

LEEDS CIVIC ARTS GUILD
Minutes of Annual General Meeting
Held on Monday 8 September 2014

Present: David Wheatley (Chair), Steve Limb (Vice Chair), Gillian Myers (Treasurer) Chris Limb (Secretary), Dawn Peters (LCAG), Judith Huntley (LCAG), Peter Sandles (LCAG), David Rose (LCAG), and 27 members representing COS, LYO, LCT, Leeds G&S, LAC, STARS, St Mary's YT & LIDOS. Michael Brown (Guild Workshop), Gerry Armytage (Guild Workshop)

Apologies: MAOS, Rich Francis (LAC), Zoe Freedman, (LAC) Rob Kirk (Shatterproof), Bryan Craven (COS), James Sidgwick (LIDOS)

Minutes of Previous AGM: Minutes were circulated and accepted as a true record. Proposed by Pete Sandles and seconded by Matt Stirk.

Treasurer's Report: Gillian Myers

Copies of financial reports were circulated.

Receipts and payments account:	£1,233.00
Current account:	£6,732.00
Reserve account:	£11,502.00

Workshop account will be handed over to the Guild shortly.

MB has been independent examiner this year. Thanks go to him.

Accounts proposed by Gillian Myers, seconded by Debs Sandles and accepted by the meeting.

Chairman's Report:

David thanked everyone for attending the AGM this evening.

He thanked everyone who had worked hard to put on the Guild Awards Evening last Saturday. It was a successful evening.

2013/14 has been a very strong year; 21 shows in total, including STARS and MAOS. David saw all of them and was impressed by every one.

Leeds Arts Theatre had left the Guild during the 2013/14 season. Due to shortcomings in their constitution and other official documents which they failed to update, we had no alternative but to ask them to resign from the Guild. However, they have hired the theatre for an October play. We wish them well, but it is going to cost them a lot of money. We await the outcome with interest.

This theatre offers us exceptionally good facilities. Apart from the pantomime, the Guild is the biggest earner for the theatre. Without the Guild the theatre

would not be able to function. They do not want us out, but costs will still have to be increased in order to 'balance' things.

LCC has been cutting £30m each year from its budget recently. Libraries, leisure centres, gyms, bin collections have all had severe financial constraints put upon them. We have seen street lighting switched off after midnight, and an increasing reduction in other facilities city-wide. Despite this, the theatre has no intention of pricing us out, and we have been assured by the new Operations Head that there is no plan for the Guild groups to be asked to leave the theatre. During the next year, the theatre want to put on a ten year celebratory show; they wouldn't be proposing this if there were plans to remove us.

We know we have to leave the Bridewell in the next year, but we have been offered alternative space. We will have to pay for this, but it is still at a comparatively low rate.

The new workshop team is working together to provide facilities for all of us. We owe a big debt of gratitude to the original Workshop Committee for all their years of service and hard work.

Theatre report – Due to a recent shortfall in theatre staffing levels, no report was available. The new manager is working with us, and wants regular communication from us in order to be able to consider our needs.

Please come and speak to us or email either David or Chris if you have any issue you would like to raise. There are people here tonight who have concerns. We will be speaking to them, as well as listening to issues via the Open Forums. We are all members of the Guild – please don't complain amongst each other – come to the Exec to discuss any concerns, and we will see what we can do to resolve these.

We have not yet negotiated the final Service Level Agreement with LCC. There are likely to be increased charges for theatre hire and rehearsal rooms.

Steve Limb reported that we are always looking at ways to keep costs down. We try to put the case of the Guild to the Council whenever we meet. There have been frustrations, but we will continue to fight on everyone's behalf. In respect of rehearsal spaces, the new Manager, Stuart Dornford-May is aware of our problems and will be looking at this. For someone new in post this is refreshing.

Storage space – we are investigating space in Croyden House, Holbeck. There will be a cost for storage space, utilities, business rates etc. Steve to approach Coun Yeadon to discuss this.

Re LAT – this is a sad enough story but, depending on their new constitution, there is always a place for them should they wish to rejoin the Guild.

There has been an application from a new, prospective group to join the Guild.

Election of Officers:

Chair, Vice Chair and Treasurer – all positions unopposed. Agreed by the meeting that David Wheatley, Steve Limb and Gillian Myers should all be re-appointed.

There is still a vacancy for Secretary – we do not have anyone who has put their name down in the last two years. Chris has held the fort this year, but does not wish to continue. Please speak to your Society to ask if anyone is able to step into the role.

General Committee Members: There have been nine nominees; however, prior to voting, both CC and CL withdrew their names, allowing the remaining seven members to be elected unopposed.

Amendments to Constitution: In a departure from recent practice, the Committee had discussed whether it would be advantageous for one treasurer to manage both LCAG accounts. There being objections, the Constitution will be updated and circulated.

Any Other Business: Janet Johnston (G&S) wondered whether the balance in the bank was kept for contingency purposes, or whether suggestions for using some of this amount were acceptable.

It was pointed out that some of this will be used for new SLA charges, as well as Workshop expenditures. If there are any legitimate suggestions for expenditure we will consider these.

The price for purchasing the flattage etc from LAC has not yet been agreed. Gerry felt that to destroy the old flats before we have secured an alternative had been irresponsible.

Steve reported that there had been a proposal that room hire rates should be increased. Charges currently stand at £2 per session per weekday, and £5 at weekends. The increase is likely to be in the region of £5 per weekday session, and £7.50 per session at weekends. This is still a very reasonable charge. Staffing is more expensive at weekends. There was a suggestion from the floor that if weekday charges were increased by 150%, surely weekends should be increased by a similar percentage to avoid any discrepancies.

Steve said that when proposals are sent out to societies we would like to also state the actual cost of room hire to highlight the preferential rates still being offered to LCAG.

Ian Goodison pointed out that this increase would result in a dramatic rise in costs for those crossing over two rehearsal sessions.

It was suggested that it might be equitable to have an hourly charge rather than a two hour slot? We will consider this.

Janet Johnston pointed out that as well as the increased cost of room hire, there is frequent uncertainty as to whether or not we have a room. There are occasional cancellations at very short notice, and this is difficult for a large society to manage. David said that the new room booking list will show exactly when the theatre is booked, including weekends and bank holidays. The Commercial team continue to be a frustration to us. This has already been raised with the new theatre manager.

We also believe that there is going to be increased demand on rooms on Monday and Thursday evenings. This will have to be monitored and any disruption to existing Guild groups will be noted and discussed with the Theatre.

Karen asked for a list of LCAG Exec members, as well as councillors and theatre reps etc. to be circulated to members. This will be actioned.

Meeting closed at 7.50 pm.