

DRAFT - IN PROGRESS

South London Theatre Centre

59th AGM

16th May 2026

1. Present:

Chris Stooke, (AGM Chair) Lorna Felix (Minutes), Gabriella Andronica, Mark Bacon, Chris Bennett, Jenny Bennett, Chris Blake, Bob Callendar, David Clements, Graham Clements, Jenny Clements, Carole Coyne, Adam Crook, Ian Cuthbert, Fiona Daffern, Caroline Durant, Sarah Farage, Dennis Fenton, Brian Fretwell, Steve Grist, Stephen Hayward, Barry Heseldene, Jeanette Hoile, Nick Jerome, Richard Johns, Guy Jones, Matthew Lyne, Gareth Milton, Alice Seglias Padin, Alistair Simpson; Marysia Skwarka, Zoe Slack, Edward Smith, Christine Theophilus, Lisa Thomas, Sean Thomas, Pippa Tuck, Peter Warcup, Greg Williams, Malcolm Woodman, Shirley Woodman.

Proxy Votes: Cal Beckett, Charlotte Benstead, Jo Boniface, David Carr, Mark Ireson, Lydie Koritsas, Gerri McAndrew, Jess Osorio, Chris Purcell, Hayley Thomas,

Apologies : Gerri McAndrew (Chair of Trustee Board) Kelly Q (Trustee Nominee) and Bex Law.

2. Chair's Opening Remarks

Chris Stooke (Ordinary Director - Treasurer) on behalf of the Board, welcomed everyone to the 59th AGM of South London Theatre Centre Ltd and confirmed the meeting to be quorate.

He introduced the current Board members Marysia Skwarka - Ordinary Director; Ed Smith - Ordinary Director; Mark Bacon - Ordinary Director; Stephen Hayward - Theatre Director and Gareth Milton - Commercial Director, as well as Trustee Board secretariat- Lorna Felix.

Chris informed the meeting that Gerri McAndrew's absence today was the result of a long planned personal engagement, but that she was also stepping down from the Board. He paid tribute to Gerri's hard work putting the new governance arrangements into place, and said that SLT had benefitted hugely from Gerri's dynamism and experience as a Charity CEO. Gerri received an ovation of thanks from members. Chris provided an overview of the AGM agenda, and said questions are invited from members at any point, and should be directed to him as meeting Chair and he'd identify the best person to respond.

He noted the sad absence of Kay George at today's AGM. A longstanding and much beloved SLT member who made a huge contribution to SLT life and who passed away recently. Members applauded in remembrance of Kay.

3. Approval of the 58th AGM Minutes

Proposed by Fiona Daffern; Seconded by Jeanette Holie. Agreed by the meeting.

4. Commercial Director's Report - Gareth Milton

a. Role of Trustees and responsibility of Executive Committee

Gareth commenced his report with an overview of the role of a trustee, and explanation about how SLT Governance structure works. He began by outlining the six core legal duties of trustees as outlined by the Charity Commission. I.e.

Public Benefit: Ensure activities are exclusively carried out to further the charity's core purposes.

Comply with the Law: Act in line with the charity's governing document (constitution) and all relevant UK legislation.

Act in Best Interests: Balance informed decisions to carry out the charity's objects, avoiding personal benefits or conflicts of interest.

Manage Resources Responsibly: Protect the charity's assets, avoid undue risk, and ensure funds are spent solely on its objectives.

Act with Reasonable Care & Skill: Use personal skills, knowledge, and experience, seeking professional advice when necessary.

Ensure Accountability: Be accountable to stakeholders,

Gareth explained that previously General council members were required to fulfil these legal responsibilities in addition to overseeing the day to day running of the Theatre, which made their roles very large. The governance structure agreed by members and introduced in 2024 separated out Trustee's legal responsibilities of setting the mission, strategy and risk framework and evaluating impact from the day to day running of the theatre which is delegated to the Executive Committee and the various teams that are represented on it. Gareth explained that the Board and Executive Committee work together because all the functions represented in the Exec report to either the Commercial Director or the Theatre Director who together chair the Exec Committee meetings.

Building maintenance undertaken in 2025 - Lambeth Repurpose Grant

SLT benefitted from Lambeth's repurpose fund which helped with the renovation of the front of the building, and secondary double glazing in the fly loft, kit room and the 'spare doors' in the foyer. This work was completed within the allotted time frame set by Lambeth (end of March).

However, as is often the case with an old listed building, having cleaned the facade of the old peeling paint, we were left with bricks, concrete and rendering that was badly in need of repair. Fortunately, with financial help from members, Bar Com and SLTC we were able to repair the damaged concrete and bricks, and restore the rendering to a good state. The next challenge was the state of the front doors. This work extended into 2026 but happily they are now finally back in place. Again we are very grateful for the generous member contributions that contributed to the restoration of the doors.

Budget Setting and monitoring:

Gareth reported that the Budget process worked well, resulting in a quick budget setting exercise for 2026. Non-project related maintenance costs in 2025 were close to the planned budget (only 1-2% away from the target figures). He also reported that we are tracking cost increases for all key suppliers, and were fortunate to fix the Gas and Electricity rates in December 2025 until mid 2028. For 2026 we have linked the BPT budget to the SLT budget (which is an advantage of having the same people on both boards)

Risk Management

Gareth informed the meeting that a risklog has been refreshed and updated and this is now shared by all teams on the Executive. The Executive meeting has a standard agenda item on risks for each area. There remain risks that we need to do more work on, but it feels like that the team are more focussed on managing risks through the use of the log. There are 93 active risks on the log. 16 of these are red, and being actively managed down.

Top Ten volunteers (House, Raffle, Box Office and Open House support. - each shift is an average of 3.5 hours) from Sign up data in 2025

- 1st - Anne Crane (44)
- 2nd - Dennis Fenton (39)
- 3rd - Hayley Thomas (33)
- Joint 4th - Jeanette Hoile, Gareth Milton, Pippa Tuck and Christine Theophilus (24)
- 8th - Eddie Coleman (19)
- 9th - Chris Bennett (18)
- 10th - Richard Shead (16)

Gareth extended thanks to everyone who did a House Shift in 2025 and particularly to Jeanette, Chris B, Hayley and Christine T who helped organise the House teams, answer email questions and set up TicketSource and Signup.

Finally Gareth also thanked:

- Jenny, Jess and Carole for their work in Wardrobe and Props team and particularly the success in expanding the wardrobe team in 2025
- Guy Jones for looking after both Membership and Brand.
- Cal Beckett for looking after publicity and getting the posters and programmes available in good time.
- The Building team, including John, Anne and Noah.
- Bex for everything she does as Building Manager (and as a volunteer)
- David Clements for being our go-to when something messy goes wrong!
- Lisa and Noah for handling all the bills and payments in such good time
- Sarah and Lorna for providing support to the Executive and Board
- Lorna and (now Greg) and the team for the work they do with the very popular Youth Team,

Commercial Director - Q and A

Risk Log :

Q: How is risk rated?

A: Each risk has a rating from 1 low to 5 high, for each of likelihood, reputation, financial impact, the results of which contributed to a weighted score.

Q How can members who aren't on the Exec contribute?

A: Each function within SLT is represented on the Exec, so please speak to the relevant Exec member, eg Theatre Committee, Backstage etc

Q: Is information about the risk register included in the Director's Handbook?

A: if it's not, it will be added in.

Q is the Foyer toilet (which is regularly not working) included in the risk register?

A: It will be added asap!

Building Maintenance

Q: What's on the building plan for next year?

A: Aside from repair of the front doors which has just been completed, the next step is to look at how we can insulate and improve security for the front doors, it is urgently needed but logistics make it tricky to complete. (Money generously donated for this purpose). Ed was invited to talk about the Arts Council funding application in progress that if successful might approve up to 72K as part of a capital project to access the yard from the stairs and improve the stairs down to the bar. The project has been discussed with the Exec and is still in early stages of planning.

5. Theatre Director's Report - Stephen Hayward

Stephen started his report by showing a video compilation of all 2025 shows, a great way of remembering the fantastic theatre SLT produced. His summary of 2025 is :

- 22 shows! Still the most active theatre company in the whole of the UK
- 170+ acting opportunities for adults and 60+ opportunities for children
- 2 world premieres of new work and 1 UK premiere
- Best ever year for ticket sales
- Flexible and creative use of space

Stephen was elected Theatre Director in December 2025, and one of his first responsibilities was to lead the recruitment process for a new Youth Theatre Manager. Members applauded in response to Stephen's vote of thanks to Teresa Donoghue for leading the Youth Theatre for five years , and for being such an absolute asset. And also to his announcement that Greg Williams has been appointed.

Stephen shared his goals as Theatre Director for 2026 & beyond

- Demystifying and increasing participation
- Kindness and understanding
- Safety, safeguarding and inclusivity
- Learning opportunities

The steps he's already taken towards achieving these goals include reinstating post show feedback questionnaires which are now administered by Theatre Committee; sharing information about the variety of volunteering opportunities, future plans include more training opportunities and better recording of who has completed which training to ensure that everyone understands how to fulfil different roles safely. Members expressed support of the goals.

Theatre Director - Q and A (and comments)

Q: Are fire alarm drills included in the list?

A: Yes

Q: Show budgets haven't been increased for many years, are there plans to do so?

A: Still new in post, Stephen explained he's working on how the show budgets could work. Use of show budgets differs widely between shows,
Comment : Longer standing members mentioned SLT used to have a resources officer who helped coordinate things, and also produced lists of people who did lighting and stage management so new Directors knew who to approach :
Response: Stephen said he'd like to have these too.

6. Treasurer's Report and Presentation of Annual Accounts - Chris Stooke

Annual Accounts for both South London Theatre Centre and Building Preservation Trust were published on the SLT Webpage in advance of the meeting. Also a Profit and Loss Account statement that compares the years post Covid. Outcomes of production income in 2025 along with a written financial summary are included in the 2025 Annual Report.

Chris summarised the financial situation by saying 2025 was the best ever year for income but that expenditure on overheads is keeping up and that the growth in costs are not all easily controlled. Year to year variability in fund raising and donations can impact the end of year reports. On the positive side SLT is paying down the loans as planned and overall debt is reducing. Overall SLT is in a good position with a net positive balance but we need to take care that we don't accidentally dip into reserves. Essentially expenditure needs to be managed. Chris reported that the setting budgets in 2025 had made a difference and for the future he wants to develop better budget monitoring, with a move to interim reporting. Another ambition is to improve feedback to donors (their generosity is much appreciated and makes a huge difference).

Treasurer - Q and A

Q: Graham Clements asked about the statements/views expressed by auditors in the SLT Accounts and those in the BPT Accounts in relation to going concern. In the SLT accounts auditors noted that the SLT's total liabilities exceeded assets by £95,080 and noted that a material uncertainty exists that may cast significant doubt on the companies ability to continue as a going concern. Graham also asked about the increase in office expenses.

A: Chris explained that the wording is normal and not of concern. There is a long term loan outstanding greater than annual income but we are servicing it, it's reducing; and there's no indication that our income will drop and we'll not be in a position to continue paying the negotiated payments. Chris also explained that SLT and BPT (and the members club) are inextricably linked and together need to be able to service the long term liability to London Borough of Lambeth The office expense increase primarily relates to bookkeeping costs; Chris agreed with Graham that these need to be carefully managed, particularly in the context of the need to ensure all costs are closely controlled

Q: A sharp rise in publicity costs between 2025 and 2024 was questioned.

A : This is due to increased printing and other costs rather than any new developments. Publicity are very careful about number of programmes, posters printed etc

Q: Are gift aid forms available?

A: Yes. Guy Jones reminded the meeting that donations can be made via SLT website , where details of SLT bank account can be found. Donations can also be made through Just Giving where there is currently an opportunity to donate in Kay' George's memory.

7. Resolution : To appoint the auditors (Bebbies) for the year 2026-2027.

Proposed: Barry Heselden; Seconded : Matthew Lyne. AGREED

8. Election of Trustees:

Details of members standing for (re) election had been included in the Website AGM pages. Members were invited to complete voting slips, which were collected and counted whilst the meeting continued. See below for results.

9. To consider and vote on the following resolutions

Three resolutions were put before the meeting. Full details had been available in advance on the website and in the meeting on voting slips.

Members were invited to complete voting slips in relation to Resolutions 1 (relating to presentation of Annual Accounts) and 3 (relating to SLT Members Club being incorporated into the activities of SLTC) The slips were collected and counted whilst the meeting continued, results below.

Resolution 2 which related to how members can join the Exec team was challenged by a number of members. Whilst the intention behind this resolution of improving inclusivity was thought positive, concern was expressed by members that if any member could freely join any sub team/committee it potentially left the various SLT teams/committees vulnerable to potential abuse/misuse. Reference was made to historical experience. It was decided that rather than put this resolution to the vote today, Fiona Daffern, Adam Crook and Stephen Hayward would work together to agree an appropriate process which can be brought to the 2027 AGM for ratification. However once agreed, a change in process can be implemented/trialled earlier.

10. Overview of Membership Consultation Outcomes - Marysia Skwarka

Marysia provided an overview of the outcomes of the Member's Survey carried out earlier this year. A fuller document had been available on the 2026 AGM page for members to read in advance. 87 responses were received representing 22% of the membership representing both longstanding and new members (this is a good response rate to surveys of this nature).

Marysia highlighted the strongest themes across the survey and how they helped shape the SLT Forward Plan.

What members told us	What appears in the Forward Plan
Community matters most	A stronger focus on welcome, belonging, inclusion and member experience

Volunteering can be hard to navigate	Commitment to make opportunities clearer, especially in technical roles, and improve volunteer support
Productions are a major strength	Continued focus on quality theatre, better feedback, and more opportunities to learn and grow
The building is highly valued	Long-term focus on maintenance, comfort, accessibility and future-proofing
Local connection could be stronger	A greater emphasis on Youth Theatre, local visibility and community engagement
Members want more visibility/transparency	Stronger commitment to member communications, progress updates, and clearer leadership structures

Marysia said that the Board will keep reporting back on progress and will be listening, learning and staying in touch with what members really want and need. A key aspect is an intention to build in more regular feedback opportunities including post-show feedback, an annual members' survey and a digital suggestion box which will shortly be available on the website enabling members to give feedback at any time.

Membership consultation Q and A/Comments

Q. SLT has a core of actively engaged members and others less engaged, a question was raised as to how can we reach members who are unlikely to complete surveys but maybe are prepared to come to the bar for a chat?

A: Members responded recalling past plans for social events such as member's evenings to be held every six months, a crew party, and quizzes.

Q. Post show feedback forms. Who receives them?

A. Everyone involved with a production, in the past they were issued to Directors to share, now they are administered centrally through Theatre Committee and will be sent to everyone listed in the show programme. The new post show feedback form was introduced in late Feb 2026, members involved in all shows from The Habits onwards should receive one. A couple of people raised not having received one, at the moment feedback forms are going out a few weeks after a show ends. Stephen will check they're happening.

Member comment: Whilst there's lots of things we'd all like more of, the reality tends to be that it falls to the same people who already do everything to do more and we need to find new people and other ways to do things.

Q. Re EDI Strategy. Were members informed when the EDI strategy was published last year?

A. A separate notification had not gone out. Marysia acknowledged that internal communication could be better and stressed that is an aim going forward.

11. SLT Forward Plan - Mark Bacon

The Forward Plan was available for members to read prior to the AGM. Mark explained that the Forward Plan has been developed with the initial support of a pro bono external consultant, discussion with the Executive Committee, a workshop

(Board and Exec) last summer and the outcome of the Members consultation. He explained that it will guide priorities over the next five years, and that having a forward plan is also very helpful to support funding applications. Mark thanked everyone who contributed.

Mark summarised the 7 priorities identified :

1. Ensure our theatre is welcoming to everyone and that our members have fun.
2. Improve our volunteer processes, giving opportunities for all.
3. Continue to produce quality theatre using feedback to continuously improve.
4. Safeguard and future proof our beloved heritage building home, managing running costs and reducing our impact.
5. Increase fundraising and identify ways to generate more revenue.
6. Strengthen engagement with our local community, including through our successful youth theatre,
7. Ensuring that South London Theatre continues into the future for our members and our community.

12. Outcome of Trustee Board Elections

Commercial Director - Gareth Milton - re appointed
(Votes For 51. None against and no abstentions)

Theatre Director - Stephen Hayward - re appointed
(Votes For 51. None against and no abstentions)

Ordinary Director - Kelly Q - appointed
(Votes For 48. Against 1; Abstentions 2)

13. Outcome of Voting on Resolutions

Resolution 1: Timeliness of presentation of Accounts to members

Agreed

(Votes For 50, Against 0 Abstention 1)

Resolution 3 Member's club

Agreed

(Votes For 48, Against 0. Abstentions 3)

14. A.O.B.

- a. Chris extended thanks to Lorna who is stepping down from the role of Board secretariat.
- b. SLT Safeguarding Lead -Chris invited any suitably qualified member who would be willing to take over this responsibility to speak to a Board member.
- c. Jeanette Hoile thanked the Board for the quality and detail of pre meeting information.
- d. SLT Lease - it was confirmed that the lease renewal in 2017 was for 125 years. (not 25 years as someone feared).