

# Minutes of AGM 2016

Tuesday 12th July 2016

At The Feathers PH



Registered Charity No 266705

Present ;

Wendy Ellis - Chair, Heather Carpenter - Secretary, Alan Carpenter – Treasurer, Tracey Hobbs, Sonia Corke, Lee Nairn, David Percival, Barbara Tilley, Carol West, Ruth Maddern, Brian Maddern, Ian McDonald, Amanda Oelrichs, Pete Harrold, Jaybee Brown, David Atkinson, Jac McAlister, Leanne Neave, Martin Drummond, Tabi Paternoster, Rick Adams, Nancy Adams, Gill Hobbs, Julie Curson, Peter Fiddling

Apologies were received from;

Georgette Vale, Rowena Atkinson, Kevin Oelrichs, Marie Stevenson, Wendy Leadbeater, Alison Burton, Bob McClenning, Colleen Giacomelli

1. The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.
2. **The minutes of AGM 2015** were approved.

### 3. **Chair's Report**

What an exciting year it has been! We have seen the production of two very different shows. In the autumn there was Entertaining Angels. A beautiful heartfelt play, set, amongst other things, a bed of real reeds! And the in the spring a play which brought together almost every member of Wymondham Players on stage and off, in the production of We happy Few. Two very different plays, but both of which allowed opportunities for new members to take on key roles along side some of our longer established members.

These plays are not amongst the most well known crowd pleasers we could have selected, but they allowed us the opportunity to try out different methodologies on the stage, and offer our audiences the chance to view something a little different. Whilst they were not intended to big box office hits in the form of money makers, the reviews and feedback given were excellent, all involved should be rightfully proud of what was achieved, and with careful money management we still end the year in a financially stable fashion.

I joined the committee as Chair this time last year. At our very first committee meeting, it was clearly apparent that we had a common goal in wishing to act in the best interests

of our membership. Every question we asked of ourselves in July last year, from discussions regarding which shows to put on, to how should we spend finances, to what social events should we organise – we found ourselves with the same answer: we need to know what our membership wants us to do.

With that in mind we sent out a members survey in August, and were very heartened by the number of responses we received. We have done our best throughout the year to act on those responses. For social events, it was clear that the most popular were Twelfth Night Dinner, Summer BBQ and Quiz Nights. With help from members, particularly the Paternosters and the Carpenters, we have succeeded in ensuring all three of these continued. Indeed plans for this summer's BBQ are underway for August 14<sup>th</sup>.

Regarding performances, 82% of responses were not in favour of being actively involved in Christmas Leftovers. The decision was subsequently made to withdraw this from the annual plans. The summer tour proved more popular, and so went ahead with plans for this. Unfortunately the very small number of people who expressed interest in being involved by turning up to auditions, or responding to email requests, did not reflect the much larger number of people who completed the members survey. We are aware that this may be due to a number of factors; the spring production of We Happy Few drew heavily on the numbers of Players to ensure its success; summer is often a difficult time for people to commit to multiple weekends. But it is perhaps a good time for the Players to reconsider the annual format of shows for future years.

There was some concerns expressed in the survey about lack of transparency in procedures surrounding the AGM. To improve this we have created a set of guidelines, procedures and forms which have been shared with all members, and are available on the newly created members page of the website. In addition to these, and in response to ensuring that we comply with statutory and best practice guidance from both NODA and the Charity Commission, we have updated a number of additional guides and procedures for members and committee members. Whilst these were time consuming, and not the most fun filled of experiences, I would like to thank committee members for their patience, understanding and integrity whilst these have been put in place.

The members survey also demonstrated strong support for workshops to allow members to learn and share skills. We have had the intention of putting these on throughout the year, but time has ran away from us and plans subsequently delayed. We do though have plans for the first one to be held in September.

Two other matters have been the focus of long deliberation at committee meetings. Firstly, the matter of matinees. To meet demand for tickets during Vicar of Dibley, the decision was made to add a matinee to the performance week. This has continued in

the interim show weeks, though perhaps unsurprisingly, the numbers attending have not been so high. However our charitable aims include bringing art to the local community. As a committee we have discussed the merits of equality, diversity and access in relation to our performances and charitable aims, concluding that in a community such as ours where there is a significant proportion of elder generations and those living in rural locations, then the service provided by a matinee is one worth pursuing.

