

General Council Minutes Open Meeting
11th November 2023

Present: Simon Gleisner (SG) Chair; Chris Stooke(CS); Guy Jones (GJ)
Gareth Milton (GM): Hywel Roberts (HR); Han Evans (HE); Eddie
Coleman(EC); Lorna Felix (LF) Minutes.

Observers: Jeanette Hoile; Malcolm Woodman; Carole Coyne: Bex Law.

	Item	Action
1.	Apologies: Jo Boniface(JB); Barry Heselden(BH);	
2.	Minutes of GC Meeting 9th October 2023: Approved	
3.	Matters Arising/Actions outstanding: SG informed the meeting that due to a change in personal circumstances Deputy Chair Philip Epstein has stood down. SG will advertise the vacancy in the next newsletter.	
4	Financial Report from Chris Stooke: Statutory accounts of SLT and BPT were finalised in October and early November. - All Charity Commission filings completed within deadline. -Current SLT cash position £92,000 but BPT (total £17,000) not yet paid. Net = £75,000 marginally better than July forecast Most recent ticket sales, excluding VAT Tilly £2,329 Deep Water £2,722 Apologia £2,628 Forecast for each was £2,718	
5.	Ticket Price Review update : GM Early Ticket Discount will start in the new year and will apply to a number of seats for each show from the moment the tickets go on Ticket Source until the Sunday Get in when final seat numbers are confirmed. £5 Wednesday is working well. A suggestion to extend this to Tuesday evenings is to be reviewed when the impact of Early Bird Tickets is known. Action: Publicity. SG is to highlight the introduction of Early Bird tickets in the next member's update.	SG

6.	<p>Membership Fees Review : GJ</p> <p>Use of MemberMojo has been extended to almost all SLT Membership, the Supporter Circle and Youth Theatre payments.</p> <p>LoveAdmin is now a legacy system and only holds members paying by Direct Debit (annual full payment or instalments) and those paying instalment payments by card or Paypal. The 200 Club membership is also still on LoveAdmin.</p> <p>MemberMojo has less flexibility than Love Admin but appears to be a simpler system to manage. GC readily agreed to pay annual fees (£75 each) for two MemberMojo accounts. One for SLTmembership, the other for The Supporter Circle and 200 Club.</p> <p>A majority of members who pay membership fees by Direct Debit are likely to be willing to change to the new system.</p> <p>Question: Can we gift aid membership? A: No because of VAT.</p> <p>Actions: To review the likely impact of reducing the rate of concession from its current 50% to 25% is adjourned to the December meeting.</p> <p>GJ and HR to liaise on a Membership survey.</p>	<p>GJ</p> <p>GJ/HR</p>
7	<p>Developing Guidance re managing diversity: SG</p> <p>The aim is to help Theatre Committee and Directors working with members who have differing needs to facilitate an early understanding of what support may be required so the experience for everyone is the best it can be. SG reported that he's making progress but has nothing to share yet.</p> <p>HE asked if the guidance could include the issue of how to manage disclosure where TC hold information from a previous experience that could helpfully inform a current situation.</p>	
8.	<p>Theatre Committee</p> <p>Director's meeting: completed this last month, it was great to discuss next season with both new and previous directors.</p> <p>New members booklet: Eddie to be commissioning content to begin compiling booklet. SG advised keeping an eye on longevity in terms of content.</p> <p>March gap: reviewing submissions at the moment and will be announcing new play after confirmation of rights</p> <p>November submission: open and have started to receive plays, reminder we are closing the window at the end of November.</p>	

