

MINUTES OF AGM 14TH OCTOBER 2024

The Chair, John Garland, opened the meeting by welcoming everybody.

Those in attendance [22] recorded their presence.

Julian Batstone*	Harry Atkinson	Rosemary Bouchy*	Tony Brownings*	Dave Comber
Susanne Crosby*	Margaret Davy	Dan Dryer*	Zöe Edden	Cherry Fraser
Derek Fraser	John Garland*	Ray Hopper*	Peter Joyce*	Mike King
David Pierce	Maggi Pierce*	Diane Robinson	Bob Ryder	Sharon Theobald
Mike Wells	Sue Whittaker			

^{*} Current committee members

Agenda items

1	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE - 12			
	Simon Armes	Sally Bacon	Sue Chaplin	Judith Berrill
	David Creedon	Ralph Dawes	Amanda Dawes	Emily Dennett
	Clodagh Reidl	Anita Shipton	Guy Steddon	Claire Wiggins
2	MINUTES			
2.1	Minutes of 2023AGM had been published on line. Hard copies distributed to those without access to www.			
2.2	Chair invited questions on the minutes; no questions were raised.			
2.3	Approval of the 2023 AGM minutes as a true record was proposed by Ray Hopper, seconded by Maggi Pierce.			

2.4	All in attendance, who were members at the time of the 2023 AGM, voted and the proposal was carried unanimously.
2.5	No matters arising.
3	BRIEF REPORTS OF THE YEAR'S ACTIVITIES - 2023 - 2024
3.1	President – Ray Hopper
3.1.1	Welcoming the 22 members in attendance RH remarked that as President he does not have to attend Committee, a matter he had observed last AGM, nevertheless he had attended meeting during the Summer.
3.1.2	And held in-check his 'pathological inability not to interfere'!
3.1.3	RH advised that he will stand down from the position when the time is right; probably next year.
3.1.4	RH thanked 'hard working' Chair John Garland both for his committee work and his administration responsibilities of The Barn Theatre as Chair of the Barn Management Committee.
3.2	Chairman – John Garland
3.2.1	As everyone is well aware, this year we have celebrated the 75 th anniversary of the founding of our company in 1948, although I understand that we did not officially become Wick Theatre Company until 1962.
3.2.2	It was lovely to see more than 30 members (past and present) attend the gathering in August to celebrate this, and to hear Ray's recollections of those early days and how the company has progressed.
3.2.3	I was completely unaware of the rebellion against the "benign dictatorship" of Molly Penny and the changes to our constitution that were instigated by Ian Elliot.
3.2.4	Anniversaries often make us reflect on our own involvement within a group and I'm sure you all have your own memories of your time with Wick Theatre - I joined Wick in 1994, having been "head-hunted" during a recruitment drive to find young male actors - it's probably time for another of those now!
3.2.5	I have since acted in over 50 productions and directed a few too. More recently, I have been primarily involved back-stage, having initiated the role of DSM (when

	Mike Medway no longer wished to follow a script), and now occasionally covering when we are short of volunteers in the lighting box - this is despite me being one of the most technophobic people I know!
3.2.6	I'm so indebted to all the members (some here-present) who made me feel so welcome when I first joined and encouraged me to develop my skills. I'm also glad that our older members are still meeting socially every month and look forward to being able to join you to reminisce once I myself retire.
3.2.7	Hopefully, we can also try to organise more evening events to keep those not actively involved in productions in touch with the company so we as a Committee can continue to engage with newer members
3.2.8	What probably surprised me the most when reflecting on my involvement with Wick is that this is actually the 15 th anniversary of me becoming your Chairman in 2008.
3.2.9	I never expected to be in this position for so long, but am very grateful for the support I have received from Committee members both past and present throughout that time to keep the Company running as smoothly as possible.
3.2.10	Season 2023 / 2024 has definitely been a year of consolidation, with many changes necessary in how we run the company following the re-opening of the theatre last year.
3.2.11	Changes in the management of the Southwick Community Centre have also had an effect, and there seem to be many more rules and regulations to follow!
3.2.12	We have (despite several challenges) produced a full season of theatre and I will ask Dan Dryer, our Theatre Coordinator, to review these first.
3.3	Theatre Co-ordinator – Dan Dryer
3.3.1	What a fantastic season we have just had.
3.3.2	This commenced with some high culture as the Wick presented not just one Shakespeare play but The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged) directed by Tony Brownings.
3.3.3	This hilarious romp through 37 of the Bards plays involved three actors, Jacqueline Harper, Mark Best and Dan Dryer (me) dressed in drag, playing multiple roles with rapid changes of costume and voice.
3.3.4	There was even a smattering of audience participation. Audience reaction was fantastic, "superb comedy timing from 3 insanely good actors", "can't remember the last time I laughed like that" and "my chest ached like buggery from laughing so much".

