

## **THE ILKLEY PLAYERS CLUB**

Notice is hereby given that the 38th Annual General Meeting of the Ilkley Players Club will be held on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020 by Zoom at 7.30pm. Log-in details will be supplied nearer the time.

### **AGENDA**

1. Welcome and apologies for absence
2. President's opening remarks
3. To receive and approve the minutes of the 37th Annual General Meeting
4. To receive the report of the Chair
5. To receive the Treasurer's report (verbal)
6. To elect the officers and committee for 2020/21
7. To appoint the independent examiner for 2020/21
8. Any other business

Sue Piper  
Secretary Ilkley Players Club 2019/20

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## **ILKLEY PLAYERS LIMITED**

Notice is hereby given that the 19th Annual General Meeting of Ilkley Players Limited will be held on Tuesday 29<sup>th</sup> September 2020 by Zoom, immediately following the AGM of the Ilkley Players Club. Log-in details will be supplied nearer the time.

### **AGENDA**

1. Welcome and apologies for absence
2. President's opening remarks
3. To receive and approve the minutes of the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting
4. To receive the reports previously made available
5. To elect the officers, trustees and ETC committee for 2020/21
6. To appoint the independent examiner for 2020/21
7. Open Forum

Nicola Swan  
Secretary Ilkley Players Ltd 2019/20

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**Draft Minutes of the 37<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Ilkley Players Club held on  
Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

*The formal meetings were preceded by extracts from recently performed plays 'Jess and Jo' (Connor) and from 'Chaos' (Amelia, Ellie & Jess), introduced by Jay Cundell-Walker, Livy Potter and Andrew Leggott. The audience was very appreciative of this contribution from our younger members.*

**1. APOLOGIES and ATTENDANCE**

**APOLOGIES:**

Richard Speight; Julie Domaille; Christine & Brian Castle; Judith Dunn; Tony Wade; Ann & Graham Peacock; Gordon Williamson; Andrew Wallbank; Barbara Davy; Sandy Hill; Sheila Morgan; Liz Powell; Julia Wilson; Jean Garbutt  
... and the cast and crew of Blue Stocking who were rehearsing

**PRESENT:**

Rosie Bond; David Wallbank; Justine Sowden; Samantha Hill; Jonty Hawkes; Jay Cundell-Walker; Chris Cundell; Andrew Leggott; John Wise; Kath Potts; Betty Calverley; Caroline Marston; Kay Vann; Geraldine Woodhouse; James Hill; Wander Bruijfel; Val Williams; David Keighley; Dennis Keith; Niccola Swan; Mark Simister; Joanne Martin; Becky Carter; Steve Mason; Hilly Rundle; Heather Cheatham; Bruce Piper; Dick Hebbert; Patrick Hebbert; Ruth Evans; Stephen Brown; David Park; Timothy Mutton; Ian Wilson; Julia Wilson; Sadie Richardson; Chloe Walker (37)

**2. PRESIDENT'S OPENING REMARKS**

Dick Hebbert emphasised the value of the Club to the whole of the Playhouse and complimented the team on the increased takings. He thanked Jonty and all the other volunteers who support the Club.

**3. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE 36<sup>th</sup> AGM**

Received and approved

**4. TO RECEIVE THE REPORT OF THE CHAIR**

Jonty Hawkes' report was presented. He thanked all the volunteers for their work on the bar and on the coffee bar. The bar surplus has nearly doubled in the year. More volunteers would be very welcome.

Qu. Ian Wilson asked if the surplus has increased because of extra events. Yes, along with higher margins.

**5. TO RECEIVE THE TREASURER'S REPORT**

Bruce Piper reiterated that margins have increased and it has been a good year. The Treasurer's Report was approved.

**6. TO ELECT THE OFFICER AND COMMITTEE FOR 2019/20**

The following names were put forward: Jonty Hawkes, David Park, Rosemary Howard, Dennis Keith, Sue Piper, Hilly Rundle.

It was agreed that this will be the committee.

## **7. TO APPOINT THE INDEPENDENT EXAMINER FOR 2019/20**

Tim Barker will be the independent examiner.