9.	<p>Sole Luna : GM</p> <p>Sole Luna have suggested offering a pre show meal for SLT audience members. The idea being that on booking show tickets via Ticket Source there is an option to also book a pre show meal at Sole Luna. SLT would receive £2 commission for each pre show meal booked.</p> <p>Gareth and Malcolm Woodman have met with Sole Luna to discuss the logistics of how this might work; and have reserved the right to extend this option to include other local restaurants too if it works well.</p> <p>GC agreed to trial this from the new year.</p>	
10	<p>BPT Update CS and GM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Governance project ongoing - Various trustee changes at BPT. - Building repairs identified incl, in particular, fire doors. See GM briefing paper on interim cover. - Other Building issues include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The retaining wall in the Garden - Internal Door in Watch Room that leads to the Garden - Refuge Area - ensuring furniture is not put in the area 	
11	<p>Bar Comm : GJ</p> <p>The bar is suffering another ingress of water following recent heavy rain. Short of tanking the room - there seems little more can be done to avoid this. In the meantime a humidifier is assisting drying the room.</p> <p>Obtaining enough volunteers is a perennial problem - but a volunteer social and an evening for new volunteers is planned.</p> <p>Several shows recently have finished late with the consequence that post show bar sales have been really low - on one night only one person came down for a post show drink.</p> <p>FOH are continuing to flag the bar post show.</p> <p>A suggestion is for longer shows to have an earlier start time i.e. 7.30. TC are able to identify which shows are likely to be in advance, and could approach the relevant Directors before auditions. If an earlier show start time is agreed this would also enable FOH, Box Office and Bar volunteers to be aware in advance. GM felt that some 7.30 starts would be manageable for FOH and Box Office volunteers</p> <p>Actions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Adam Crook to be canvassed re potential earlier start to some shows 2. TC will encourage Directors to ask the cast to meet friends and family in the bar post show. 	<p>LF/SG/ GJ TC</p>
12	<p>Questions on General updates: see below for separate collation of reports.</p>	

	<p>a. GTM/Wardrobe BH suggestion for an account at the builders merchants agreed, with proviso purchases need to be allocated to correct cost heading/show.</p> <p>b. Publicity : no questions</p> <p>c. Marketing Agreed - to provide SLT Credit Card details to facilitate Google Ads. HR to liaise with Lisa Thomas.</p> <p>d. House: no questions</p> <p>e. Youth Theatre: no questions</p> <p>f. Membership GJ recommended a script for audience announcement to include information about The Supporter Circle and Bar open after show.</p>	
13	<p>AOB</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. In response to a request from another Theatre organisation it was confirmed that we can't share the SLT mailing list. 2. Feast Rota : Acknowledged that getting enough volunteers to cover Feast is tricky. We may need to find a way to incentivise volunteers. After December there's a break until April so there's time to ponder. 3. Sound Training request. Jo/Han are offering a shadow opportunity. 4. Eddie thanked HR for his support of TC with marketing. 5. Cycles - are to be banned from the Foyer when a show is on. Work is being done with Lambeth to get a cycle rack outside the theatre. In the meantime there are places outside the Picture House. GM has updated the website with details. It will also go into a members newsletter. 6. A question from Bex to TC about suitable dates for a potential external hire by Dulwich Players, prompted disclosure that Southside's January 2024 production will be Hamlet. 	
14	Confidential Matters : GC elected members only	
	Next Meeting : 11th December 2023. 8.00pm Kit Room	

South London Theatre General Council Meeting
13th November 2023
Reports

1. General Tech Manager/Wardrobe: BH

I can create an SLT account at the builders merchant using the SLT account. They would invoice bill/debit us once a month. People would then be able to get things without raising an expense claim. Any issues with that?

2. Publicity: SG

Continue to have slight problems with print - always a bit last minute. But it's good value and local, so I'm going to bring forward deadlines to allow more time and hopefully reduce/eliminate late arrival of posters and programmes..

Working with next year's directors on new posters.

Need to try and find some support still - particularly on programmes.

3. Marketing: HR

October highlights

- Google Ads grant approved and ready to use
- Website traffic and referrals to ticket site up
- Strong ticket sales
- Particularly strong interest in page for You Stupid Darkness
- Higher traffic for auditions pages and very high audition numbers for A Midsummer Night's Dream

October challenges

- Open rates and link clicks down on emails (this is partly because we sent a one-off email about the March 2024 slot, which had a lower open rate and click through rates)

4. House Report GM

Resources

We are fully resourced for the next two shows, but the focus is on the Christmas Show. There are a few gaps on the FoH and Box Office roles, including the Saturday matinee. Jeanette has already sorted the resources for the Raffle team.

Box Office

Good takings for Apologia. Wednesday nights continue to be popular with the cheaper tickets attracting both those looking for a discounted price, and their friends who are happy to pay full price.

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

Key Risks / Issues

Those people on the first aid list are feeling out of touch with the training.

