

**South London Theatre Centre  
56th AGM**

**11th June 2023**

**1. Present:**

Simon Gleisner (Chair), Lorna Felix (Minutes), Gabriella Andronico, Cal Beckett, Elisa Benham, Chris Bennett, Charlotte Benstead, Peter Burke, Maria Cabral, Siobhan Campbell, Andrew Chadney, Leon Chambers, David Clements, Eddie Coleman, Lily Ann Coleman, Carole Coyne, Adam Crook, Fiona Daffern, Nicholas Davidson, Matthew Davies, Derek Dempsey, Teresa Donoghue, Caroline Doyle, Han Evans, Dennis Fenton, Brian Fretwell, Kay George, Kimberley Goldsmith, Stephen Grist, Jeanette Hoile, Mark Ireson, Guy Jones, Victoria Keegan, Jack King, Bex Law, Geoffrey Lill, Matthew Lyne, Pamela Lyne, John Lyne, Tom Mathias, Gareth Milton, Craig Norman, Jess Osorio, Sarah Pearcey, Steve Pleasants, Lee Ridgeway, Richard Shead, Christopher Stooke, Christine Theophilus, Lisa Thomas, Sean Thomas, Gregory Williams, Malcolm Woodman.

**Apologies :** Jo Boniface, Philip Epstein, Sarah Farage, Barry Heselden, Hwyl Roberts

**2. Abbreviations**

General Council = GC

Building Preservation Trust = BPT

Member's Club = MC

Bar Committee ( of the Member's Club) = BarComm.

**3. Chairs Opening Remarks**

Simon Gleisner, our Chair, welcomed everyone to the 56th AGM of South London Theatre Centre Ltd. He reflected that 2022 had been an amazing year, our first full year back post Covid. He also highlighted some clouds on the horizon which we are already working to address and which we need to focus upon in the coming year, namely finances and volunteering. Finances because of the rise in utility costs and end of various grants ( Chris and Charlotte will say more later) and volunteering, because in common with the rest of the voluntary sector SLT has fewer active volunteers post Covid so we are dependent upon a smaller pool to keep going. However Simon recognised that in addressing those attending tonight he was preaching to the converted.

A few initial thanks ( in no particular order)

- Lisa Thomas and the cast of Gabriel for giving up theatre space in their get in week
- GC members in 2022 - during a challenging year
- Cal Beckett - who is stepping down after 3 years on Theatre Committee
- Charlotte and the BPT for their fundraising efforts and looking after the building
- Bex and David for keeping the building running and safe
- Adam and Bar Comm for keeping us watered and socialising

- Everyone of our members who have volunteered their time doing front of house, box office, bar, back stage, wardrobe, publicity etc to keep the place running.

To remind us of the fantastic productions in 2022, Simon had put together a video. This was received to great applause and cheering.

#### **4. Approval of the 55th AGM Minutes**

Proposed by Gareth Milton, Seconded by Geoff Lill. Agreed by the meeting.

#### **5. Financial Report**

Chris Stooke, our Financial Director introduced the financial report for the year ending December 2022. The accounts are currently with the auditors so not available to be approved today. However the Profit and Loss summary together with a commentary is in the 2022 Annual Report which has been circulated to members. The figures will not change. Audited accounts will be shared in due course.

Chris highlighted that total income is slightly higher than 2019 ( the last pre Covid year). Ticket sales continue to be our largest income stream, although ticket sale income has yet to reach 2019 levels. Other key figures are the Rent and share of overheads, both of which have hugely increased as we are no longer benefiting from any subsidies and utility costs have escalated. Consequently BPT and SLT are looking at all the main areas of business to ensure every activity pays its way.

#### **Proposal**

Chris proposed the current accounts to the membership. Seconded by Tom Mathias. AGREED by those in attendance.

#### **6. To appoint the Auditors**

Chris proposed Begbies be retained as our auditors. Seconded by Lee Ridgeway. AGREED by those in attendance.

#### **7. Building Preservation Trust Update**

Charlotte Benstead Chair BPT, reflected on the huge achievement of replacing the rusty beam. An achievement acknowledged by applause. This is the first year since we moved back to the building that all grants and subsidies have ended. In January we had to start to repay a loan from the Architectural Heritage Fund, we've also had to resume paying full rent and our rate rebate is ending. All at the same time utility costs have spiralled. BPT has to ensure ongoing maintenance of the building and continued compliance with Health and Safety. The 60:20:20 split between SLT, BPT and MC is to be reviewed. Since January 2023 BPT have been focussed on looking at overall costs to ensure we can cover costs. We are not in crisis but we do need to be careful.

#### **Questions:**

Eddie Coleman asked whether we could identify gas/electricity usage so we can address wastage. Charlotte said we are able to survey usage by the half hour which has proved very useful. We have also moved to a new supplier on a fixed term

contract which in itself will help to reduce costs, electricity costs fixed down, but gas fixed higher.

Jeanette Hoile referred to a recent notification not to use the lift without taking a phone as we are between contracts and asked how this had come about. Bex reassured that the contract for services had been maintained and so the lift remains in good working order, however the contract for managing the call centre alarm for emergencies is being transferred because the original company went bust. It should be sorted shortly.

Carol Coyne asked why we have lost Business rate subsidies. Charlotte explained that not enough Lambeth residents are using SLT- its not that we've lost Lambeth members, rather that Lambeth have raised their criteria. But a big shout out to any family and friends who live in Lambeth to sign up/visit.