As an experiment, to see if we could increase numbers for the matinee, at the last performance in April, we added 'tea and cake' to the matinee, inviting audience members to attend street party style refreshments before the performance. We were inundated! Particular thanks to Amanda and Vicky for helping to meet the seemingly unending demand for teacups and cakes. Whilst we should air a word of caution to not take numbers away from the evening performances, feedback from audience members who told us they were grateful in being able to attend a performance which was for other reasons inaccessible to them, makes me believe that it is a format worth pursuing.

The second often discussed matter at committee members is the inclusion of members. Putting on workshops, social events, ensuring we comply with legislation and law, running finances, box office, publicity, front of house and all manner of things which go into supporting a show; these tasks need to be spread as far across the membership as possible. The committee have tried over the past year through the Wympie and emails to encourage these tasks to be shared, but often the take up is so sparse, committee members have ended up fulfilling the majority of tasks. My personal concern is a continued reliance on a few, will lead to the Bank of Goodwill running dry in the future. It is paramount that over the forthcoming year we find more effective ways of sharing these tasks more evenly across membership.

That said, it should also be recognised that the Players are populated by talented, dedicated and generous individuals. Without whom we would not be able to continue to deliver the high calibre of work which do. A very big thank you to everyone who has contributed to our success over the past 12 months. All support, particularly that given off stage, is so incredibly important to us.

I would personally like to thank all of my fellow committee members who have made my own role on the committee enjoyable and worthwhile. Particular thanks goes to Alan Carpenter who is stepping down this year. His work across many areas including box office, publicity and set construction has been extremely appreciated.

Lastly, we would like to take an opportunity to say a special thank you to one of longest standing members who over the past 22 years has been involved in 46 shows at Wymondham Players – both onstage, back stage and front of house. David Paternoster was one of the very first members I came to know at my time here, and his warm

friendship and expert guidance has been one of the key things that made me personally so very glad to have joined. I am sure all members will want to join in me in wishing David the very, very best for the future.

**Wendy Ellis**

#### **4. Treasurer's Report**

##### **Financial Report for AGM:**

##### **Bank Accounts**

Community Account balance:

Opening balance 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015 :           £9,876.34

Closing balance 31 May 2016:           £8,408.78

+/-   £1467.56 -

Business Saver Account balance:

Opening balance 1<sup>st</sup> June 2015 :           £1958.04

Closing balance 31 May 2016:           £1959.26

+/-   £1.22 +

##### **Productions**

“Entertaining Angels”

<b>Date</b>	<b>Tickets</b>	<b>Raffle</b>	<b>Prog. (dons)</b>	<b>Teas (dons)</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
<b>Weds</b>	69.00	39.00	14.90	28.73	<b>151.63</b>
<b>Thurs</b>	50.00	55.00	29.76	40.90	<b>175.66</b>
<b>Fri</b>	58.00	43.00	16.85	35.60	<b>153.45</b>

<b>Sat.m</b>	64.00	22.00	9.50	22.25	<b>117.75</b>
<b>Sat.e</b>	91.00	33.25	14.07	34.50	<b>172.82</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>332.00</b>	<b>192.25</b>	<b>85.08</b>	<b>161.98</b>	<b>771.31</b>
<b>Sales report Ticketsource</b>				1,962.82	<b>1,962.82</b>
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>	<b>332.00</b>	<b>192.25</b>	<b>85.08</b>	<b>2,124.80</b>	<b>2,734.13</b>

Less expenses paid to date **3,022.76**

Surplus / Deficit **-288.63**

**Cash ticket sales** £ 600.00 26%

**Ticketsource online sales** £ 1,306.82 57%

**Ticket sales by cheque** £ 24.00 1%

**Ticket sales by card** £ 32.00 1%

**Ticket sales on the door** £ 332.00 14%

### "We Happy Few"

<b>Date</b>	<b>Tickets</b>	<b>Raffle</b>	<b>Prog. (dons)</b>	<b>Tea Party</b>	<b>Teas (dons)</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
<b>Weds</b>	72.00	35.00	14.22		17.10	<b>138.32</b>
<b>Thurs</b>	49.00	43.20	24.67		20.28	<b>137.15</b>
<b>Fri</b>	255.00	57.00	39.60		26.35	<b>377.95</b>
<b>Sat.m</b>	260.00	67.00	21.43	48.00	21.36	<b>417.79</b>

