**AGM REPORTS 2024-2025**

**Report From The Club Committee [Bar] – June 2025**

The committee for the last year has been David Park, Chloe Walker, Sue Piper, Julie Domaille, Julia Wilson and Jonty Hawkes. At the first meeting Jonty Hawkes was volunteered as Chairman and Sue Piper as Secretary.

After a good year in 2023-24 this year (2024-25) has been disappointing. The bar has seen a reduction of over £4,000 (18%) in sales leading to a smaller profit and a reduced contribution to Playhouse funds of £15,232. We have not increased our prices for a couple of years and with rising costs the profit margin has reduced slightly so watch out for a price increase when we return after the summer break. The committee have continued to work hard by putting themselves out to buy stock from the cheapest sources and by stocking a number of new products. These include a non-alcoholic ‘prosecco’ both white and rose, a non-alcoholic cider and a return of Appletize. PLEASE let us know if there is anything that you think would sell well.

The cafe has had a good year with a 15% increase in profit to over £ 3,800. Well done to Chloe and her team.

I would like to thank all our bar and cafe volunteers who have helped over the last year, some of them doing two or even three nights and a big thank you to Cath L. in the office for sorting out the rotas, not always an easy task!

More volunteers are needed throughout the Playhouse so if you or someone you know can help it would be greatly appreciated whether it is behind the bar, in the cafe, selling programmes, set building etc, just get in touch with the office. New volunteers will be fully supported and will have an experienced person with them to show them the ropes. Volunteers do not have to be members of the Playhouse.

The Playhouse Monthly Book Sale continues to open once a month and contributed nearly £1,000 to Playhouse funds. Thank you to all those who supported the library by buying or donating books. There are now over 1700 books to choose from, for more information go to [www.facebook.com/IPLibrary](http://www.facebook.com/IPLibrary) or email me to be included in the circulation list. The Book Sale is open to non-members so tell your friends and family all about it.

The IP 100 Club continues with their monthly draw and provides much needed funds to the Playhouse. If anyone wants to join, please get in touch with the office for more details. Thank you to Richard Neale for continuing to organise this.

And finally, thank you to all our customers, without you we would make nothing!

**Jonty Hawkes**

[**jonty@DirectSave.net**](mailto:jonty@directsave.net)

**(Club Committee Chair)**

**Co-Artistic Directors’ Report to the Annual General Meeting of Ilkley Players Ltd.**

**June 2025**

**Current Season Overview**

At the time of writing, there are two productions remaining of the current season; *Labour of Love*, which opened the week before the AGM, and *The River*, which will play in the Wildman Studio in July. This season has been a strong one, both in terms of quality and attracting and supporting new actors. We have also encouraged and supported new directors to assist on productions in the season, with three assisting on main season shows and one assisting on a fringe production. We already have three assistant directors in place for the 2025/26 season and are seeking to attract more. Our thanks and congratulations to the directors, actors, crews and all the volunteers who have contributed to the success of the current season.

**New Season 2025-2026**

Work has just been completed on the 2025-2026 Season. Our thanks to the play reading and selection committee for their dedication, hard work and support in this. The final piece of the jigsaw, the production scheduled for June 2026 which will also tour to the Minack, has been confirmed. The launch evening in February was well attended, with a very positive response from actors and stage management volunteers showing an interest in the plays and signing up to be involved. The casting process has been reviewed, and a different approach has been taken. As a result, casting is already underway, with auditions taking place in late May/early June for the first four plays in the season, that is *Toast*, *The Unfriend*, *It’s A Wonderful Life* and *Gaslight*. We are indebted to the members of the casting committee (and others) for their time given. We thank Mel Winstanley, convenor of the committee for keeping everything on track. We would like to thank Ian Taylor and Dick Hebbert for all the help and support given to us over the past year. Similarly, we are very grateful to Justine for everything she has done – and continues to do – in terms of help, support, explanations and encouragement; we really appreciate it.