#### **8. To confirm members of the General Council**

There were nominations for all bar one of the General Council posts and as all nominations were unopposed, no voting was needed. Simon expressed a huge thanks to departing GC member Cal Beckett for her hard work during her three years on Theatre Committee. He welcomed new GC Members Eddie Coleman and Han Evans ( both Theatre Committee) Hwyl Roberts ( Marketing Director) and Philip Epstein (Deputy Chair) who will join Gareth Milton (House Manager), Guy Jones (Membership) Lisa Thomas (Rights and Payments ,) Jo Boniface (Theatre Committee) Barry Heselden (General Technical Manager) and Lorna Felix (General Secretary)

The remaining vacancy is the Publicity Director, if anyone is interested in taking this role on, please talk to Simon.

#### **9. Resolutions**

After some advocacy and discussion voting took place on the following all of which are changes to our Bye Laws:

- a. To change the name of 'Friend of SLT' to 'SLT supporter'  
Proposed; Guy Jones, Seconded Cal Beckett. AGREED by the meeting.
- b. To raise the age of senior concession from 60+ to 65 +.  
Proposed Gareth Milton, Seconded Geoff Lill. AGREED by the meeting.
- c. To change the quorum for the General Council meetings from half its voting membership to not less than five, whichever is the higher figure.  
Proposed Gareth Milton, Seconded Adam Crook. AGREED by the meeting with one abstention.

#### **10. House Report**

Gareth Milton gave an overview of ticket purchases, 27% members / 73% non members; and an update on the impact of flexible ticketing. He named and thanked the volunteers who had completed the most volunteering shifts in relation to House, Feast Stand and Open House, ( but not including BPT) individuals i.e:

- 1st Anne Crane (58)
- 2nd Dennis Fenton (50)
- 3rd Jeanette Hoile (38)
- 4th Gareth Milton & Hayley Thomas (37)
- 6th Christine Theophilus (25)
- 7th Lily Ann Coleman (23)
- 8th Fiona Daffern & Chris Bennett (22)
- 10th Cal Beckett (20)

In addition he gave personal thanks to:

- Chris Bennett (for organising the FoH resources)
- Jeanette Hoile (for organising the Raffle)
- Those people who attend my House meetings to help input to the “House view” in the GC meeting.
- Anyone who has done a House Team shift in the last year

## **11. Youth Theatre**

Teresa Donoghue Youth Theatre Manager gave the meeting an overview of South London Youth Theatre from the small dedicated team of drama teachers and assistants, Greg, Siobhan, David, Mattea and Katie and two new assistants Bethany-Rose and Florence to the productions the youngsters have taken part in during 2022 including Alice in Wonderland, Blue Remembered Hills and Thumbelina. After a few teething problems, thanks to the cooperation of the production teams and the flexibility of the drama staff, she said the new chaperone policy for under 18s involved in adult productions had worked well.

The annual Youth Drama production in 2022 was Macbeth, performed ‘in the round’/ the cast was made up of more than 50 young people. A total of six performances over five days, all of them sold out.

Teresa told the meeting that Youth Theatre classes are very popular, usually full with waiting lists. Over the last year, the youngsters have explored Greek Myths, voice and accent work, melodrama, stage combat, and physicality, choral work and ensemble movement. And studied scripts as diverse as Canterbury Tales, Roald Dahl and Blood Brothers.

Teresa is also the SLT lead on community engagement and for two key family shows in 2022, ‘Alice in Wonderland’ and ‘Thumbelina’ free tickets were offered to people who were unable to pay. Many of whom have not previously been inside a theatre.

She finished by sharing some lovely quotes from parents and carers.

## *Questions*

a.Charlotte Benstead asked whether there was any way we could engage those on the waiting list, Teresa said that lack of space was the primary reason for not being able to expand further.

b. Maria Cabral suggested looking for grants to work with young offenders. Teresa acknowledged the suggestion and assured that she is working with some community groups that are working with children..

## **12. Questions and Comments from the Floor**

a.Maria Cabral asked whether the concession category of unwaged applied to those disabled people who are in receipt of attendance allowances. The response was that it covers those on benefits, and the meeting was reminded that Wednesday has flexible ticketing so anyone can choose to purchase a ticket for £5.

b. Han Evans asked about the schedule for shows next year. Cal Beckett said that she has prepared a schedule of 21 shows and said things were ready for the new Theatre committed to advertise this year's deadline for submissions at the end of July. As a departing Theatre Committee member, her recommendation was to seek submissions for the full year but to ask would be Directors for their preference as to which half.

c.Tom Mathias asked if it would be appropriate to split the vacant Publicity Manager role between online and local publicity. Simon said that splitting the work between the Publicity and Marketing Manager had gone some way to doing that, and we are trying to build up a team of people to share the work, so if anyone is interested in taking on one aspect that would be great.

d.Jeanette Hoile was surprised to find recently that member fobs have been deactivated on Saturdays during Youth Theatre hours, and asked if this could be given further publicity. Simon said he was happy to reiterate, and reminded the meeting that this had been done as a necessary safeguarding measure. Teresa said if any member absolutely needs access to the building during YT hours to contact her in advance. Bex assured that during YT holidays, fob access is reactivated for any booked activities.

e.Tom Mathias asked whether the potential to 'gift' tickets had been considered to enable someone else on a low income to attend. It was thought to be a lovely idea, GC will take that for consideration.

f.Chris Bennett highlighted the huge contribution of the wardrobe team who contributed over £6k in income through hires last year and proposed a vote of thanks to them. The meeting showed their appreciation through a round of applause.

g. Sean Thomas thanked everyone for their help in the theatre space, Simon took the opportunity to also thank Sean for everything he does too. Again the meeting showed their appreciation through a round of applause.

DRAFT