awards and we car	ntry in the annual Brighton and Hove Arts Council drama rried off the Arthur Churchill Award for Excellence, with Tony a nomination for Best Director. o had other nominations including Best Stage Crew and Best
	o had other nominations including Rest Stage Crew and Rest
· · · · · · · · · · · · · · ·	nd last but not least, the award for Best Publicity went to Suse
3.3.7 The poster, yet and comment.	other brilliant creation from Judith Berrill, came in for special
3.3.8 Our December offer Sheridan.	ering was the perfectly apt A Christmas Carol directed by Nettie
Nettie to manage a	ammoth production had 25 adult actors and 12 child actors for and she did an incredible job bringing a real spectacle to the vish feasts, ghosts and even snow to create the perfect has.
theatre when you is am-dram sprinkle	ver for the Source said "Why go to London for Christmas can go to Southwick? No kidding! You might think local drama ed with polite applause and a chance to see your daughter, son Right? Wrong! Very wrong.
and minimum prop	Company, combined high class acting, subtle choreography os backed up by precision mood lighting and sounds. It also story, right into contemporary debates about poverty, health
in it and very good	company it is hard to single out individual performances. I was . Seriously: Bob Ryder played Scrooge and was described by a NODA as "outstanding".
3.3.13 She went on to say	"In fact there wasn't a weak link in the whole show.
between 3 and 5 d makeup were exce particularly loved t fast changes involved	ble thing about this cast was the number of people playing ifferent parts with never a prompt. All the costumes and ellent, being very varied and exceedingly appropriate. I the ghosts' outfits. I was very impressed with the number of yed. Every word could be heard clearly and the sound effects the lighting was good, adding atmosphere to the individual
various routines w	vice of songs was excellent with plenty of variety and the ere obviously well rehearsed and very watchable. Thank you so vening's entertainment.

3.3.16	Spring saw a return to Shakespeare with Sam Razavi directing <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> . This contentious play was brought right up to date with Sam's incredible vision, transporting the testing of Portia's suitors to the setting of a television game show and Shylock (played by me – quite good again) having his own loan company – Lock Financial Solutions.
3.3.17	Mike Aiken, reviewer for the Source wrote, "The rapid scene changes, coloured costumes (Lindsay Midali and Maggi Pierce) and lights (Martin Oakley, Torrin Gieler) create subtle backdrops to the action.
3.3.18	This production, at the Barn Theatre in Southwick, is a long way from being a play that is acted out solely beneath a proscenium arch. So, there is a lively movement of actors coming from the front or sides or moving through the back of the audience, subtly unsettling us.
3.3.19	Towards the end the performance segues to brief, but bold, quick film clips of political protests from recent history. Brave, bold and contentious: A story for, and of, our times."
3.3.20	Audiences were full of praise "I don't normally like 'updated or tinkered with Shakespeare', but I have to make an exception for this show which was absolutely superb, and great performances all round. Well done to all concerned!!!".
3.3.21	"Huge congratulations to Sam Razavi for <i>The Merchant of Venice</i> at Wick Theatre Company. I do love it when a director takes a few risks, creates some welcome surprises, and puts a lot of thought in to create a stark backdrop. Some super ideas and gorgeous performances. Ethan Dryer - what a belter".
3.3.22	"I just wanted to say again how much I enjoyed the play last night. I was blown away by your imagination and ability to bring new ideas on an old play to life".
3.3.23	"The concluding scenes are absolutely stunning and profoundly shocking. Brilliant work."
3.3.24	Our final show of the season was the brilliantly dark Alan Ayckbourn comedy Woman in Mind directed by Mike Wells.
3.3.25	This tale of neglected housewife Susan who escapes into her own fantasy world was, in the words of Mike Aiken again, "accomplished by Mike Wells (director) and Peter Joyce (stage manager) with Martin Oakley and Susanne Crosby presenting an excellent stage design and lighting operation in tune with the themes of the play. Challenging, stimulating and thoughtful."
3.3.26	Kay Roman of NODA said of the play, The lighting and sound in this production were both very important as they needed to indicate not only changes in the time of day but also the transition between the two worlds. This production achieved full marks for all those aspects. They, obviously have a great team. One

