

**MINUTES OF AGM OF THE HASLEMERE PLAYERS**  
**Held on Tuesday 20 June 2017 at the Haslemere Hall**

Hamish welcomed 25 members to the meeting.

**1. APOLOGIES:** Apologies were received from Christopher Lloyd (Chairman of the Society) Adrian Stent (Vice Chairman), Andy Boughton, Valerie Bishop, Elizabeth Chester, Vicki Gavin, Graham Ferris, Christine Foster and Tony Creasey.

**2 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING,** which had been displayed on Players' website and also available at the meeting, were taken as a true record of that meeting and duly signed by Hamish (President) and Pamela (Secretary)

**3. MATTERS ARISING AND CORRESPONDENCE:** The secretary had received notification of the NODA AGM to be held in Bognor on 2nd July. We were delighted to learn that we had been awarded a councillor's award for Singin' in the Rain, directed by Hamish. He is hoping to attend the AGM.

**4. TREASURER'S REPORT: Presented by Arabella Burwood**

Haslemere Players

AGM – year ending 30 April 2017

20<sup>th</sup> June 2017

Arabella presented a financial statement for the year ending 2017 and figures for the three relevant shows, together with comparison figures for the three shows in 2015/16.

She mentioned Part III of Jonathan Foster's Showstoppers– Memories of the Movies – the final in the trilogy. She said it was another superb show, very well received, superbly directed and presented, with an impressive 434 tickets sold. The production costs were marginally higher than the previous Showstoppers, and less alcohol was sold, as it was extremely hot, but an excess of £1,204.23 was produced. Arry thanked Mary Lou and her team, also Alison and Steph and their team.

Vicki again took on the enormous task of producing the meals for the two evenings and the cakes at the matinee thereby saving a really huge sum of money and for which she expressed thanks both to Vicki and all the volunteers that are required in order to plate up/clear up etc. In October 2016 Singin' in the Rain, – most ably directed by Hamish, was produced, being a firm favourite with everyone and was, as the committee predicted, a sell out on most performances, selling 1563 tickets. Arabella said that when Hamish said that the performances would involve real, proper, wet rain, she envisaged Steph and Alison up a couple of ladders with watering cans, the engineering that went into the rain was extremely innovative and very effective. Although this did, along with some of the other scenery costs, make a slightly larger dent in the scenery budget, other costs were relatively low and the show made a very, very commendable profit of £4,168.77. One of our best results in quite a few years.

Arabella continued that in March of this year Vicki took the baton and ran with the Wizard of Oz with commendable aplomb, rather at the last minute. This was not an ideal scenario for her Director's debut, as she was given very little time to prepare and it was down to her dedication and enthusiasm that enabled it to even be staged at all and for this we were exceptionally grateful to her. This was a show that the Players had not put on since 1992. As it involved talking trees, an abundance of Munchkins, tornados, wizards, witches and a real live dog, there were a lot of balls to juggle. The show had a large cast including children and required many scenery and costume changes so production costs were reasonably high but certainly not exceptional. The slightly lower than expected financial result of £211.09 profit was mainly due to the large volume of tickets purchased for children and the fact that children do not tend to buy raffle tickets or programmes. Nevertheless, just under 1300 tickets were sold which was a very respectable result.

Arabella reported that an overall profit for 2016/2017 was £3,300.74, which was a healthy result but includes a number of one off generous donations, that obviously cannot be relied on in future years.

She also reported that membership subs were down on the previous year, scenery and wardrobe hire is down on last year and our donations are down on last year, yet costs are permanently rising. An increase in the Haslemere Hall's fees of 10% will result in an increase for the Players of approximately £1000 a year and an unexpected change in our rehearsal venue has resulted in an additional cost per year of around £300. Annual Studio costs of approximately £2,500 to run, does not take into account the running repairs – £1800 was paid this year for some essential re-wiring and new skylights have just been installed at a cost of £791. With this in mind it is the committee's intention to propose an increase in membership subs for the first time in many years to £30 for full members, £20 for students/junior members and £10 for non-acting members. AB very much hoped Players' members will support this increase and understand the reasons behind it and acknowledge that it still represents extremely good value. The committee members are very aware of the importance of selecting shows that are not only popular with cast members but also audiences, and then crucially ones that will as a minimum break even or hopefully make a profit. AB emphasised that every penny is taken into account when selecting a production, including cost of royalties, costumes, scenery and the likelihood of audience numbers. Along with the subs increase we feel it necessary to raise the show fee to £35 for adult members and £20 for junior/student members. It is a fine balancing act for the committee, but by increasing subscriptions and the show fee it was hoped that this would help with the management of rising costs of putting on Players' productions and avoiding any compromise to the quality of shows, of which we are all very proud.

