update to the group on the current financial position as at 31/12/20.
- In summary - cash £3978, + cash in hand £850, + £4000 capital, + £19 on line sales. Total funds £8847.
- Steve's report included detail breakdowns of costs/profits for last year as well as grants and purchases as detailed within the Business Plan report.

Election of Committee Members

Ten Committee members are, under our new company, known as " Company Directors / Trustees " Their roles are detailed in the Business Plan.

Response of Representatives from the Co-op

Karen and Hilary thanked Carl for the Report and Business Plan. 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 year. Both Karen and Hilary commented how they felt part of the group by participating in the Quiz evenings.

Planned productions

- Come On, Jeeves! - produced by Spencer Greasley is planned for May 6/7/8 2021. However Covid-19 could well see these dates postponed.
- Charlie and the Chocolate Factory (Youth Group) - produced by Sandra Sutcliffe September 23/24/25 2021.
- The Christmas Show - produced by Carl Smith December 8/9/10/11 2021.
- The Lady in the Van - produced by Ben Cutler-Thomas planned for May 2022.
- A " big " production in Autumn 2022 as it's our 60th anniversary.

Murder Mystery programme

The Murder Mystery Group has had another successful year with “Hi-de-Hi- de Help” until it had to cease because of Covid-19. Libraries, Churches, sports clubs, voluntary carers and the Wildlife hospital were among the beneficiaries. A new full costume Murder Mystery “ A Twist for Oliver ” Is due to commence as soon as possible. Bookings have already been taken for voluntary carers, the Wildlife hospital and a local Church.

Any Other Business

- Ben Cutler-Thomas suggested involvement in the game “ Taskmaster ” Details were read out with 5 participants needed for each game.
- Sandra raised the issue of volunteers to run the bar at productions. Ben Love said his mum could maybe take on this role. The question of who could buy and store the drinks/ice-creams was also discussed. Steve suggested we could purchase a fridge freezer to install in the side room. This would need electrical work and the agreement with the URC.
- Paul Hurford asked how we think we would cope re audiences when normality is resumed after Covid-19. Carl replied that hopefully we would resume as normal when we can or maybe operate over a few more nights to separate seating.
- Sandra raised issues relating to rehearsals highlighting maybe wearing clear plastic masks and for Charlie and the Chocolate Factory rehearsing in “bubbles.” We do have a Covid Policy in place written and approved by Sandra.
- Ideas to commemorate Graham Ward were discussed. For example naming the bar “Graham’s Bar” was suggested. If anyone has any ideas please let the Committee know.
- Steve and Ben Cutler-Thomas discussed a possible trip to the Thursford Christmas Show in Norfolk in November 2021. We would hire a mini bus and plan an overnight stay. Dates of the weekend of November 14th were suggested. Steve will send details to us.

Minutes agreed

Carl Smith – Chair

Date