	cannot comment on the wardrobe without referring the fantastic juxtaposition of Muriel from frumpy down at heel sister-in-law to the sexy French maid.
3.3.27	The lead was played by Emily Dennett, she never left the stage once! Her performance was deservedly applauded by Kay Roman describing her as "magnificent".
3.3.28	Other members of the cast Dave Peaty, Gala Osborne, Rosy Armitage, Giles Newlyn-Bowmer, Barry Syder, Dan Dryer (me again) all received praise and the audience loved it.
3.3.29	"Emily smashed it, you were a fantastic leading actor". "Loved it, great production full of energy and very funny (and sad).
3.3.30	And so, our new season has just opened with <i>Shadowlands</i> , but you will have to wait until next year to hear more
	Chairman – John Garland – continues
3.2.13	Thanks Dan, it's pleasing to hear that once more we have been able to produce a season of theatre that has been so well received by our audiences and that has brought so many new actors to the Barn stage.
3.2.14	It sounds like the next year of productions will be equally exciting and more, we have 2 members making their directorial debuts for us.
3.2.15	Of course, no show goes on without the backstage support and, with 2 very large-cast productions this year, we are very grateful to Maggi Pierce (supported by Lindsay Midali) for coordinating costume and wardrobe and to Di Tidzer (supported by Lauren Brakes) for continuing to coordinate our props department.
3.2.16	The Workshop Team, headed by Dave Comber, but ably assisted by Nigel Goldfinch, Mike King, Gary Walker and the 2 Suse's (Netley & Chaplin) also continue to produce what our directors request, albeit with the necessary slow intakes of breath" I'm not sure about that"!
3.2.17	Set designs have very much changed in the last few years. Since the purchase of our new projector, funded by Mark Flower's bequest, directors have been increasingly innovative in their use of this - both to reduce the necessity for major scene changes and to improve on-stage ambience.
3.2.18	We are very grateful to Julian Batstone and Martin Oakley who have taken the time to learn what the projector can do and to implement this. Thanks also to those who operate the lights and sound - we are especially grateful to 3 non-members - Pete Dilloway, Jeff Woodford and Torrin Gieler - who have stepped in

	from the Southwick Players, when our own membership have not been able to do so.
3.2.19	Of course, no show is any fun to perform unless we have an audience to applaud it, and we are thankful to our Publicity department, headed by Suse Crosby, for continuing to encourage them to attend. Suse has moved a lot of publicity online to increase distribution, but posters / flyers (beautifully designed by Judith Berrill) continue to be required to advertise us more locally.
3.2.20	And production trailers are being produced with assistance from Phil Nair-Brown.
3.2.21	Once the audience arrive, they need to be looked after, and thanks go to all the members who volunteer for FOH, cover the bar and cafe and staff the Box Office on performance nights.
3.2.22	We are grateful to Emily Dennett for coordinating this.
3.2.23	So, let's have some reports about our current position - starting with membership numbers, which I think have risen slightly.
3.4	Membership Secretary
3.4.1	Membership number at 86 [last year 107]
3.4.2	Full Members 49
3.4.3	Associates 30
3.4.4	Youth Members 1
3.4.5	Honorary Life Members 6
3.4.5.1	Since 2024's AGM we have seen the final curtain fall on
	 David Goodger [January 2024] Ralph Dawes [June 2024] Ann Baker [June 2024]
	Chairman – John Garland – continues
3.2.23	I think now might be a good time for the Treasurer's Report, so we can get some idea of how we are doing as a Company.