Update:

Informal revision session agreed with Bex, but worth noting that all First Aid accreditation will expire next year, and we will need to trigger full accreditation again from June onwards (with the associated cost).

Latecomer policy

Concerns that even when we allow latecomers, when we have a sellout show the current policy doesn't really work. This will be tackled in the House meeting.

L'Arche are hiring our space during the middle of the run of our Christmas show to perform their own Christmas show (Aladdin).

I checked with both TC and the Christmas show director before putting tickets on sale. In order to keep a clear demarcation between our show and the L'Arche one, I have put the L'Arche one on the youth version of TicketSource. L'Arche have been given the TS link, and the visiting show event on the website has this link on the buy tickets button at the bottom of the event page. Hopefully we will not get any confusion.

For information:

The Wednesday night performance of You Stupid Darkness will include a pre-show Q&A by the Croydon Samaritans. This is free to attend and is being ticketed separately from the show.

5. Youth Theatre: Teresa Donoghue

Class numbers

I have been working hard on filling up the classes from the waiting lists. We now have increased to three Intermediate classes (which are almost full but we've had a couple of drop outs). We also created a new class for 6 to 7 year olds which has been really popular. In fact we've had parents of 5 year olds trying to book their youngsters early!

The numbers at present are:

Juniors 6 to 7 years - 8 (This is a small class due to the age, but we've got three more youngsters starting soon).

Juniors - 8 to 9 years - 21

Intermediates - 49

Youth - 39

Young Adults - 26

So total at the moment is - 143

We still have 33 youngsters on the waiting list. But we are unlikely to offer places until the Youth production is over as we will have cast for the production. Also we will have youngsters old enough to move up to the next class and we will need to make adjustments for this.

Curriculum

The youngsters in Juniors and Intermediates are getting ready for their end of term showcases. These will be on Dec 2nd 10.30 to 11am for Juniors and 12.45 to 1.15pm for Inters. Members of GC are very welcome to come along.

Staffing

We have a great team of teachers and assistants at the moment. They are:

Greg, Mattea, David, Siobhan, Florence, Cerys, Jack and Holly. We have a core team and others who cover for absences. We also have two young volunteers, Mereana and Nina (Nina is volunteering as part of her Duke of Edinburgh award). We also have Frances, a new adult volunteer who has also joined the theatre as a full member.

Youth production

We are rehearsing for the youth production of Jekyll and Hyde which will take place early in February. Rehearsals take place in the usual Friday and Saturday classes, Wednesday evenings and Sunday mornings.

Plans for the future

We have a couple of one day holiday workshops on Dec 9th.

We are planning in advance for holiday courses for February half term, Easter, May half term and summer 2024. As long as space is available.

We would like to hold a social evening for parents in January. I will liaise with the Bar team to see if this is possible.

6. Membership: GJ

Supporter Circle update

The launch has been a bit soft and we've only had single figures of new registrations, so I would like to have our audience announcements for upcoming shows, reference the Supporter Circle as follows:

Welcome to the South London Theatre and tonight's production of XXXXXX.

Please turn off your mobile phones to avoid disrupting the performance and be advised that filming and photography of any kind is strictly prohibited for reasons of copyright.

Also, please note that should you need to leave the auditorium at any time, you may not be readmitted until a suitable point in the show. [AS RELEVANT - There is however an interval of 15 minutes and the bar will be open both then and after the show.]

Please consider joining our Supporter Circle for free and reduced price tickets. Your subscription could mean the lights keep coming up at the SLT on our 20 plus shows a year. More information is on the flyers in the foyer and the poster outside the bar, or you can search Supporting South London Theatre online. Enjoy the show!

This worked fine for my show. I think we need to get a male and female recording of the above on the desktop of the sound computer, so that they are prominent for those setting sound on upcoming shows.

Membership Stats update:

Membership numbers data and trending is now published to the [Members' Area](#) of the website, but for convenience:

As @ 31 October, we have the following number of subscriptions changes since last month indicated in brackets:

- Total Full Members: 374 (↑20)
- Paying standard £50 rate: 244 (↑10)
- Paying concession £25 rate: 130 (↑10)
- Supporters: 51, (↑4)
- Total active subscriptions: 425 (↑24)

Revenue still seems to be carrying an upward overall trend:

