

**South London Theatre
General Council Minutes**

9th October 2023

Meeting held via Zoom

Present: Gareth Milton (GM) Chair; Hywel Roberts (HR); Han Evans (HE); Eddie Coleman(EC); Jo Boniface(JB); Barry Heselden(BH); Lorna Felix (LF)
Minutes.

	Item	Action															
1.	Apologies: Simon Gleisner (SG) ;Chris Stooke(CS); Philip Epstein (PE); Guy Jones (GJ)																
2.	Minutes of GC Meeting 11th September: Approved																
3.	<p>Matters Arising/Actions outstanding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Membership Fees review carried forward b. Developing Guidance re managing diversity carried forward. c. Directors Briefing date set for Tuesday 24th October 2023 d. 2024 AGM : Saturday 11th May at 6.30pm 																
4	<p>Financial Report from Chris Stooke: Audit has just been completed. Thanks to everyone who provided information. Final net assets at 31 December 2022 are £105,418 which is £65 more than the figure of £105,353 included in papers already on shared drive. I will upload final signed accounts within the next few days Current cash (end of Q3) £84,000, remains close to forecast</p> <p>Recent productions ticket sales net of VAT</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Girl on the train</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">3,747</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">(forecast 2,718)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Railway children</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">4,483</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">(forecast 6,575)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Shorts</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">3,078</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">(forecast 2,922)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">Home I'm darling</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">2,895</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">(forecast 2,718)</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">History boys</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">4,097</td> <td style="padding-left: 20px;">(forecast 2,718)</td> </tr> </table> <p>Structure discussions ongoing, meeting set for October.</p>	Girl on the train	3,747	(forecast 2,718)	Railway children	4,483	(forecast 6,575)	Shorts	3,078	(forecast 2,922)	Home I'm darling	2,895	(forecast 2,718)	History boys	4,097	(forecast 2,718)	
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<p>5.</p>	<p>Covid /Illness Policy Further to last week’s experience when a member of the cast tested positive to Covid and initially other cast members declined to share the stage because of their autoimmune vulnerabilities. It is apparent that directors might benefit from guidance. Last week the situation was resolved through discussion with cast and crew resulting in agreement of strategies to reduce risk of spreading infection; FOH volunteers were informed and a few roles then needed to be covered. Similarly, the audience was informed that there was Covid in the house and whilst the vast majority of the audience still came, a few audience members chose the option for refund/ticket exchange. In the end there were a few additional cases of Covid amongst cast/crew/FOH by the end of the week, but obviously it’s impossible to know the individual causes.</p> <p>The topic was also discussed at the House meeting last night where there was a strong feeling that Covid should still be treated separately from colds and flu (even though less people now die from Covid than flu in the official stats) because of the continuance of long Covid, and the likely impact for those with autoimmune issues.</p> <p>Whilst there was recognition the show needs to go on (SLT needs ticket income), it was equally noted that we’re a members club and everyone is a volunteer we should want to look out for each other.</p> <p>The House meeting felt that the long held principles of if you’ve got a cold - stay home from work and don’t pass it on to others should generally be encouraged for all winter season ailments.</p> <p>It is apparent that this is a complex (and emotive) situation with a disparity of views and the bottom line is that tests for Covid are no longer free, therefore taking one is optional, and personal health information is private.</p> <p>Action: GM offered to write up suggested guidance as per discussions in House and GC meetings.</p>	<p>GM</p>
<p>6.</p>	<p>Ticket Price Review GM had prepared and circulated a mock up of the suggested early bird ticket structure. It makes setting up a show a little more complicated but is doable. The most contentious point is that both concession ticket prices and family tickets have gone, but the option for Wed £5 tickets remains, which is potentially a bigger discount than either concession or family tickets. Walk up purchases will now be the same as online booking. Proposals agreed.</p> <p>Actions: GM and SG will discuss communications GM to set up new ticket structure for Jan 2024 shows</p>	<p>GM. SG GM</p>