4	FINANCIAL REPORT AND PRESENTATION OF 2022 - 2023 AUDITED ACCOUNTS		
4.1	Tony Brownings presented audited accounts for 2023 – 2024 and walked through the salient points		
4.2	Production Account: Expenditure exceeded income by [£4,939.51]		
4.3	To be exact: £2,977.97		
	 £222.16 - [in:£3,350.86 - out:£3573.02] Shadowlands £621.31 - [in £1,916.60 - out: 2,537.91] How To Date a Feminist #1 £1,354.46 - [in:£2,279.45 - £3,633.91] Fuddy Meers £780.04 - [in:£2,143.06 - out £3,633.91] How to Date a Feminist #2 		
4.3.1	Expenditure for next season's productions totalled [£1,961.54]		
	 769.86 – Death Trap 740.48 – Anna Karenina 451.20 – Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time 		
4.3.2	General Account: Profit and Loss - loss [£4, 966.76]		
	reflected annual outgoings and commitment to investment – [£6,283.06] mitigated by subscriptions and sundry income £1,316.30		
4.3.3	and this with Production shortfall led to an expenditure exceeding Income by [£8,191.47]		
4.4	Company loss: [£8,191.47]:		
4.5	Balance Sheet: £59,789 [reduced from £67,980]		
4.6	Treasurer proposed acceptance of accounts, MP seconded; agreed unanimously		
4.7	Treasurer recommended appointment of Malcolm Gough as Independent Examiner for 2023 – 2024.		
4.8	Tony Brownings proposed, Julian Batstone seconded; agreed unanimously		
4.9	Treasurer advised opening of Barclays Business Savings account @1.4%		
4.10	JG noted that funds level enables ticket prices to remain at present level £12.00		

5	PROPOSAL FOR ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR 2023 - 2024
5.1	Given current financial position with general expenses of the company being covered by subscriptions and fundraising, Treasurer proposed that subscription rates remain unchanged - ie £25 Full adult membership; £15 Student/over 65/Associate membership; £5 youth.
5.2	Dan Dryer seconded; agreed unanimously
6	ELECTION FOR 2023 - 2024 POSTS
6.1	John Garland handed the meeting over to President Ray Hopper to conduct the election of Office of Chairman.
6.2	RH thanked JG for everything he does for the company.
6.3	Election of Chairman
6.3.1	Julian Batstone proposed by Mike Wells and seconded by Rosemary Bouchy
6.3.2	Julian Batstone duly elected to the Officer Post of Chairman
6.4	Julian Batstone, as newly elected Chairman, conducted the rest of the meeting.
6.5	Election of President
6.5.1	Maggi Pierce proposed by Margaret Davy and seconded by Sue Whittaker
6.5.2	Maggi Pierce duly elected to the Officer Post of President
6.6	Election of Vice-President
6.6.1	No nominee for this post
6.6.3	JB says: I don't think I need to say too much about either Ray or Maggi's invaluable contribution to the company over many years and they are deserving holders of these positions as the representatives of the membership, ensuring social events are organised (thanks also to Maggie for the refreshments!) and Maggi is also still involved either on- or back -stage in practically every production we put on.

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6.7	Election of Secretary & Membership Secretary
6.7.1	Peter Joyce proposed by Sue Whittaker and seconded by Margaret Davy
6.7.2	Peter Joyce duly elected to the Officer Post of Secretary
6.7.3	JB says: Because we have no other nominees, Peter has also agreed to remain Membership Sec also. Of course, Peter coordinates many things - he manages the Box Office, volunteers in the Workshop, and of course runs our website.
6.8	Election of Treasurer
6.8.1	Tony Brownings proposed by John Garland and seconded by Maggi Pierce
6.8.2	Tony Brownings duly elected to the Officer Post of Treasurer
6.8.3	JB says: You've already heard Tony's report and whilst we are solvent, it seems we may have to review this situation if returns on our efforts are not rewarded.
6.9	Election of Committee Member with Theatre Co-ordinator remit
6.9.1	Dan Dryer proposed by Emily Dennett and seconded by David Comber
9.9.2	Dan Dryer duly elected as a committee member
6.9.3	JB says: Dan has reported on a tricky year – but planning for a better 2025.
6.10	Election of Committee Member with Publicity Co-ordinator remit
6.10.1	Emily Dennett proposed by Julian Batstone and seconded by Dan Dryer
6.10.2	Emily Dennett duly elected as a committee member
6.10.3	JB thanks SC for her generosity with her time on this taxing portfolio and has offered to assist ED in any way possible.
6.11	Election of Committee Member with Safe Guarding and IT Lead remit
6.11.1	Julian Batstone proposed by Mike Wells and seconded by Bob Ryder
6.11.2	Julian Batstone duly elected as a committee member