## **8. AOB**

None

The meeting closed at 8pm

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## **Ilkley Players Club (Bar) – Jonty Hawkes**

The committee elected at the AGM in 2019 was David Park, Hilly Rundle, Sue Piper, Dennis Keith, Rosemary Howard and Jonty Hawkes. At the first meeting Jonty Hawkes was elected Chairman, Dave Park Secretary. During the year we co-opted Lee Midgley and Chloe Walker onto the committee.

For the year to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020 we have raised funds of £14,000 (£9,000 from the bar and £5,000 from the coffee bar) which has been transferred over to Ilkley Playhouse. This is broadly in line with 2017-18 but is a decrease of nearly 30% on last year's figure which is disappointing especially as last year was a good year (35% up on 2017-18). Coronavirus will have had a small affect on the turnover (and profit); we lost one music event and the Wharfeside production in March would probably have had a larger audience had it not been for Covid-19. Our cost prices remained largely stable during the year so there was no increase in our prices.

Ullages (stock going out of date) has been a problem during the year. We have received short dated or even out of date stock from our soft drinks suppliers on a number of occasions, so in 2020/21 we will be changing our supplier and implementing our learnings on stock control. We will continue to keep an eye on all our cost prices to ensure we generate a fair and reasonable margin.

We continue to review the products we sell. This year after a few requests we have changed the white wine to a sauvignon blanc; please give it a try (when we eventually re-open) and let me know what you think. We now have a choice of four different gins but what tonic should we be selling to go with it? Should we stick with the Schweppes tonic, change to Fentiman's (about twice as expensive!) or go for one somewhere between the two? How about flavoured tonics? Please let me know your thoughts, we want to stock what you, our members want!

Behind the committee, there are a number of people who help to keep the bar functioning. Most important are all the volunteers who man the bar. Shortly before coronavirus we had several new volunteers who had their first 'training' bar duty with an experienced bar person and I was very pleased with how they did. Hopefully when we re-open they won't have forgotten everything they learnt on their first night! Ian Sargeant (Facilities Manager) continues to keep the bar stocked and the ice machine flowing and Cath Chamberlain banks the takings & keeps an eye on change in the till. In the office Cath Laughey does a great job in cajoling people to fill the various rotas from our band of wonderful volunteers. And then

there's Chloe who does a fantastic job of running the cafe and sorting out any catering requirements that the Playhouse needs. Thank you to all of you.

I don't know what this year will bring when eventually we re-open but I am sure that our volunteers will be there to help wherever they are needed. Until then keep reading those books and taking the short-dated bar stock off my hands - the Lockdown Library continues to open every other Saturday!

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## **Draft Minutes of the 18<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of Ilkley Players Ltd on Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> June 2019**

### **1. APOLOGIES and ATTENDANCE**

As shown for ILKLEY PLAYERS CLUB

### **2. PRESIDENT'S OPENING REMARKS**

Dick Hebbert welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted the presence in the room of the two preceding presidents. There was a minute's silence for members who have died: David Calverley, Geoff Oldham, Geoff Wilson, and Paul Woodhouse. Dick gave a tribute to the outgoing president, Roger Davy, and described how he had been approached to become the president. He reviewed the year's highlights, and the highly successful season, with a high standard of productions, and especially noted the increasing contribution of younger members – the future of the Playhouse. Bruce Piper was thanked for his careful attention to the figures, and Justine Sowden for her work as theatre manager, together with all the office team. Roger Davy's role in community engagement was commended and it was noted that we have an obligation to be a community asset. Other officers were thanked: Geraldine Woodhouse as chair of ETC; Becky Carter as Publicity Director; Richard Speight and David Wallbank in their technical roles; Andrew Leggott and Lisa Debney for their work on the Greenroom and Sacha Denney-Rodwell and Rosie Bond for their work on costumes. Sheila Morgan and Barbara Davy were both wished a speedy recovery. Dick made a plea for members to be more involved.

There was a presentation of flowers for Chloe Walker on the occasion of her imminent 80<sup>th</sup> birthday. As a very long-term member, she was thanked profusely for her contribution, catering for all sorts of events, to the décor and for her ideas.