**The Greenroom**

The Greenroom continues to play a significant role in the life of Ilkley Playhouse. The weekly Saturday morning classes attract a good number of young people who come to gain confidence, performance skills and to socialise. Anyone who saw the production of *Aladdin* earlier in the year can attest to the levels of energy and talent present in the Junior Greenroom. The four members of the Senior Greenroom who appeared in *The Trials* were excellent and came together with the other young people in the cast to bring the powerful play to life. Recent graduates of the Greenroom have also taken up backstage roles. We remain committed to giving our younger members opportunities to shine. We will be taking part in the National Theatre Connections event in the coming year. Many thanks to Andrew Leggott and Lisa Debney for their hard work and commitment. A special thank you to Andrew who is retiring from the post of Leader of the Greenroom after 15 years. His contribution has been immensely valuable. We are pleased that Lisa Debney has agreed to take up the leadership role, and excited that she will be assisted by Greenroom alumna, Eliza Wilson.

**Partnerships**

During this season, we have seen several partnership projects. Bradford Producing Hub used the premises for meetings and research and development projects. Ilkley Clean River Campaign and the Culture Declares Emergency group supported the productions of ‘*Enemy of the People*’ and ‘*The Trials*’. The recent production of ‘*Bronte*’ was enhanced by external workshops with the author, Polly Teale, and assistance from the Bronte Parsonage Museum in Haworth. The ongoing relationship with Ilkley Manor House will see the sixth Bard in the Yard event in August. Earlier in August, Ilkley Playhouse will take part in the Yorkshire Day celebrations, presenting a selection of Yorkshire themed material.

**Volunteers**

We would like to take this opportunity to thank the brilliant volunteers who work across all areas of the theatre, and who give their time to make sure that our ambitious programme of productions and events is realised. We hope that you have felt welcome and valued as part of the Playhouse family, and that you continue to enjoy your time spent here. We would like to remind all volunteers of the Code of Conduct that sets out the expectations of behaviour.

**Publicity and Communications**

It is very pleasing to note that there has been an increase in the number of volunteers who have joined the publicity and marketing team. Publicity is a crucial element in the success of each production and, in turn, that of Ilkley Playhouse itself. Thanks to Becky Carter for all her work as Publicity Director. We wish her well as she steps down from this position. Carol Butler and the volunteer photographers have done a brilliant job capturing the different projects and productions. Thanks to Alex Whitaker, who took on the responsibility of keeping our Instagram and Facebook presence updated – and has now agreed to take over from Becky as Publicity Director. Chrissie Poulter continues to look after the X/Twitter account. Thanks to Marie Varney, editor of the Newsletter, for her contribution to keeping the membership informed and entertained.

**Looking Ahead**

The Board of Trustees has embarked on a strategic review of where Ilkley Playhouse would like to be in five years’ time. The results of the initial meeting will be shared with the membership elsewhere. The strategic decisions may lead to some changes in the way things are done. While change can be uncomfortable, the review aims to secure the future of the theatre and ensure that it remains a significant and relevant part of the cultural offer in the town and beyond. We are committed to supporting the organisation.

**Damien O’Keeffe & Yvette Huddleston, Co-artistic directors, May 2025**

**Theatre Manager Report for AGM 2024-2025**

It is always a pleasure to look back on the journey of our theatre over the past year and to recognise the hard work and dedication of our volunteers, members, trustees, staff, loyal patrons and supporters.

Within the financial year April 2024-March 2025, we staged an impressive seven Wharfeside productions, three Wildman productions and four fringe productions, including the delightful Junior Greenroom performance of *Aladdin* - still one of my personal highlights of the season for its sheer joy and outstanding costumes. We brought together audiences from all walks of life, united by our shared commitment to delivering high-quality entertainment at reasonable prices. It’s an achievement we should all be proud of.

**Events & Hires**

Another strong year for events and hires with the gross income exceeding our projections. We trialled moving the Wharfeside July 2024 production to the Wildman Studio, freeing up the Wharfeside Theatre to host several successful events. The feedback was excellent, with groups like the Ilkley Stage Singers and Bradford Youth Choir scheduled to return this July.

We enjoyed the return of many of our most popular crowd-pleasers and introduced new acts including Fleetwood Shack, Voodoo Room, Yorkshire Swing Collective, Shout Out to the 60s, The Wild Murphys (who brought the house down) to name just a few. Coming into the new year, Stagefright Comedy Club will celebrate 15 years at the Playhouse - a remarkable milestone.