AB mentioned that members are able to pay their subs and show fees by BACS or PayPal which is recommended and preferred. The CAF bank that Players use has a reciprocal arrangement with the HSBC and AB reported that this is the only bank she can use to deposit fees. As HSBC has shut down in Haslemere, she has to travel to Farnham or Guildford so online banking where possible, would be very much appreciated. Pamela will continue to collect cash and cheques for show fees however and she thanked her for her ongoing support in this capacity. All the details for paying subs and show fees are on the website.

AB expressed the committee's thanks to Linda, our outgoing membership secretary for all her hard work over the years. She said that Linda was an absolute delight to work with and she was very pleased to report that Linda will still remain very much part of the Players, dealing with all Front of House arrangements and editing and managing the newsletter. Jane McMichael, who is coming back onto the committee will be dealing with the membership subs.

AB said that many people work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure that Players continues to thrive in ever challenging and demanding economic times. Mary Lou, Sue and the wardrobe team dedicate hours of their free time to costuming our shows and also run a well-oiled costume hire service to local schools, groups and individuals. Steph, Alison and the props team and Gary, Luan, Adrian and Hamish, all the behind the scenes crew who paint the scenery, make the scenery, erect the scenery and then clear it all away are paramount to the success of the society and she extended a huge thank you to all of them for their hard work and frugality – very rarely was she presented with an invoice that made her balk.

Finally, AB expressed thanks to Hamish for all his help with the end of year accounts and also to Sally who as her co-signatory was responsible for authorising all the payments made from the Players' bank account. Sally also took over temporarily as Treasurer at Christmas time when she was unable to fulfil her duties temporarily due to other commitments.

Kim queried the insurance costs and AB said part of the increase was due to the payment being split over two financial years, so appeared higher than it actually was. She also queried if the NODA fee had been paid, and AB confirmed that it had.

Hamish thanked Arry for her detailed and comprehensive report.

**5. CHAIRMAN'S REPORT: In the absence of Chris Lloyd and Adrian Stent, presented and read by Sally Barr**

Christopher Lloyd offered his sincere apologies for not being present due to work at short notice. He thanked Sally for stepping in for himself and Adrian, also away with work this week. He stressed that it was not a lack of dedication by either of them.

Chris said that his first year as chairman had seen some challenges but these were outnumbered by the successes of the society.

Mid-way through rehearsals for Singing in the Rain, an alternative rehearsal venue had to be found but after a brief period of peripatetic rehearsing, the Grove Resource Centre in Hindhead has been used on a regular basis. He appreciated that this location may be difficult for some to get to, but in terms of suitability of space and cost there is nowhere in Haslemere that is as suitable. Cast and committee members alike have been only too happy to help with lifts for those who otherwise would not be able to get there.

Chris continued that Singing in the Rain was a technically challenging production, involving having to pour a thousand litres of water onto the stage every performance without damaging the fabric of the Haslemere Hall or causing an electrical catastrophe! A challenge which Hamish, helped by the team of set builders and the rest of the production team, accomplished without ever looking too nervous!

Then there was the shooting of the silent films as well as the numerous large chorus numbers which involved a lot of people learning to tap dance, including himself with his two left feet. Jess McCluskey choreographed the numbers which were taught and drilled by Debra Allen and Robyn (Michalski) Davies. There was sweat, tears and blisters!

The hugely talented cast wowed the audiences at each performance. Chris said that even though he only had a small part, he hoped that the cast had as much enjoyment being in the show as he did.

He was pleased to report that all the effort has been recognised by the award of a NODA regional councillor's 'Accolade of Excellence' for the show. He offered huge congratulations to Hamish and to all involved in making this show such a success.

