

South London Theatre Centre
58th AGM
14th September 2025

1. Present:

Gerri McAndrew, (Chair) Lorna Felix (Minutes), Mark Bacon, Cal Beckett, Chris Bennett, Charlotte Benstead, David Carr, Graham Clements, Jenny Clements, Carole Coyne, Fiona Daffern, Teresa Donoghue, Chas Doyle, Bryon Fear, Brian Fretwell, Phil Gammon, Kay George, Simon Gleisner, Stephen Hayward, James Hebblewaith, Jeanette Hoile, Ruth Huggett, Carole Ironside, Guy Jones, Jack King, Gareth Milton, Jess Osario, Richard Shead, Marysia Skwarka, Edward Smith, Chris Stooke, Christine Theophilus, Lisa Thomas, Sean Thomas, Pippa Tuck, Alan Walker, Peter Warcup, Malcolm Woodman, Shirley Woodman.

Proxy Votes: Gareth Barker, Jeffrey Byers, Michael Darbon, Sarah Farage, Luke Gardner, Florence Henderson, Bex Law, Chris Mansi, Hannah McCorry, Steve Pleasants, Lorna Reed, Hayley Thomas,

Apologies : None

2. Chair's Opening Remarks

Gerri McAndrew (Chair), welcomed everyone to the 58th AGM of South London Theatre Centre Ltd. She introduced the current Board members i.e. Chris Stooke - Ordinary Director (Treasurer), Marysia Skwarka - Ordinary Director, Shree Ziradkar - Ordinary Director, Mark Bacon - Ordinary Director (co-opted) Simon Gleisner - Theatre Director and Gareth Milton - Commercial Director, as well as Trustee Board secretariat- Lorna Felix.

Gerri thanked Sapphire Shoferpoor, Director of NSFW, the cast and crew for letting us use the theatre during their get in week.

3. Approval of the 57th AGM Minutes

Proposed by Fiona Daffern, Seconded by Jack King Agreed by the meeting.

4. Chairs Report

Gerri McAndrew shared some of the work undertaken by Board members since the membership voted in a new governance structure last year. In addition to 7 Trustee Meetings, the Board has held 5 strategic planning sessions(including one with members of the Exec Group) and held a 'Meet the Board' event in SLT Bar. Their focus has been on bringing together the governance and financial reporting of BPT and SLT. Not an easy or quick thing to achieve. The Board has been reviewing and creating systems and processes to meet legislative requirements; establishing reporting mechanisms and delegating financial accountability. They have addressed legal requirements around Health and Safety, and now have an active Risk Register as required by the Charity Commission.

The Board have reviewed and revised key policies including safeguarding and

Equality, Diversity and Inclusion. Gerri extended thanks to Fiona Daffern both for her role in drawing up the original draft policy and for recently checking it.

Marysia Skwarka has taken on the role of lead Trustee for EDI. The next step is to draw up an action plan, for which SLT may need to bring in expertise to help guide us on the way forward.

All the Board's work has been with a view to ensuring SLT is able to continue with their amazing productions. Knowing that membership contribution is the backbone to SLT's success, the Board have started discussions about how better to know what membership needs and wants, and are looking at ways of better reporting back.

Gerri invited **Guy Jones, Membership secretary** to say a few words about SLT membership. Guy showed a graph of the various membership categories since 2019, clearly showing the 2020 Covid dip but then an upward trajectory. Currently membership averages around 400 paying members, and 60 - 80 supporters. Member Mojo is set to collate certain demographic details such as borough of residence that are helpful for funding applications. The questions are refreshed on each annual renewal so enable SLT to keep accurate data. Membership records stay on the system for just 3 months after a lapsed membership before being permanently deleted.

Honorary Membership ; Jeanette Hoile Gerri announced that following the receipt of a nomination a few months ago the Board have awarded an Honorary Membership to Jeanette Hoile who has been an active member of SLT since 1976 and in addition to acting and directing, has been publicity manager and still manages the Raffle, delivers leaflets, and conducts tours of the building.

The new Governance structure means the same Board also is responsible for our lovely Grade 2 listed building. The Board were delighted to receive 5 days free consultancy from the Architectural Heritage Foundation and have been working with Diana Moore. Members of the Executive committee joined for a full day consultation working to identifying strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats for both charities. The work is still in progress, although key themes are emerging:

- Attracting a broader membership, developing routes for members to maintain commitment and participation
- Income generation: improving financial resilience, to reinvest in our activities, facilities and heritage building
- Impact: Seek out and evaluate our information as we have a good story to tell. Collate evidence of what works well and what we could do better
- Governance: Leading with clear direction both charities, with resilience built into our culture and management
- Succession Planning

In conclusion Gerri thought it had been a successful first year under the new structure. A lot has been achieved, but there's a long way to go. She also commented it had been tough not being a full Board.

Initial questions from the meeting included:

Q: Can people join as Trustees at any time - not just at AGM?

A. Yes. There is provision for the Board to co-opt trustees at any time. The current skill sets that the board are looking for are fundraising, HR and EDI.

Q. How was it decided which Board member would stand down this first transition year?

A. This year the Board Member standing down chose to do so. If no one had wanted to step down then it might have resorted to drawing lots. Eventually every Ordinary Board member will be on a three year cycle, with the option to stand again for another cycle. The Theatre Director and Commercial Director roles are subject to annual membership confirmation.

Q: Do the Board think the new structure works?

A. Yes, it does. It's been particularly helpful for continuity having SLT and BPT managed by the same Board of Directors. It has also been helpful having a Board to focus on Health and Safety, Compliance and fundraising freeing the Exec Committee to focus on the day to day management of everything that supports productions.

A couple of members said that they thought the new structure feels very different, however Sean Thomas said the place hasn't changed, the shows still go on and the members make it work. Cal Beckett reminded that SLT is accountable to the Charities commission, and the Board's work enables everyone else to get on with making theatre.

5. Theatre Directors's report - Simon Gleisner

Simon played a photo montage of shows throughout 2024. He thanked all of the people who had made all of those productions possible.

A strong presence means a good audience and he shared some fun facts from 2024:

- 80,565 users of the website
- 52,000 hits on our homepage
- 78,905 newsletters sent out
- 8,293 bums on seats
- 78% non-members

Simon extended thanks to:

The final General Council who were in place until September 2024:

- Lorna Felix, Gareth Milton, Barry Heselden, Guy Jones, Chris Stooke, Hywel Roberts, Jo Boniface, Han Evans, Eddie Coleman

Wardrobe Team and the Sewing Bee : Including Jenny Bennett, and Jess Osario
Props Team - Carole Ironside and Kay George

Backstage and Sunday Teams in 2024 . Particularly Barry Heselden and Sean Thomas

Marketing and Publicity - Cal, Guy, Jeanette, Christine and Eleanor

Youth Theatre- Teresa, Lorna, Teachers and Teaching Assistants

Simon also wished to thank the current Executive Team:

- Gareth Milton - Commercial Director
- Simon Gleisner - Theatre Director
- Theatre Committee - Lisa Thomas, Jess Osorio and Stephen Hayward
- Wardrobe - Jenny Bennett, Jess Osorio
- Backstage - Alistair Simpson
- Publicity - Cal Beckett
- Brand and marketing - Guy Jones
- Membership - Guy Jones
- Youth Theatre - Lorna Felix
- House - Chris Bennett
- Building Team - Bex Law, John Winters, Anne Crane, Noah Wright
- Exec team support - Sarah Farage

6. Commercial Director's Report- Gareth Milton

Commercial Director is a role instigated by the new Governance arrangements in September 2024. Key responsibilities include: Building Maintenance, Budget Monitoring, Risk Management, and ensuring Charity legal requirements are met. Gareth explained that this first year has involved gathering a team together, setting the budget for 2025 using the actuals received from 2024, finalising the contract with Lambeth (with help of a fellow trustee Shree Ziradker) Ensuring all staff had contracts in place (also with Shree's help). Bex then created a list of items that needed attention to enable the building meeting to discuss and agree priorities.

The latest set of building challenges are:

- Finalise the plans for improving the security and heat retention of the main doors (after they have been repaired and repainted)
- The basement is always damp, a solution has been proposed but it will be very expensive and disruptive for the members club.
- We still have problems with the soil bank in the yard.
- We all need to be more building security conscious.

Many thanks to the Building Team: Bex Law (Building Manager) John Winters, Noah Wright, Anne Crane, Chris Bennett(heritage items). And to Carole Coyne and Geoff Lil for their support.

Gareth also announced the list of the Top Ten House volunteers in 2024, as judged by the number of shifts completed in House Roles ie Box Office, Front of House, Raffle and Open House support.

1st : Anne Crane (50)

2nd Hayley Thomas (40)

3rd Dennis Fenton (32)

4th Gareth Milton (26)

5th Chris Bennett and Jeanette Hoile (24)

7th Fiona Daffern, Christine Theophilus and Richard Shead (21)

Gareth extended his personal thanks to:

- The Core building team (members listed above)

- Bex Law and David Clements and the small team of duty manager for looking after the building and the daytime hirers.
- Chris Bennett for organising the FOH resources.
- Jeanette Hoile for organising the raffle.
- The core House team (see top ten list) and everyone who has done a House shift in 2024.

Finally - a call to anyone interested in helping with the Building or House, to get in touch.

7. Financial Report - Chris Stooke

Chris confirmed that the audited accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024, of SLT and its subsidiary, SLT Building Preservation Trust Limited (BPT), have been completed and signed by the auditors, Begbies. The two companies are now run in an entirely integrated manner with the same board of trustees/directors so it is helpful to review the results of both together.

He shared a summary of the accounts:

	2024	2024	2023	2023
	SLT	BPT	SLT	BPT
	£	£	£	£
Ticket sales	80,100		67,042	
Youth classes income	51,248		35,649	
Membership subscriptions	15,276		14,800	
Room hire income		95,265		105,541
Costume hire income	4,705		4,445	
Donations	12,503	29,294	1,436	38,765
Other income	18,396	1,674	13,275	717
Total income	182,228	126,333	136,647	145,023
Net income	22,500	28,090	(28,855)	69,271
Total assets	99,063	122,372	76,563	101,568
Long term liabilities	-	(218,547)	-	(225,833)
Net assets	99,063	(96,175)	76,563	(124,265)

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Chris explained that the above figures illustrate a good financial position for the past year. In particular all of the main activities of SLT have achieved growth in income with ticket sales growing by 19%, youth classes income by 43% (although some of this growth may be affected by the phasing of receipt of fees), membership by 3% and costume hire by 6%. Room hire is slightly lower but still a significant contributor. Donations are less predictable but, between the two charities, these have also grown and include amounts from members and other theatre groups.

Importantly, at 31 December 2024, our total assets, mainly cash balances, exceeded total liabilities by almost £3,000 – the first time this has been the case since the redevelopment of the Old Fire Station. The management accounts of both companies have been prepared up to 30 June 2025 and these show a further improved net asset position with an overall excess of assets over liabilities of approximately £14,000 – so the financial situation remains sound.

That said, members can see that we have long term liabilities, which are a loan from London Borough of Lambeth, of more than £200,000. It remains most important that all of our activities at least break even and we are careful to invest in areas which will show a long term benefit for our theatre related activities, and for our building.

Chris concluded his presentation by thanking Lisa Thomas and Noah Wright who have worked hard in support of the finances of SLT – between them Lisa and Noah manage all of our payments in a thorough and diligent manner.

Questions from the floor:

Q. Room Hire: Various questions were asked about hire arrangements, whilst members understand the need for income from Hires, there was also a degree of frustration expressed that evening hires can cause tensions for SLT members - particularly when rooms aren't vacated as quickly as they should. Members would like exploration of hire options during the day time and for evening hires to end at 7.30 at the latest to allow prep time for rehearsals starting at 20.00. Also requested was a breakdown of individual room hire income, which was agreed subject to commercial sensitivities.

A: Gerri said members' concerns would be discussed in a Board meeting.

Q. Did the Members Club make any donations in 2024?

A. They paid rent, but there were no additional donations.

7a To receive the report and financial statement and accept the accounts for the year ended 31 December 2024: Not agreed. Those present expressed disappointment they had not received a copy of the full accounts in advance of the meeting and declined to approve the 2024 accounts.

8. To appoint the auditors (Bebbies) for the year 2025-2026

Chris confirmed that Bebbies continued to provide a good service.

Proposed: Chris Stooke; Seconded: Gerri McAndrew; **AGREED**

9. Youth Theatre update : Teresa Donoghue Youth Theatre Manager

Teresa informed members that 130 plus youngsters attend SLT Youth Theatre each week. The Youth Theatre classes continue to be very popular with almost all classes being full. During 2024 the waiting list for Intermediates (10 -12 years) was so long that an additional class was introduced. Also a new class for 6 to 7 year olds has proved very popular and has a permanent waiting list. (Due to their young age the size of this class is smaller than the others). The Curriculum is planned six week's in advance and in 2024 the youngsters studied a range of subjects as usual including acting terminology, character

development, blocking, stagecraft and improvisation. Scripts included Greek Myths, Sleepy Hollow, Jekyll and Hyde. They also enjoyed making stage props including puppets and masks.

The 2024 Youth show, Jekyll and Hyde involved a total of 65 youngsters across six performances. SLT Youth theatre members were also involved in several main productions giving them valuable experience and further developing their acting skills. Namely: Jerusalem, The History Boys, and The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.

Chaperones: 10 Youth Theatre staff received certificates for completed NSPCC chaperone training.

The Youth Theatre team also received professional training in working with youngsters with neurodiversity.

Feedback from parents is always extremely positive. Teresa invited members to let her know by e-mail. if anyone would like to come to an end of term showcase.

Teresa thanked the wonderful team of experienced drama practitioners from 2024, but felt it more helpful to highlight the current team of Greg Williams, Mattea Thomas-Gray, Florence Henderson, Angelo Paragoso, David Clements, Kassa N'jai-sealy, Tom Mattias, Stephen Hayward, and Barley Page.

Q: Cal Beckett asked if older YT members could be involved backstage.

A: Teresa said that she's looking at how this might be achieved, given the safeguarding requirements. It may be possible for young people to work in pairs.

10. Election to the following positions on the Board of Trustees:

Following a count of votes from members and proxy votes received in advance, the following were elected:

Commercial Director - Gareth Milton

Theatre Director - Simon Gleisner

Ordinary Directors - Mark Bacon and Ed Smith

11. Resolutions:

a. Resolution One. - Carried overwhelmingly .

We change article 14 in General Meetings from:

- i. '14 The directors may call a general meeting at any time' to
'14 (1) The Directors may call a general meeting at any time
(2) if thirty or 1/5th of members , that are eligible to vote, request an Extraordinary General Meeting in writing to the directors within the same week, then the directors must call that meeting within the following five weeks.

Proposed: Charlotte Benstead. Seconded: Bryon Fear

b. Resolution Two. Carried: 25 in favour, 15 against and 6 abstentions

Under Disqualification and removal of directors Article 39 propose to add:

'(7) if at a General Meeting a Special resolution is readied to state that the membership has no confidence in a particular director, and that the resolution is passed

Proposed: Charlotte Benstead. Seconded : Bryon Fear

This proposal caused considerable discussion, partly because some members felt that they did not have enough information to vote on the amendment in isolation. Proposed resolutions had been published on the website, but not everyone had been able to see them. An initial vote took place as to whether members had enough information to proceed to vote on the resolution today. It was agreed it could, and Gareth Milton was able to put the relevant section of the Articles on the overhead screen.

No one disputed the need to be able to address inappropriate behaviour actions by a Director. The discussion that followed was whether this amendment was necessary given there are already procedures in place to protect SLT members interests from rogue directors (or any member) . Charlotte quoted from the Charity Commission website to support the change.

12. Members questions

- Q. Chris Bennett said that like many others he had responded to a request for a report to contribute to the SLT Annual Report and was disappointed not to have had sight of the compiled report in advance of the AGM. He was particularly interested in the breakdown of each show. He asked when and if the Annual Report would be shared with members.
- A. Gerri McAndrew apologised if she'd raised false expectations and reminded members it was the first AGM of the new arrangements. She said she anticipated the Annual Report being completed shortly and it would then be shared with members.