Sat.e	105.00	55.70	20.80		17.58	199.08
<b>TOTALS</b>	741.00	257.90	120.72	48.00	102.67	<b>1,270.29</b>
Premier Travel sales	791.00					791.00
Box Office Sales	57.00					57.00
Sales report Ticketsource	1,876.56					1,876.56
<b>GRAND TOTALS</b>	<b>3,465.56</b>	<b>257.90</b>	<b>120.72</b>	<b>48.00</b>	<b>102.67</b>	<b>3,994.85</b>

Cost 79.47 56.64 68.27

Less expenses paid to date **4,418.34**

---

**Surplus / Deficit** **-423.49**

---

#### Ticket sales analysis

Ticket sales Premier Travel £ 791.00 23%

Ticketsource online sales £ 1,876.56 54%

**Ticket sales by box office** £ 57.00 2%

Ticket sales on the door £ 741.00 21%

#### Analysis of cost centres

	Take	Cost	Profit	%
Raffle	£ 257.90	£ 79.47	£ 178.43	69

Teas	£	150.67	£	68.27	£	82.40	55
Programmes	£	120.72	£	56.64	£	64.08	53

Other expenses during the year were:

Noda insurance and committee insurance, Website costs, radio batteries, BBQ, 12<sup>th</sup> Night, First Aid kits and various scripts from French's. £782.19

**Alan Carpenter**

## 5. Secretary's Report

COMMITTEE MEETINGS X 8

29.07.15; 07.09.15; 20.10.15; 15.12.15; 08.01.16; 15.02.16; 07.03.16; 10.05.16

WYMPIE X 8

SEP; OCT; NOV; DEC; JAN; FEB; MAR; JUNE;

SOCIALS

SUMMER 15 BBQ; BONFIRE PARTY – CANX; PLAYREADINGS – 30 NOV / 1 DEC

CHRISTMAS SOCIAL – 8 DEC; 12<sup>TH</sup> NIGHT SUPPER – 8 JAN;

PLAYREADING – 22 FEB / 1 MAR; VALENTINE SOCIAL – CANX

QUIZ AND POT LUCK SUPPER – 7 MAY; THEATRE VISITS; ADAMS BAND;

SUMMER 16 BBQ – 14 AUG

**Heather Carpenter**

## 6. Director's Reports

### Entertaining Angels – November 2015

I first saw Entertaining Angels quite a few years ago in Norwich and it has been simmering on a back burner as a potential to direct in my mind ever since. Finally, I finally decided it was time to tackle it for the November 2015 production. One of the reasons for hesitation was the need to have two different scenes including one involving the depiction of running water. I need not have been concerned, David (Paternoster) converted my ideas into a set design that worked wonderfully well, and the set build crew came up trumps, that crew involving all of the cast on occasions.

For this production I was able to assemble an excellent cast. There are four strong female roles all of which were developed well beyond all my expectations or hopes (Amanda Oelrichs, Tracey Hobbs, Cathey Rix and Emma Kirkham). It would have been possible for the male role to be overshadowed but David (Atkinson) coped admirably in bringing Bardy to life. (Not easy when the character was dead!)

The back stage crew, Pete, Adam and David, was also strong and needed to be physically strong, hauling the revolve back and forth. The revolve enabled us to move between the two different scenes quickly and smoothly, with technical effects enhancing the changes (Niels Elffers).

I have to say that this was probably the least stressful production I have ever directed, which was particularly thanks to my producer. Costume, make up and hair were also well taken care of by Jac and Carol with little interference from me.

I believe that all those involved with the production enjoyed it, as did the audiences. To be nominated by NODA as "best play" was a bonus.

Tabi Paternoster

### We Happy Few – April 2016

I first became aware of 'We Happy Few', listening to an interview with Imogen Stubbs on Radio 4. Wymondham Players had recently performed 'Calendar Girls', and I was struck by the similarities. In my mind's eye 'We Happy Few', was 'Calendar Girls' with clothes on!