6.11.3	JB noted that the Safe Guarding role has become an important role in the Company due to increases in legislation, especially when we have younger actors on stage and also for Data Protection.
6.11.4	As you are aware, we had no volunteers to fill the Workshop Liaison post last year, and sadly that remains the case. In addition, Martin Oakley has also had to stand down as our Technical Liaison Officer due to his work commitments although is willing to remain as a valuable resource to the committee and to directors. This leaves both positions vacant, but we will try to form subcommittees of the current committee members to cover them.
6.12	Election of Committee Member with Newsletter Editor remit
6.12.1	Amanda Evans proposed by Julian Batstone and seconded by John Garland
6.12.2	Amanda Evans duly elected as a committee member
6.12.3	JB says: With Rosemary Bouchy stepping down from this role, I thank Amanda for accepting this nomination.
6.13	Election of Committee Member with Safeguarding & Technology remit
6.13.1	Julian Batstone proposed by Sarah Frost and seconded by Tony Brownings
6.13.2	Julian Batstone duly elected as a committee member
6.14	Election of Committee Member with Wardrobe remit
6.14.1	Maggi Pierce proposed by Amanda Evans and seconded by Di Tidzer
6.14.2	Maggi Pierce duly elected as a committee member
6.15	Election of Committee Member with Workshop remit
6.15.1	Vacant
6.16	Election of Committee Member
6.16.1	Guy Steddon proposed by Suse Crosby and seconded by Lauren Brakes
6.16.2	Guy Steddon duly elected as a committee member

6.16.4	JB says: Because we now have 3 vacant positions on the Committee, Guy Steddon has agreed to return as a General Committee member. As you are aware, we normally like members to have a specific portfolio but, due to short-notice since his offer (gratefully received!), we haven't had time to discuss this fully with Guy - I'm sure he will be a useful support on several subcommittees whilst we do so!
	Chairman – Julian Batstone – continues
3.2.16	So that concludes the formal business of elections. As we still have empty spots on committee, we would love to hear from anyone who, like Guy, would like to join (or rejoin) us. Although there are obviously key roles that do need to be filled, the most important thing is that you are a willing volunteer - those already on committee (or those who have held the posts previously) will be willing to "show you the ropes".
3.2.17	Unfortunately, we will, over time, have to replace everyone currently serving so, shadowing someone else for a while would be enormously beneficial to the future company.
3.2.18	As I said at the beginning, we continue to produce quality theatre, but no show goes on unless there are people backstage making sure everything is prepared - we've made it to 75 years and we want to ensure we are equally strong when we hit 100 and beyond!
3.2.19	If you are interested in learning how to operate the lighting or sound boards, or helping to source props for shows, or helping in finding costumes, or learning how to open the Box Office - the list is endless - but please tell us.
7	APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER FOR 2022 - 2023
7.1	Tony Brownings proposed Malcolm Gough continues in this appointment
7.2	Peter Joyce seconded
7.2.1	Agreed unanimously

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8	PROPOSALS RECEIVED IN ADVANCE
8.1	There were no formal proposals received
9	ANY OTHER BUSINESS – from the floor
9.1	Ray Hopper spoke of the social side and a members' monthly meeting. This now is on first Mondays in Community Centre canteen at 11.00
9.1.1	Next meeting scheduled for November 6
9.1.2	Christmas meal December 14; reservation for 15 made
9.2	Mike Wells noted success of zoom readings during C-19 season but agreed numbers fallen since then.
9.2.1	RH observed that if the zoom enterprise was to be continued an organiser would need to step forth
9.3	Bob Ryder asked for discussions on our continued practise of production start time of 19.45. Noting that both Southwick Players and Southwick Opera start at 19.30.
9.3.1	Listening to various comments JG acknowledged that matter should be discussed in committee especially to talk further on the impact such a move would have on publicity time-line.
9.4	PJ asked committee to discuss 'future planning for significant points of failure in production process '
9.4.1	JG acknowledged that matter should be discussed in committee
10	The Chair thanked all who attended and meeting closed at 21.30