At the same time as directing Singing in the Rain Hamish led on the Society being incorporated as a Company Limited by Guarantee. This is no mean feat involving a tremendous amount of paperwork and bureaucracy with Companies House and the Charity Commission. Hamish would brief the members further on this but it places the Society in a position of strength going forward and is a process that many other societies and trusts are going through.

The end of 2016 also involved the committee having to review the Studio. He thanked Gary Moorshead for undertaking a full fire risk assessment and for implementing its findings. An up to date fire plan is now in place with properly marked fire exits, newly serviced fire extinguishers and new smoke detectors. Chris also thanked Sally for all the work she did on undertaking a full risk assessment of the premises and making sure that the results have been implemented. Meanwhile, Adrian has been carrying on the day to day maintenance and running of the Studio, including the installation of new skylights in the corridor.

Whilst all this was going on, the society has been faced with rising costs from all directions: rehearsal venue, studio running costs, insurance and the fees charged by the Haslemere Hall. The committee has therefore had to make the difficult decision to recommend an increase in membership and show fees, which have not been reviewed for a few years. Ticket prices have also been increased. Players have been very fortunate to have received some generous donations over the last few years, which have helped to absorb some of these increased costs, but these cannot be relied on for the financial viability of the society. Arry has covered the details in her report and Chris hoped that the members would support Players in this difficult decision.

Chris then reported on the success of Showstoppers – Memories of the Movies Part III. He noted that this was not the production just done but the first production in the financial year of 2016-17. This was Jonathan Foster's third and final production in his trilogy and again it was a great success and played to full houses. A huge thank you to Jonathan for all his hard work over the three years, which was certainly a hard act to follow this year. The show had a

talented cast, supported by Vicki Gavin and her team, who managed the food production in the Annexe. They contributed substantially to the excellent financial result.

Vicki Gavin, who was Chris' predecessor, made her debut as a director and he expressed grateful thanks to her for stepping in at the last minute to direct *The Wizard of Oz* which contained munchkins, colour, a dog that burnt himself in the "fire" during every production, and extraordinarily clever use of projection, plus lots of glitter. Chris said it was great that Vicki is still actively involved with the Society and taking on new roles.

Chris also thanked Lizzie Hales for taking over the Musical Director's baton with only weeks to go. Vicki gave a lot of regular chorus members the opportunity to come forward and have their moment in the limelight and glitter.

Chris said he was equally excited about forthcoming shows. Kim Seymour has agreed to direct *My Fair Lady* in October. The auditions were of a very high standard, which bodes well for the show itself.

Next March, Howard Bicknell will be directing *The Full Monty*. Chris said it was pleasing that a number of people wished to audition and he was certain that the audiences would be full of anticipation and sniggers! Players October 2018 production is going to see Hamish Donaldson returning to the director's chair with *Chess*. He said that there was so much to look forward to over the next eighteen months and fingers crossed for more awards!

Susanna, our social committee member organised the summer barbecue and a quiz night in February. Both were very well planned and attended. Thanks to Susanna for allowing their home to be used for the barbecue and Arry for arranging the quiz questions. This year's summer barbecue is being held on Sunday 27 August and Jane McMichael has kindly agreed to host it again. Chris hoped that as many of you as possible will be able to attend.

Chris then mentioned a few other people he wanted to thank in addition to those already mentioned:

- Linda Donaldson who has been Players' membership secretary for many years. It is a difficult task making sure that everyone's membership is in order and she has done it tirelessly and with a smile. Linda has decided to step down, although she will be retaining her vital role of producing our regular newsletter. Chris was sure that Linda would continue to offer help and support. Mary-Lou Knox and her team have worked tirelessly not only to costume our shows but to raise money by costuming other shows and parties. Chris reported that he had often seen the Studio looking like a Chinese laundry as they turned costumes around. Chris hoped that Mary-Lou would have more time to take part in shows rather than just costuming them.
- Pamela Depledge, who as secretary makes sure that all notices, agendas and minutes are circulated in a timely manner. Pamela also looks after the scores and librettos. Please help her by looking after them and letting her have them back as soon as a show is over. Over the years Pamela has looked after the bar stocks for *Show Stoppers*, and Chris hoped that she would delegate the physical work to others.
- Arry for her never ending and often thankless task as Treasurer which is so important for Players in keeping finances on track. With increasing costs, it would be very easy to become financially unviable, and therefore her role is absolutely critical in keeping spending within our means.
- Sally Barr for her work in marketing the shows and in raising awareness in social media.
- Debs Bowyer for publicity and selling advertising space in our programmes, which helps the society's finances quite considerably.
- Steph, Alison and Annie for looking after the props and helping with the scenery. Gary, Luan and all those who regularly turn up on Wednesdays and Saturdays to build sets and everyone who comes to help as stage hands.