The play covers the entire period of the Second World War, from the declaration of war through to VE Day. The day before our first rehearsal, the British Parliament voted for air strikes on Syria - the resonance, hit home!

Creating a set to depict six years of wartime Britain, and encompassing 17 scenes, from storeroom to drawing room, to school, to radio station, to pub to hall, to beach etc., presented a challenge. From the beginning I had a clear vision of how this could be portrayed. I hope the setting works to form a coherent backdrop to the story.

As a first time director, I have regularly been teased with comments such as "Well, you couldn't have chosen a more difficult play", " Why choose a play with a cast of 6, when you can have a cast of 18?". I have no regrets about taking on the challenge. From the outset I explained to all involved that I wanted this to be a collaborative effort, and all suggestions and ideas would be welcomed and explored. The cast and crew have wholeheartedly taken this on board, and have supported me unreservedly. They truly have been my '*Band of Brothers*'.

NB It is said that life reflects art. Ten days before opening night, our Helen; the drunken Diva, seriously damaged her leg and as a result is on crutches. No alcohol was involved! Despite dealing with pain and the obvious difficulties, she has continued to attend all rehearsals. As a consequence of her injuries we have had to make some last minute adjustments to the play. I'm in awe of her, and the rest of the cast and crew who have also had to adapt to accommodate the changes.

It has taken me 12 years of being a member of WP to finally put up my hand and offer to direct. I knew that for me; the commitment involved in directing could only be tackled if I found a play I wholeheartedly believed in.

I found that play in *We Happy Few* after hearing an interview with Imogen Stubbs on radio 4. Wymondham Players had recently performed '*Calendar Girls*', and I was struck by the similarities. As I said in the programme; 'In my minds eye '*We Happy Few*', was '*Calendar Girls*' with clothes on!' On further research I found that the play, when performed in the West end was slammed by the critics; partly because it lasted over 3 hours! I realised that the script of over 100 pages would need some serious culling, without detracting from the narrative. I reduced it by about 1/3 and at our first read through last Nov, I was thrilled that it read in an acceptable time.

To cast a play of 22 characters was always going to be a challenge – that is ½ our membership. But with some doubling and losing just 1 character we ended up with a cast of 18. It was great to welcome some new players to our *Happy Few*; Becky, Kimberleigh, Leigh. But ... how lucky was I to have the pick of such a talented group of players. One of the elements that I am most proud of is the casting; I'm sorry if this sounds immodest but ... I don't think it could have been cast any better! Thank you to all of you.

A cast is only a part of a production and this show was demanding for all those working 'behind the scenes'. Again ... how lucky was I to be surrounded by such talent and experience. David on set design and the whole team on set-build; Alan

on extremely demanding technicals; Lee who came in as a novice Stage Manager and with the back stage crew gave us a flawless multi-moving set and Jac, always supportive, sewed and sewed and with her team dressed bodies and hair to perfection.

I need also to thank the producer; Wendy; who struggled through the last 10 days of rehearsals and the show with a badly damaged and torn leg muscles. Thank you for being such a trooper even when you were grimacing with pain.

And well done to everyone for coping with the last minute changes we had to make to help Wendy through.

I was regularly teased with comments such as "Well, you couldn't have chosen a more difficult play", " Why choose a play with a cast of 6, when you can have a cast of 18?", but I can honestly say I loved it and hopefully I will be trusted to do it again in the future. Thank you to everyone involved and thank you WP for trusting me with our Spring production.

**Heather Carpenter**

## **7. Election of Officers**

The 2015 – 2016 committee stood down. The current secretary took over the proceedings.