7	<p>Theatre Committee</p> <p>a) Backstage volunteers JB reported that they are having some success through advertising roles in the SLT newsletter. Recommendation is that it becomes a regular feature in the newsletter.</p> <p>Action: HR will mock up an option to share with TC before the next newsletter.</p> <p>b) Fobs It has become apparent that too many SLT members who have fobs aren't aware of how to open/lock up the building. Also some new members gain a fob because they are cast in a show, and then don't return, but their fob remains active until their membership lapses.</p> <p>Agreed: Cast members won't automatically have entitlement to a building fob. And before a fob is issued , the recipient needs to have a walk through tour of the building and understand how to lock up.</p> <p>Action: TC to alert Directors and Bex of GC agreed stance above.</p>	<p>HR</p> <p>TC</p>
8.	<p>BPT Update</p> <p>a. We have had an issue getting quotes for electrical testing that should have been completed in March. We now have the requisite 2 quotes and have ok'd the work to go ahead. We will have approx £2k from this year's budget to complete some more capital works depending on if the certification report highlights any issues. We don't know yet what we should prioritise.</p> <p>b. We have worked out we need over £50k in room hire for it to just break even which we are on target to do but have some overdue payments from a couple of hires. We have asked for the hires to be chased up asap.</p> <p>c. We are starting to progress the works to make the front door more secure and clear the land bank in the yard that has some restricted funding to complete.</p> <p>d. Green Room - the refuge area for those who are unable to manage stairs in the event of a fire or other emergency is in the Green Room. Those people who are unable to use the stairs should retire to the refuge area to await rescue - where there is a buzzer for those trapped to raise the alarm. The lift won't work when the alarm sounds, it will return to the foyer and open its</p>	

**South London Theatre
General Council Meeting
Function Reports October 9th 2023**

1. House Team Report from Gareth Milton

Resources

SignUp for the Christmas show requirements have now been added to the application. We are actively seeking resources.

Box Office allocation is currently working well as we have two new regulars. Raffle allocation is reduced to a small dedicated team, Jeanette is managing, but it would help to have a few more bodies

Front of House has a couple of new volunteers, so that is also manageable at the moment.

The big challenge will be the Christmas show, hence the push for those resources now.

Box Office

Very successful run for The History Boys.

As a reminder, full details of the Box Office takings are available on this spreadsheet: https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1esM5XTdb7avHkCYrJQWKDws-qOV__f4R6qyqTRW-ZJ8/edit#gid=293943378

Raffle takings were also high for this show, £205 for the week.

Key Risks / Issues

Those people on the first aid list are feeling out of touch with the training, hence we need to organise refresher training for them. I have produced a quick “what to do if someone falls ill” guide, which has been approved by Bex.

At the time of writing(5th October) , we have one member of the cast of Tilly tested positive for COVID. I’m awaiting guidance on what impact this will have on the show.

2. Marketing from Hywel Roberts

September highlights

- Back on track with getting two previews ahead in the newsletter
- History Boys sold out run
- Draft lines for press sent to Simon for approval
- Open rate on newsletter up 3% to 54% and unsubscribes down 20%

September challenges

- Low ticket sales for Tilly of Bloomsbury
- Ticket purchases from site down 9.1%

Website report - see separate document

3. Youth Theatre notes from meeting with Teresa Donogue 20th Sept. LF
History Boys - a huge success generally. But included a 17 year old, a long standing member of Youth Theatre doing ASM under David's guidance as part of school work experience.

Beauty and The Beast is due to cast a couple of young people so chaperone arrangements will be needed.

Teresa reports that the Youth theatre term has started well. Credits Greg and Mattea particularly (but all the YT team too) for coming up with a new structure to the sessions which is proving very successful, has enabled some expansion in capacity and involves rotation through 3 workshops each week.

Holiday courses to be planned in advance to try and maximise take up and hence income (subject to negotiation with BPT over room use).

4. Theatre Committee update

We did not get the rights to Closer. We will update the website and make a mini announcement.

Adding backstage roles to the newsletter appears to be going well so we will continue to make those as visible as possible.

Eddie has rewritten the Directors Handbook and we have started on the new member booklet. We are aiming to have a Directors Meeting on the 24th of October.

5. Membership from Guy Jones

Included:

- 1. New Membership System Pilot**
- 2. Supporter Circle Launch** - Box Office implications
- 3. Stats update**

1. New membership system pilot

I have begun a trial with MemberMojo for new registrations and members in the following circumstances only:

- **New registrations for the Supporter Circle**
- **New registrations for SLT Membership**
- **Existing Supporter Circle subscribers previously paying via card/PayPal**

All other existing members will continue unchanged for now, but as with the Supporter Circle, I may move those whose payment behaviours permit an easy migration, leaving behind only those who pay using London & Zurich via their bank accounts in LoveAdmin - as they would need to pay in a different way with MemberMojo.

The difference with MemberMojo is that there is no facility to pay in instalments and no integrated way to pay via one's bank account. However, payment options are still multiple, with the following offered:

- PayPal account
- Card via Stripe (We incur charges for payment processing, which I'll monitor and compare with current LoveAdmin costs)
- Apple Pay & Google Pay wherein no payment details need be entered and payment is authorised biometrically on a user's device (Processed via Stripe again I think ultimately, as the payment will still be by card)

It means operating two systems for now, but I should have to do far less with MemberMojo as all payments are confirmed and renewal notices sent out automatically - something LoveAdmin doesn't do.

Member Mojo is simpler and easier to use, as it tries to do less than LoveAdmin. LoveAdmin doesn't purge any contacts and unless they are manually removed from membership groups, it continues to contact them twice annually for renewal payment, regardless of how long they may have opted to lapse. MemberMojo will remove people instantly from the membership group as soon as their payment becomes overdue, meaning that there is always a clear and countable current membership group, with its own email link. With LoveAdmin, I had to create a new group and filter paid-up members into it manually every time we wanted to check.

If we can ultimately get the entire membership onto it, we can easily communicate with them via the automatic groups it creates and any others we put people into. Potentially, we can send the newsletter from MemberMojo to our members and reduce our MailChimp list down to just mailing list recipients. It won't have quite such a sophisticated template and graphics arrangement as MailChimp, but it can be done. I know Simon would like to separate these two audiences.

The costs are minimal, with an annual cost at the level of some of the monthly costs of options considered previously and for our first 60 days there are no charges from the platform at all. (Payment acquirers will still charge their cut of course)

I will liaise with Lisa on the financial side to see how that billing goes, but I am not anticipating any significant uplift in costs to process membership fees. Should the trial not prove successful, I will be able to move people back to LoveAdmin, no problem.

I want to use the next show (Arturo Ui) as a test to see how well people get signed up. With LoveAdmin most shows with new people - which is most shows - had at least one person whose registration failed and I was forced to carry out admin to get them onboard. If they get signed up swiftly, I will consider it a very successful start.

Following on from the legal issue we encountered, I have included an agreement to all our policies, in the registration form, which you can see if you follow the links to join, from our website. I have also included the ethnic identity question, previously used in the member survey and which Teresa has already applied to Youth, I think, to begin to collect that data - optionally from the submitter's POV.

2. Supporter Circle is Go!

I have launched Supporter Circle and communicated the rebrand to former Friends. I have included those lapsed in the past 12 months, sending them a special invitation to come back. (They have been advised to register afresh via the website, which will take them to MemberMojo now, rather than LoveAdmin.)

The banner stand is up in the theatre, communicating the benefits of the Supporter Circle to audiences and I have also asked FoH to put flyers on the seats of the shows in the later part of Tilly's run.

The only operational change (from Friends) in Supporter Circle, is that there is now an additional benefit - the loyalty scheme. This permits them a further free ticket if they buy 5 separate Supporter (member) price tickets for 5 separate SLT-produced shows in a calendar year. The goal being to encourage return visits and potentially buy tickets in advance.

The qualifying tickets for the loyalty scheme must either be purchased online or if face to face, the Box Office operative must ensure the ticket is either booked against their TicketSource member account, or marked as a comment on that account, so that when it comes to their application for their freebie, Box Office can clearly calculate their eligibility. This has implications for Box Office, who need to be briefed on this simple element.

3. Membership Stats update:

As @ 28 September, we have the following number of subscriptions:

- Total Full Members: 354
- Paying standard £50 rate: 233
- Paying concession £25 rate: 121
- Supporters: **47**, down from 74 in 2019
- Total active subscriptions: 401

Revenue still seems to be carrying an upward overall trend:

Net Membership Revenue Continuous