It really is a massive team effort.

Chris next mentioned the committee changes.

- Susanna has decided to stand down. Chris thanked her for all the work that she had put in as the social representative.
- Chris expressed pleasure that Jane McMichael was re-joining the committee after a break. She is being joined by Graham Ferris, a new member of the society. He hoped that Players would join him in supporting their appointments.

Chris closed by thanking the members, for whom the society exists and the committee serves. A society like Players not only provides an opportunity to express artistic talent as a hobby but it also provides a forum for friendship and fun; not just for the members, but also to those who time and again come to support our shows, not just out of loyalty and the high quality of our productions, but because they find it difficult to travel further.

Chris thanked everyone for their continued support and hoped those present would enjoy the evening and he again expressed sorrow that he could not be present.

6. **Incorporation and adoption of new Rules:** Hamish (President) went through the new Rules following the changed status of the Haslemere Players to a company limited by guarantee, as agreed with the Charity Commissioners and Companies House. These were adopted by the members present. Members approved the transfer of the assets of the existing charity to the new charitable company.

7. **SUBSCRIPTIONS:** It was pointed out that annual subscriptions had not been increased for several years and therefore, in view of increasing costs, the committee recommended that subscriptions be as follows:  
**£30** acting adult members, **£20** acting student/child, **£10** for non-acting members and **£20** for patrons.

Pamela pointed out that this recommendation was agreed at a meeting held after the Notice of the AGM had been sent out.

These new rates were proposed to be accepted by the members by Linda Donaldson and seconded by Mary-Lou Knox. The motion was unanimously carried by the members present, except for abstentions by Howard and Jonathan.

It was also intended to increase the show fees, but this would be a committee decision.

Jane McMichael asked how many members there were in Players and it was estimated about 100 at any one time.

Howard mentioned that this is why we have to know what shows are proposed well in advance, so that costs could be estimated.

Jonathan Foster brought up the query as to whether people invited to be in a show, to dress the stage or e.g. to play a musical instrument and purely as a favour, should have to pay the full membership fee. This would need to be discussed by the committee and perhaps a minimum fee to cover insurance would be charged but every case would have to be judged on its merits. Kim said the purpose of the show fee should be explained and Pamela replied that she did this when collecting the same.

Howard suggested that we increase the show fees instead of paying subs, as they do in Thespians.

8. **ELECTION OF OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS:** The Executive Committee now consists of: Hamish Donaldson – President, Christopher Lloyd – Chairman, Pamela Depledge – Secretary, Arabella Burwood – Treasurer. Other committee members: Debbie Bowyer, Sally Barr, Susanna Lloyd, Adrian Stent. Susanna Lloyd had decided to stand down. Jane McMichael had agreed to serving on the committee, proposed by Sally Barr, seconded by Arabella Burwood. Also, Graham Ferris, proposed by Christopher Lloyd, seconded by Pamela Depledge. Confirmed that everyone was elected. This was unanimously agreed by the members present.

9. **Auditor:** Hamish explained that the auditor is obliged to examine at least 3% of all the transactions recorded in the accounts. In view of the departure of Chris Lang, due to lack of time, Nigel Oldham has agreed to be our independent examiner. He is an acquaintance of Arry and Hamish spoke very highly of his efficiency.

10. **ANY OTHER BUSINESS:**

Hamish thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting at 8.30.

Signed as a true record

..... Hamish Donaldson (President)

.....Pamela Depledge (Secretary)