During the election of officers there was a challenge from the floor from David Atkinson, and a consequent discussion about the propriety of the system used for the nomination and election of the committee. It was explained that the new procedure had been notified to the entire membership 2 months in advance of the AGM; as follows;

- *Nominations for the positions of Chair, Treasurer, Secretary, and 7 Ordinary members to be received by the secretary by **Tuesday 14<sup>th</sup> June 2016**. See further detail below, and within the **AGM Guide**.*

### ***Joining the Committee***

*Role descriptions for each of the Committee Roles can be found on the Members Page of our website. If you wish to join the committee a nomination form is enclosed. If you wish to join the committee please arrange for the enclosed nomination form to be completed. Further information can be found in the **AGM Guide**.*

## ***Voting By Proxy***

*If you are unable to attend the meeting please ask another member to vote on your behalf by completing the proxy vote slip and ensuring that they bring along the voting slip to the meeting. These are available from the Members Page of our website.*

**AGM Guide** – is a detailed description of what happens at the AGM and how anyone can stand for election to the committee.

The purpose of the new procedure was to address criticisms received in the 2015 Membership Survey as to the perceived lack of transparency during the 2015 election of committee. The challenge continued, suggesting that the proposed procedure was unconstitutional. The chair assured the floor that the constitution does not give instruction on the method of electing the committee, only that ‘

**Chair – Wendy Ellis** proposed by Brian Maddern. Seconded by Jaybee Brown. Agreed

**Secretary – Heather Carpenter** proposed by Wendy Ellis. Seconded by Sonia Corke. Agreed

**Treasurer – Tracey Hobbs** proposed by Brian Maddern. Seconded by Alan Carpenter. Agreed

## **Committee -**

**Lee Nairn** proposed by Brian Maddern. Seconded by Tracey Hobbs. Agreed

**Sonia Corke** proposed by Brian Maddern. Seconded by David Percival. Agreed.

**David Percival** proposed by Georgette Vale. Seconded by Rick Adams. Agreed

**Georgette Vale** proposed by Heather Carpenter. Seconded by Nancy Adams. Agreed

## **8. Alteration to the constitution**

The following had been notified to the membership prior to the AGM;

- To consider and vote upon the changes to the constitution, the purpose of which are to update language, promote clarification and shared understanding. There are no changes to the aims or objectives to the constitution. Other changes are only to effect the purpose stated. The exceptions being;
  - Item 5: Change from stating a specific amount for subscriptions to stating that annual subscriptions will be decided annually at the AGM.

On enquiry by the Chair it was discovered that the constitution registered with the Charity Commission is the 1970 version. Any changes agreed since then have not been formalised by amendment and appropriate registration. The right to change the constitution was challenged by David Atkinson. The chair reiterated that the proposed changes only involved the language used and not the aims or objectives of the constitution.

On discussing item 5 (above) a question from Pete Harrold asked 'why do people who help us out when we're in dire straits have to pay subs?'

In the past this has been linked to our insurance, as it was thought that only members are insured. The committee will check the validity of this assumption.

It was agreed that the committee should effect the alterations to the constitution proposed above and register the new constitution with the Charities Commission.

It was agreed that membership subscriptions should remain at £7 for the year.

## **8. Members Resolutions**

**1/ I propose that Committee Agendas \* are published on the Members Page of our website together with a subsequent summary \* of each meeting within 2 weeks of the meeting.**

**\* The committee reserve the right to omit/edit any items deemed inappropriate for publication outside of the committee, at their discretion.**

**Also the committee meeting dates should be published on the website.**

**Proposed: Brain Maddern    Seconded: Rick Adams**

**The proposal was agreed by the meeting.**

**2/ I propose that a monthly Wymondham Players evening, attended by at least one committee member, is held to enable members to gather and socialise on a regular basis. Prospective members should be welcome.**

**Proposed: Brain Maddern    Seconded: Tabi Paternoster**

**The proposal was agreed by the meeting.**

## **9. Any Other Business**

Pete Harrold questioned whether we should perform a Saturday matinee as cast are shattered for the evening performance? It was questioned whether we lose audience

from the evening shows?

The committee had already considered this at great length at their meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> May 2016;

The chair reminded the meeting of the reasons for including a matinee i.e. accessibility; service to the community etc. The committee had decided at the meeting of 10<sup>th</sup> May, that we should continue to offer matinee performances. The reasons behind this decision were included in the Chairs AGM report.

Martin Drummond reminded the meeting that the essence of Wymondham Players was always to deliver the best possible production.

Alan Carpenter gave thanks to Wendy Ellis for her work in the role of Chair.

With thanks to all for their attendance. The meeting closed at 9.24 p.m.