We also booked the sell-out touring production *Bridge*, a strong reminder of how important it is to programme high-quality touring theatre that aligns with our reputation. I’m especially excited to have scheduled That’s The Badger Productions in June 2026 with their take on John Godber’s *Teechers* in the Wildman Studio, directed by Rick Hyland - no stranger to our stage. A new collaboration with Ilkley Live will see an evening of live music featuring three bands in the Wildman in November.

We were pleased to welcome back our regular hirers, including Ilkley Film Society, Ilkley Literature Festival, U3A Voyagers, U3A Environment, Vintage Fair, and Outside the Box. We also ran several short story classes and a popular modern art course. I’ve had positive discussions with Ilkley Literature Festival and am happy to confirm their return to the Playhouse for the October festival.

**Community Engagement**

Our outreach efforts continued - we’ve worked in partnership with The Manor House for Bard performances, with Ilkley BID and the Pride Festival, Amnesty Wharfedale, Yorkshire Water, Climate Action and with Outside the Box for their biannual shows. It’s been inspiring to see young talent emerge through our Greenroom classes and productions, and to welcome students from the wider community in *The Trials*.

We collaborated with local learning support groups to once again offer a relaxed performance of our Christmas production - an important part of our inclusive programming. Being part of Bradford 2025 has fostered new relationships, including a successful three-day hire by Bradford Producing Hub for their *Mastering the Mindset* workshop, which received positive feedback.

In December, we held our festive Christmas Fair supported by our members and local community, who gathered to watch improvised performances from our Greenroom students. Many thanks to Andrew Leggott, Lisa Debney and all the volunteers for making it happen.

We hosted a successful Open Evening, with another planned for June, and Julia Wilson introduced regular social evenings that are quickly becoming a staple. Always my favourite Playhouse night of the year, the New Season Launch saw an enthusiastic turnout and great energy. Thank you to Yvette and Damien, along with the Play Selection Committee, for all their hard work creating the upcoming 2025–2026 season.

It has been another busy and productive year for our fantastic and dedicated part-time staff, who consistently go above and beyond to ensure the smooth running of our operations. From office administration, box office duties, website/box office updates, and rota coordination to managing membership, rehearsal schedules, publicity, building maintenance, cleaning, and supporting our volunteers – their commitment is truly invaluable. We are fortunate to have such a hardworking and reliable team. It is a genuine pleasure to work alongside each of them: Cath Laughey, Rosalia Roberts, Cath Chamberlain, Paul Heron, Jacky Parker, and our freelance evening box office team: Helen Rabbage, Becky Wholley and Jess Redhead. Thank you all for everything you do.

**Publicity**

The office staff have continued to provide support for the publicity of all our plays, social events, and external activities. All posters and flyers are prepared and distributed by the office, along with the creation of our season brochures, bookmarks, play programmes, new external banners and marketing materials - with assistance from Moorprint. We have maintained strong relationships with BBC Radio Leeds, Drystone Radio, and Rombalds Radio. Our productions and events are regularly featured on Ilkley Chat, and they appear in the Discover Ilkley 'Things to Do' section, the Bradford Tourism website and Visitor Guide, and the Ilkley Business Forum brochure. We also advertise volunteer opportunities through the Volunteering Ilkley website and Ilkley Chat and are pleased to be featured on the Ilkley Tourist Guide & Map.

Caroline Mutton has ensured that we retain a strong press presence with a weekly ‘What’s On’ column in the local newspaper and radio interviews. Our members and patrons continue to receive a regular "What’s On" email, and thanks to Cath Laughey, our Box Office Manager, every production and box office event is fully covered with a front of house rota. Feedback is essential to how we grow. We now send an automatic online feedback form to every audience member after their visit. This will help us learn and adapt.

Sincere thanks to all our volunteers on the Publicity Committee. A special thanks to Becky Carter, who, after years of dedicating her time and energy as our Publicity Director, is now stepping down. I am grateful that she will continue to contribute by writing her excellent reviews of our plays. Thank you also to Alex Whittaker, Vani Midgley, and Chrissie Poulter for their continued support with social media - and many thanks to Alex for taking on the role of Publicity Director. Carol Butler remains at the helm of photography, ensuring our visual content stays consistently strong. A special thank you as well to Marie Varney, who is doing a fantastic job as our newsletter editor. And to Ann Mutton, who stepped down as our Archivist after numerous years keeping everything in order. We are very grateful to our dedicated team of volunteers who assist on stuffing days and help distribute publicity materials.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Andrew Leggott and Chris Cundell, who are both stepping down from their roles - thank you for your significant contributions to the Playhouse. I’d also like to take this opportunity to recognise David Park, who stepped back last year after serving as Premises Supervisor. David has been an invaluable presence and a trusted advisor to me personally. His steady support has meant a great deal, both to me and to the wider team.

It is important to acknowledge the financial challenges we’ve faced this year. Like many arts organisations, we have seen a decline in income driven by lower audience turnout for our productions compared to last year, rising operational costs, and the broader impact of the economic climate. Despite these pressures, we remain committed to addressing these issues head-on and exploring new ways to adapt, ensuring we continue to be a vibrant and sustainable part of our community. The Trustees are already taking proactive steps - most recently through a strategic planning day that provided a valuable springboard for these discussions and the development of future actions.

**Justine Sowden May 2025**

**THEATRE COMMITTEE CHAIR’S REPORT TO AGM 2025**

The Theatre Committee (TC) brings together the various Directors and Coordinators into one forum, meeting every few months to oversee the day-to-day operation of the Theatre. In particular, we support the Artistic Directors in the delivery of the programme and address any issues or problems arising during the season.

Much of the excellent work of our Directors and Coordinators will have been detailed in their own reports, so will not be repeated here, suffice to say that their tireless efforts are much appreciated and highly regarded by the TC.

While much of our work is transitory and reactive in nature, in that we deal with issues and problems as they arise, we have sought this year to be more proactive, to contribute to measures which address the overarching need to improve both our audience and volunteer numbers.

To this end we have spent some time this year considering ways in which we can support our Publicity team to help improve our publicity offer for each production. For example, we will shortly be looking at bespoke publicity plans for each production in the new season, in conjunction with the new Publicity Director and their team.

We have also sought to reconvene a working group to look at equality and diversity issues throughout the Playhouse, hoping to make all aspects of the Theatre, from casting to the front of house experience, more accessible, welcoming and open to all. A call for volunteers earlier this year unfortunately did not produce sufficient people willing to take on this role, so we will be re-considering how best to take this work forward in the coming weeks and months.

We have also looked at the issue of volunteer conduct and have made proposals to the Trustees which we hope will clarify expectations in this area, in terms of both expected behaviours and a clear system of dealing with concerns or complaints.

More generally we continue to consider ways of increasing volunteer numbers, and hopefully by the time you read this another successful Open Day will have generated more, much-needed interest in set design and building, backstage and technical support.

Our theatre can only continue to operate, and to put on the impressive number and variety of quality productions that we do, if our volunteer numbers are not only maintained but increased. I would particularly encourage all of our acting members to consider giving just a little more of their time to contribute in other ways, to help ensure we can continue to meet the high standards we have set ourselves.

**Ian Taylor**

**Theatre Committee Chair**

**May 2025**

**Technical Director’s Report Season 2024-25 for AGM**

It has been an interesting year but in general from a tech point of view little has changed from last year.

As you will see from the finance report, the year has been poor financially and we have done our best to keep tech costs down to a minimum despite the ageing nature of the infrastructure and our systems.

Though technically there is a budget for rigging shows in the Wharfeside that the tech director can charge, Paul and I make it a rule not to do so and any income we have generated from running the odd outside event we have ensured stays in the Playhouse.

We have had to replace a sound Mixer desk in the Wildman as reported last year and have also had carried out last summer by Richard the safety checks in the Wharfeside – not all these works are complete yet – it is proposed to carry out the Wildman checks this summer.

We were gifted some old lighting by Bingley and this has helped augment our stock but we are still running old lighting and have not been able to move forward to LED due to the costs and priorities elsewhere. We are the only local theatre in the area not to have moved to LED systems.

We have had to replace some backstage curtains as they were rotten and we did a deal with repairing the side curtains in the Wildman to ensure we had a fully useable stock – we have replaced chairs in the cabs by donations.

We have had repaired one dimmer in the Wildman to replace a faulty unit but otherwise we are just maintaining rather than moving forward.

We have good teams of helpers but need more going forward.

This is my final report as Tech Director as I am standing down from the role as I am not in agreement with the current artistic direction of the Playhouse from a commercial point of view which I believe is detrimental to the long-term viability of the Playhouse but will still be involved in running shows and supporting the Playhouse generally in other ways as usual.

I wish any successor all the best and will work to maintain the standards we have set.

**Chris Cundell**

**Tech Director**

**House Director’s Report for AGM 2025**

**Overview**

As House Director, I focus on managing and maintaining Ilkley Playhouse’s facilities to ensure a safe, welcoming, and efficient environment for performers and audiences. Before commenting on these various aspects, I want to talk about and thank all the volunteers who have undertaken all the front-of-house roles that are an essential element of the Playhouse. This year, we concentrated on compliance and preparing for infrastructure improvements while addressing one key reactive issue.

**Front of House**

We are now planning to undertake training for all front-of-house staff every six months. As the training focuses on fire safety aspects, we are also encouraging all volunteers and teams to attend and working with our social lead to make this a fun and inclusive evening. I would also like to thank David Park for his continued support on this aspect.

**Key Reactive Issue**

* **Wildman Heating:**Unfortunately, a power surge recently knocked out the control panel of the heating system serving the Wildman Theatre. This incident, compounded by our 20-year-old system, caused various issues that took a couple of months and several thousand pounds to remedy. The system is now fully repaired, with additional maintenance work scheduled for the summer. These upcoming works will enhance the system's efficiency. However, we still face a challenge in delivering hot air to the floor level. A potential solution has been identified, but due to the cost, we plan to monitor the upgraded system's performance over the upcoming winter before making any further decisions.

**Compliance Works**

Several projects have been undertaken or planned for the ‘summer close period’ to maintain and improve our infrastructure. My thanks go to our Facilities Manager (Paul Heron), Electrician (Richard Speight) and the technical team for their continued and invaluable support.

* **Fire Safety Measures:** Review and adjustments our emergency lighting systems, fire exits signage, and extinguisher servicing in compliance with current regulations.
* **Electrical & Lighting Systems:** Various planned maintenance upgrades on the wiring, lighting, and backstage power supply.
* **Accessibility Enhancements:** Lift maintenance performed, alongside continued monitoring of seating arrangements and aisle space to accommodate diverse audience needs.
* **Fabric Upkeep:** Undertake various repairs across fabric of the building such as the coping stones, gutters, etc.

**Future Upgrades**

Over the next few years, the theatre will need to undertake several projects to maintain and enhance our infrastructure and customer experience. Here are some options (no particular order) that require research and funds to identify the best solution.

* **Stage Lighting:** Transitioning to LED stage lighting.
* **Heating:** Upgrading the Wharefeside heating systems and controls to improve energy efficiency.
* **Hearing Loop Replacement:** Upgrading the current hearing loop system to ensure compatibility with modern hearing aids.
* **Sound System Upgrade:** Upgrading our sound controls equipment.
* **Lift Adjustments:** Additional refinements to platform and passenger lifts for smoother accessibility throughout the building.
* **Seating Upgrades:** Improving Wharfeside & Wildman seating to enhance audience experience and accommodate patrons with comfort concerns.
* **Fire Door:** Renewal of our fire doors to improve security.
* **Remote Panic Alarms:** Expanding panic alarm coverage for lone workers to improve safety measures.
* **Wildman Scene Upgrade:** Enhancing our controls to improve experience for external hirers.

Over 2025/26, we also need to review of our approach to Legionella to maintain water safety standards and review our policies relating to safe working practices to align with evolving regulations.

**Michael Richardson**

**House Director**

**May 2025**

**GREENROOM ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25**

**Membership** The membership of the Junior Class has been growing steadily over the period and is now over 20. However, 13 of these are due to move up to the Seniors in September 2025. Membership of the Senior Class is currently 22. Places are available in both classes.

The fees were increased to £55 per term from September 2024 but the additional siblings fee remained unchanged at £45 per term.

**Tutors** This was the fifteenth year the writer (Andrew Leggott) had led the Greenrooms, and the eighth year for Lisa Debney as Co-Tutor. Occasionally, guests tutor sessions.

**Activities – a selection.** After an enforced break due to covid, we reintroduced mask work for both classes, but with the masks individually named and allocated. Both classes also enjoyed Status and Focus exercises. Highlights for the Seniors included Fight Club (Don’t talk about it!) with John Howard as guest tutor. They also learnt about sensory perception in the intriguing “Firewalk with Me” exercise (not really!).

**Annual Production – Senior Class**

After their success with “The IT” in March 2024, the Seniors were given the opportunity to return to the main Wharfeside stage in “The Trials” directed by Damien O’Keeffe in January 2025. Unfortunately, due to the timing of mock exams in particular, only four members of the Senior Class could participate, although they were assisted backstage and technically by other current and former Greenroom members. The play was powerful, thought provoking and highly appropriate to the times we live in. Next year we are hoping to participate in National Theatre Connections again in the Spring, although how can we hope to emulate our resounding success with “Circle Dreams” on the South Bank in 2023? We’ll try!

**Annual Production – Junior Class**

In January 2025, the Juniors and Year 8 Seniors performed an extremely audience-friendly version of the ever-popular “Aladdin” to great acclaim. It particularly featured lively Bollywood-style dances choreographed by Lisa Debney plus colourful costumes resurrected after decades from “The King and I”, but still looking good. It is unlikely that enough members will be left in the Junior Class to mount a full-scale production in 2026.

**Christmas Coffee Morning and Summer Showcase Events** These continue to be popular and give extra performance opportunities to our youngsters.

**Involvement in Adult Productions** Opportunities continue to arise for Greenroom members to perform in other Playhouse productions, which could not be mounted without their involvement. Significantly, four Seniors will feature in the 8X8X8 Fringe Productions this September.

**Chaperoning/Safeguarding** It is vitally important that we replenish our stock of Bradford -approved Chaperones. Students under 16 cannot perform without them. More volunteers are needed urgently.

**Retirement** Andrew plans to retire from Greenroom in July 2025, when he will have completed 15 years in post, and be coming up to his 75th birthday. It’s been an extremely happy and productive time. I’ve loved it.

**STOP PRESS**

**Eliza Wilson will be stepping into the breach, full of youthful enthusiasm, assisting Lisa from September 2025. GOOD LUCK, Eliza!**

***ANDREW LEGGOTT and LISA DEBNEY May 2025***

**Wardrobe Report for 2024-25**

Ilkley Playhouse has an extensive in-house stock of costumes in the Wardrobe, which are available for hire to the public and other amateur theatre groups. We have been running our Costume hire department in-house throughout this past year, with support and help from Paula McKie and a team of regular and many new volunteers. If you have visited us up on the 3rd floor, you will see there is a wonderful stock of costumes from all periods, which has been put together over many years. The hire side is run alongside the supervision of the Wardrobe and the two areas are closely linked. We aim to use the stock to costume our own plays and hires provide funding towards future wardrobe provision for the theatre.

An additional group of volunteers, along with Kath Potts and myself, also meet throughout the year on each Monday morning, to look after stock and maintain the costume hire area. Details of hire arrangements are on our website, [www.ilkleyplayhouse.co.uk](http://www.ilkleyplayhouse.co.uk). We can take enquiries by phone and email. Contact: message for Rosie Bond via the Playhouse office by phone 01943 609539 or Playhouse email: info@ilkleyplayhouse.co.uk. Costume hire is currently at times by appointment only, usually on a Wednesday evening.

In relation to plays, we are costuming from stock if we can, occasionally hiring in and each play needs a “costume co-ordinator” to work with the ladies of the wardrobe. We are always looking for additional volunteers to take and share responsibility for carrying out this role for individual plays during the play season. All plays are “costume plays”, whichever period they are set in and the role of Wardrobe involves co-ordinating with the director and set designer from pre-production onwards and with the cast during rehearsals for fittings and then during the run of the play. During this past and present season, we have costumed our cast members in Glorious!, Bleak Expectations, The Merry Wives of Windsor, Mary Shelley and Bronte covering periods from the Regency period through the 19th and 20th centuries up to the present day. Sephra Greening-Jackson has helped us providing wigs for all periods.

The Playhouse was host to another two of Jill Coulson’s Saturday Vintage Fairs in October 2024 and at Easter in 2025, which were very successful and popular busy events. There is another Vintage Fair planned for a Saturday at the end of October 2025.

Alterations, some making of costumes and props, providing accessories, laundry, ironing etc. are the responsibility of the “Sewing room”, who meet at the Playhouse on Wednesday evenings. We welcome new recruits to this very valuable team of volunteers, who work all year round to maintain our stock. If you have an interest in sewing or costume, please contact us via the Playhouse office. We are very grateful to all our helpers, who have been extensively involved in costume hires, sewing room and costuming plays for performance and behind the scenes throughout this year.

**Rosie Bond, on behalf of the Wardrobe group, April 2025**

**Little Theatre Guild Report for 2024-25 for Ilkley Playhouse**

The Little Theatre Guild represents around 125 member theatres throughout the United Kingdom; all have sole control over an established theatre through ownership, lease or contract; all are independent and self-governing; produce a regular programme of stage plays and are non-commercial in character. The idea was first mooted in the 1930s as companies began to open theatres and the Guild was established in 1946. Ilkley Playhouse has been an active LTG Member since 1972.

The LTG’s website can be found at **‘www.littletheatre.org’** publishing updates and an annual yearbook listing all member theatres and their productions. The Conferences are a great opportunity for networking with other theatres, keeping updated, sharing experiences and having an enjoyable theatre weekend. Member theatres take it in turns to host and we have agreed to host the Northern Region Conference at Ilkley Playhouse in autumn 2026.

The **LTG National Conference and AGM for 2024** was hosted by **Sutton Arts Theatre** based in **Sutton Coldfield** in **June 2024.** I attended as LTG Rep, accompanied by Sam Hill and Jonty Hawkes. Originally formed in 1944, Sutton Arts Theatre became part of Sutton Arts Council, staging plays in Sutton Town Hall. They purchased their own freehold theatre in 1997 from Birmingham City Council. It has a 135-seater raked auditorium and is still run entirely by volunteers. On the Saturday night, we watched a performance of “***Bonnie & Clyde” the musical***. Eight plays in their season; Plays run for 7 nights over 2 weeks (no performances Mon/Tue). Musicals/panto for 11 to 16 performances including 2 shows on a Saturday and a Sunday, on both weekends (4 matinees). The 24-hour conference ran from Saturday lunchtime to Sunday lunchtime and included workshops on LED lighting and grant applications from the Theatres Trust (TT).

**The Caxton Theatre** in **Grimsby** hosted the **Northern LTG Conference** in **October 2024.**

The Caxton Theatre and Arts Centre celebrated its 80th birthday last year. They stage 8 plays each year running Saturday to Saturday (excluding Sunday) for 7 performances. It is the only society in North East Lincolnshire owning its own theatre, a former Victorian methodist chapel, then cinema; purchased by them in 1980s and converted into a theatre. The main auditorium seats 174 people and is steeply raked. There are also smaller productions each year, normally for 2 or 3 nights, held in the bar area – the Studio bar. They do have outside lets, hosting events and other acting companies. They are fortunate to have purchased the former retail premises next door, now housing a rehearsal room and they are able to run with rehearsal periods lasting 12-13 weeks before opening night. The impressive studio bar area was refurbished in Art Deco style by members during lockdown in 2020/2021. Again, Sam and Jonty attended with me. Workshops offered over the weekend:Getting the most out of Social Media advertising, Unarmed Combat, Cuts & bruises, Writing for the Stage, The History of the Caxton Theatre and its operation. **The play** performed for us by Caxton Players on Saturday evening was ***‘The Dresser’ by Ronald Harwood***.

**Future conference dates in 2025:**

**National Conference & AGM 2025: Royalty Theatre, Sunderland, 27th/29th June 2025**

**Regional Conference Northern 2025 – Lancaster Grand Theatre, 10th/11th October 2025**

**Rosie Bond, LTG Rep Ilkley, April 2025**