### **3. TO RECEIVE AND APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE 17<sup>th</sup> AGM of Ilkley Players Ltd**

The minutes were accepted.

### **4. TO RECEIVE THE REPORTS ALREADY DISTRIBUTED**

NB. These can still be read in full on our website:

<https://images.savoyssystems.co.uk/IPI/539334.pdf>

Printed copies of the following were available at the meeting: financial report and accounts; the figures on each play; the strategy document.

## **ARTISTIC DIRECTOR**

This was the first season selected by Jay Cundell-Walker. She was very pleased with the consistency and the fact that many more people were signing up to act with us, and we have many new acting members and young ones. Jan Thomas was commended for her award in the Wharfedale Theatre competition. There were no touring productions this year but The Bench and the Murder Mystery generated funds and enabled less experienced actors to take parts. More backstage helpers are needed.

## **MANAGER**

Justine Sowden talked about a year of great achievement, and thanked Jay particularly. There has been a significant increase in the number of events which has generated income and increased bar takings. The Playhouse is increasingly becoming a welcoming partnership hub, with the assistance of front-of-house teams, regular hirers, sponsors and advertisers. The new website, new 'what's on' email and the new design for the season brochure have all been very well received. There was an appeal to photographers for arresting, well-lit images. Our social media profile has been enhanced and thanks were extended to Livy Potter who will sadly be leaving us. There has been good coverage in the Ilkley Gazette and on the radio. Thanks to Joanne Martin and Mark Simister on increasing the acting membership. A volunteer open evening is planned and there will be a new volunteer handbook available for that event. There are several new policies and thanks to Andrew Walbank, Rosie Bond, David Park and Phil Johnson. Our computer systems have been upgraded.

## **PUBLICITY**

Becky Carter put out a plea for younger people to get involved. We need new reviewers, photographers and a younger audience, watching as well as performing. Livy Potter was thanked again.

Qu. Sam Hill asked if more people were needed to distribute brochures as this distribution could be a fairly easy task to do. She thanked Justine, Becky and the team for their excellent work. Jay advised that many venues will accept brochures when they may not want posters. Dick advised he would be happy to deliver to Leeds Playhouse if they were willing. **Action:** for Publicity Committee

## **TREASURER**

Last year Bruce Piper had given a very direct view on the financial challenge. This year, through a big team effort, those challenges have been addressed. This year there has been a loss of £14,000 compared to last year's loss of £19,000 in a Minack year. An audience of 10,000 has been retained, despite the 10% price rise. Jay's play budget controls have played a big part, and there has been a better contribution from Wildman Studio activities. Outside and extra events have almost made as much as a Minack contribution and every event has made money. The greater contribution from the Players Club has been achieved through extra footfall and good purchasing. All contracts have been reviewed. Thanks were extended to Jody Kendall, our excellent external finance manager. Sponsorship support from Marcia Hughes was very welcome and this probably now needed to focus in specific projects.

Qu. Maggie Warren asked if we should know more clearly who is paid and who is not. Jay responded that there was now a very clear policy on who is paid and why.

Qu. Ian Wilson asked for an explanation on how a loss of £14,000 was a good year. Bruce explained that relative to where we were it was good and that after depreciation the position was cash neutral.

Qu. Roger Davy asked if we were holding our own despite Minack, as this can never be guaranteed. Bruce answered that we need to keep doing more but there is less scope as we review more.

### **SECRETARY**

Niccola Swan's short report was summarized. The need for committee members was emphasized.

Dick Hebbert suggested a vote of thanks to the trustees and to David Park as chair.

### **HOUSE AND TECHNICAL**

Richard Speight was unable to attend but David Wallbank covered the report. Niccola Swan noted the large amount of work done in the hours of darkness which no-one else sees.

Asbestos was mentioned and people reminded not to do works without consulting; a new review is underway now. A Wildman heating solution was discussed.

Qu. Kay Vann asked about the asbestos. A: it was confirmed it was all ok as long as not disturbed

Qu. Sam Hill asked about the dark period (when the theatre is effectively closed) and it was confirmed that work would be undertaken in the first two weeks of August.

Qu. Sam Hill asked about the updated lighting rig; it was advised that some units are over 30 years old, are relatively inflexible and use a lot of power.

Qu. Ian Wilson asked if there would be rain for Singing in the Rain. It is being worked on.

### **GREEN ROOM**

Andrew Leggott referred people to the full report but drew attention to the new members attracted by Chaos. The future is bright with productions of Wind in the Willows and Snow Queen in prospect.

### **WARDROBE**

The report was accepted as presented.

### **LITTLE THEATRE GUILD**

The report was accepted as presented.

## **5. TO CONFIRM THE APPOINTMENT OF PRESIDENT**

Dick Hebbert was confirmed unanimously.

## **6. TO ELECT THE OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES FOR 2018/19**

### **Trustees**

Bruce was confirmed as treasurer.

### **Executive Theatre Committee (ETC)**

Jay Cundell-Walker was re-elected as Artistic Director.

Richard Speight was re-elected as House Director.  
Becky Carter was elected as Publicity Director.  
Sam Hill was elected as secretary to the Executive Theatre Committee  
Vacancies remain for the posts of Training Director and Social Director.  
Committee sign up lists remain on the corridor noticeboard.

## 7. TO APPOINT THE REPORTING ACCOUNTANT 2018/19

Tim Barker and Co recommended and agreed.

Proposer: Dennis Keith

Seconder: Jonty Hawkes

## 8. OPEN FORUM

- Ian Wilson offered his services as plenipotentiary consultant for anyone having issues with a production, given his experience since 1962.
- Joanne Martin commented that the new season brochure looks very modern but the programme design feels dated; can programmes look more like those in the professional theatre. **Action:** Becky agreed to review and to work with Joanne on this
- Jay asked a question on behalf of Steve Mason about whether front-of-house staff could wear more informal garb. Heather Cheetham advised that with over 100 volunteers on the list, t-shirts or polo shirts could be quite a challenge to organize. Jay asked if we could experiment for Wildman productions? Kay felt that this might be more of a challenge for older volunteers. **Action:** ETC will be looking at this.
- Dick asked if the website could have more photos of productions, and asked if the Publicity team could look at this. **Action:** Justine has this under review
- Ian W asked about plans for increasing the size of the auditorium as put forward by Walter Swan and by Graham Smith. David Park advised that this would be very expensive and had been put on the back-burner. Jay advised that most productions are running at about 80% capacity so the case was not very strong.
- Dennis Keith advised that the seats in the Wharfeside Theatre are uncomfortable. **Action:** Bruce responded that we should review potential investments after the Minack run and see if new seating or an improved bar / café area might be projects to consider. James Hill asked that any new scheme be confirmed with the members. Wander Bruijfel suggested we should have a number of targeted projects and seek funds for these specifically.
- Wander asked what we could do to attract more volunteers, including more time given by our members. **Action:** for a more structured plan

The meeting closed at 9.30pm

Minutes prepared by Niccola Swan and Sam Hill

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## Artistic Director's Report – Jay Cundell-Walker

This report covers the immediate pre- Covid period of April 2019-20, in a completely different world from today. I was going to write about some disappointments as well as huge successes but now those days seem halcyon!

The Wharfeside season saw some really excellent plays - fantastic quality with some good feedback. From January 2020 we introduced a postcard exit feedback system which started to grow in popularity with a good return by *Ladies In Lavender* which received much positivity. However we continue to have complaints about audibility in both theatres, and we must continue to address this. It was improved in *Ladies in Lavender* with feedback letters to the office remarking that all cast could finally be heard, but still two folk on feedback forms reported poor sound quality.

However there is no doubt that audience numbers were substantially reduced, down from 9333 to 7812. All plays went to a Thursday start but I had hoped that one night less would actually condense the same audience into nine nights with some savings. We made the savings but didn't retain the audiences. I have reflected constantly on this. The last play was definitely impacted upon by the onset of Coronavirus but nevertheless every play except *Humble Boy* had lower attendance than last year. Even a £10k reduction in costs left us £10k down in profit. The financial situation was saved by Minack profits, but we now know we must not rely on this, we need to become self-sufficient. Any suggestions as to why the 2018-19 season was so much more successful are welcomed.

The Wildman picture is much more rosy, with overall attendance of 96%, but unfortunately there were fewer IP events in the Wildman last year so profits were actually down overall. *Teachers* was a sell out before the run began and made over £3k which is unprecedented for an IP Wildman production. Four IP Wildman productions sold out so clearly there is a strong appetite for the productions we are choosing in there. All credit to Fringe for their work, but the November Fringe slot wasn't filled and the previous year there was one additional Fringe event which sold well and made good profit. More of these short fundraising events will be needed going forward.

We have welcomed a good number of new members this year but we must beware of losing new people before they get going. When members join we have often cast most of the upcoming year and this year the Wildman programme didn't embrace them either. This is a strong message going forwards. In February we read for a Shakespeare opportunity *Bard in the Yard* in association with Manor House, and were delighted with the response from new members and non-members. Sadly this is now on hold due to Covid restrictions.

We have also had a shortage of good directors, often because they have already committed to other groups elsewhere. Things will change going forward because of Covid re-schedules, but after that, the play reading period needs to be shorter and sharper to choose a season earlier so that we can claim our directors back before they take up opportunities elsewhere. *'As ever we are still keen to recruit more back stage and technical regulars. However we do have a few promising new members in this department..... The working party too are stretched , but despite that have helped and supported with some smaller pieces of set for*

*the Wildman as well as building sets for our eight large Wharfeside productions.'* This is copied directly from my last report. Nothing changes, we still need many more backstage volunteers, people who can learn from our extremely competent and experienced stage managers, technical crew and set builders, some of whom are easing up due to the inevitable aging process.

My report in a year's time will be written in a new world. But we must not forget as the world changes that:

1. We are constantly short of active members who want to do much more than act. We must encourage people to appreciate the joys of the other roles, make them fun to do and give them high status.
2. We do not always embrace new members (and non-members) to get them into the fold and build the future of the Playhouse. Everyone is welcome here.
3. We all need to pull together to maximise profits.
4. Everyone's opinion is valuable if it helps to bring in a wider audience. We must listen and learn.

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## **Theatre Manager Report – Justine Sowden**

*My report focuses on events, hires, community and other achievements but I do want to acknowledge our season of productions in the Wharfeside and Wildman, and the dedication of everyone involved in bringing superb entertainment to our stages and delighting our audiences. Special thanks to Jay, our Artistic Director, for all her hard work and support.*

The positive momentum created during last year's excellent success with events, hires and consistently strong and well attended productions in the Wildman has ensured another good year. We have delivered an entertaining arts programme for all ages within a welcoming atmosphere of which we should be very proud. The Playhouse has been thriving. Our profile has increased as have our Wildman audiences, and we are now firmly considered as a venue for dynamic programmes of high-quality events across theatre, film, music, dance, comedy, poetry, presentations, magicians, and festivals.

Our achievements are due to the remarkable teamwork across all areas of the Playhouse. Without the commitment and sheer determination of our members, volunteers, trustees and staff none of this would happen. Thank you to every single person who has contributed in some way this year. It is a privilege to work alongside such talent.

### **Events and Hires**

In the last twelve months we have continued to increase the number of visiting events and new hires resulting in a positive impact on income growth. A notable achievement in a year when our income from the Ilkley Literature Festival was significantly reduced, there was no performance from Alan Titchmarsh and several March 2020 hires and sold out events were cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Some highlights from the year include: Soul Train, 309s Swing, David Harper – Unexpected Tales, Ilkley Arts Trail, John Denver, The Art of Simon, Dolly Parton, a Poetry and the Novel course, History of Art course, Jive dancing classes, U3A Victorian Day, Rob Dylan, Stagefright Comedy Club to name a few.

As well as our regular hires such as Ilkley Film Society, U3A Voyagers, Vintage Fair and Skipton Building Society, we have also hired our spaces to Virtual College, Bradford Council, NHS Airedale, Waypoint and local charity groups such as Outside the Box and Macmillan Cancer Support.

We attracted several new hires: Ilkley Coutances Twinning, Ilkley Arts Trail, SS Indian Dance Academy, U3A Environment, Little Cherries movement classes for under 8s; and we welcomed three brand new, and popular, courses: Jive Dance classes, a Poetry and the Novel course and a History of Art course; all succeeded in attracting current members as well as new faces to our theatre.

The Ilkley Literature Festival returned to our building for 16 days but with a reduced number of events which impacted on our revenue in terms of hire, bar, café and tech. The Festival café was a success again, thanks to Chloe Walker.

In February of this year I met with members of The National Theatre who were hoping to use our spaces during the summer for rehearsals of their forthcoming production of Wuthering Heights. Sadly, the plans were put on hold due to the pandemic, but a relationship is now established, and we hope to make this happen one day.

### **Community**

We forged new collaborations with the Manor House via poetry recitations and storytelling projects; and we joined a newly formed Culture Group comprised of several local arts organisations who meet monthly. We remain part of the Ilkley Business Forum and Ilkley BID.

We continued to develop our relationship with local charity Outside the Box providing office-based work experience for their members, as well as spaces for their drama and music students to enjoy workshops in both the Wharfeside and Wildman.

We have worked with local learning support and dementia groups, ensuring that our programme of events included a well-attended relaxed performance of The Wind in the Willows. We have held NHS Airedale Diabetes Awareness days, and Wellbeing Support days, facilitated by Waypoint, for those working in the volunteer sector. Relationships with local schools have continued with Ilkley Grammar regularly advertising our productions via their newsletters, websites and social media. A year 10 student from Ilkley Grammar completed a successful backstage work placement in July 2019.

A variety of social events were held for the benefit of members, including a popular Murder Mystery evening. The President's Party was a celebration of our wonderful volunteers and their commitment and support. We hosted training workshops for actors, along with fire evacuation training for our volunteers and members. Both members and the public attended

Ilkley Players Club Christmas Coffee Morning, with its annual performances from our Greenroom students and Christmas stalls.

We held an Open Evening to showcase a variety of volunteering roles as part of our publicity drive to attract more volunteers. Members of the public enjoyed tours of our fantastic spaces where they watched Greenroom rehearsals in action, our Working Party building sets, the sewing room and wardrobe departments in full swing, our techies on hand with lighting demonstrations and much more. Our teams of volunteers created a welcoming atmosphere and the evening attracted a steady flow of people with approximately 15 signing up to become volunteers.

A volunteer handbook was completed and issued to all heads of departments to share with their teams; front of house manuals and check lists were updated and reissued.

### **Publicity**

We made further improvements to our website and continued to see an increase in online bookings and membership renewals. We have introduced audience feedback forms for productions and events in both the Wharfeside and the Wildman.

Our social media presence on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram continued to grow. We have maintained a good press profile with a weekly report, previews and reviews in the local newspaper, and radio interviews. We are regularly featured on Ilkley Chat and we are registered with the Volunteering Ilkley website where we advertise our volunteer positions. Several plays and events were featured for the first time in the Sparkling Christmas Bradford brochure (120,000 delivered direct to homes and businesses) and Bradford Visitor Guide (20,000 distributed nationwide) – both were free advertising for the Playhouse.

Our members receive a 'What's On' email fortnightly, and we constantly receive positive feedback about our season brochures (4,000 copies widely distributed twice a year) which has been instrumental in attracting new audiences and hires through our door. Damien O'Keeffe continues to keep all our members entertained throughout the year with the wonderfully edited newsletter.

The office provides daily support for the publicity of all our plays, social and external events and prepares all posters and flyers for distribution. The season brochures, bookmarks, play programmes, posters and flyers are all created by the office with support from Moorprint. Thank you to our team of regular volunteers who help on stuffing days and who distribute our marketing materials.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge our fantastic committed team of part-time employees. You all work incredibly hard to ensure that the Playhouse runs smoothly in terms of office admin, box office, membership, publicity, maintaining and cleaning the building throughout the year, and ensuring that our volunteers are always well supported. It is a pleasure to work with each of you.

## **ETC Chair Report – Geraldine Woodhouse**

First of all thank you to all of you who have attended tonight. What a loyal and committed membership we have!

In these strange and strained times, it is all too easy to keep things on hold and just keep waiting ....but that can mean no steps forward and no progress at all.

I would also like to thank all the members of the ETC, who have attended many Zoom meetings, embraced changes and then more changes, but always with a caring and committed focus on the future of the Playhouse and the safeguarding of our audiences, our members and our wider community.

Jay, our Artistic Director, has been a whirlwind of forward thinking, endlessly reconfiguring our seasons, guiding Reading Committee (another hard-working group of members), communicating with directors and looking to the future. Among other initiatives, her 8x8x8 playwriting competition looks set to be an exciting triumph and has generated a lot of national and even international interest. Watch out for this! Something new and positive to look forward to!

Thanks also to Becky Carter who was instrumental in setting up our audience survey and guiding her Publicity Committee.

To Jonty Hawkes who has been proactive in not only selling off bar stock and books but in keeping a real, human and personal link to the Playhouse which has been both profitable and sociable...in a distanced way, of course!

To Janet Park, one of the most hard working Playhouse members, who has also set up the Playhouse recipe book, so watch this space.

More thanks to Janet, Julie Domaille and Richard Speight who have all been considering backstage issues, house and technical issues and general ways forward.

And last but not least to Sam Hill who is a totally brilliant Secretary and has a wealth of insightful, practical and considered advice and experience to help develop our planning and decision-making.

The ETC has met regularly over the past year and discussed many issues, pre-Covid, including the possible change to our Playhouse 'uniform', ideas about how to review and develop roles on the ETC itself and how to appeal to a wider audience and attract younger members. Post-Covid we have been even busier in some ways, aiming to preserve the Playhouse, its members, its staff and its future.

Other hard working and invaluable members who have been central to our success include Steve Mason who continues to take charge of our Fringe, an increasingly valuable, popular and exciting aspect of the Playhouse.

I would also like to thank Mark Simister and Joanne Martin and their Casting Committee, who have worked tirelessly to cast plays and keep actors informed.

Andrew Leggott for steering and guiding the Bard in the Yard monologues so successfully performed over two days during the Bank holiday weekend.

Lisa Debney who with Andrew has worked hard to keep Greenroom members busy and engaged and I know there will be a lot of excitement and energy in the Playhouse when Greenroom returns, live!

Another thank you is owed to Rosie Bond who has kept the wardrobe ladies connected and been an invaluable help when Justine and others have been furloughed.

Thankfully, Damien O'Keefe has been in charge of our newsletter and long may that continue.

In terms of our future planning, we are passionate in our collective will to help the Playhouse through these hard times and provide exciting, challenging and varied plays and other opportunities for our members and audiences.

I would also like to thank the Trustees for their hard work on behalf of us all. They have supported Justine and our other paid staff over furlough, investigated and applied for grants and financial support and given a lot of their time to protecting and supporting the Playhouse.

Finally a personal and huge thank you to Niccola Swan who has been a power house member of the Trustees and one of the most loyal and committed members of the Playhouse in every single aspect: Walter would have been deeply impressed and very proud! And also to Justine, our totally exceptional Theatre Manager, who really is at the heart and soul of the Playhouse. We are privileged to have you.

To conclude, we value your input and ideas so please do get in touch, volunteer, comment and even criticise ....we will always consider your comments and we'll do our best to keep making the best of our Playhouse.

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### **Publicity Committee Report – Becky Carter**

Further to Justine's comprehensive report much as it relates to publicity, there is little to add.

The processes had continued normally up to the last production before lockdown commenced. We have developed an excellent relationship with Ilkley Gazette and have a frequent and significant presence in it – often at least a whole page.

We have trialled using new media platforms – Instagram and increasingly Twitter. These both need further investigation and work in order to really maximise their potential and we were grateful for Wander Bruijfel's attendance at one of our meetings to discuss their usage. This will be something we pursue in the lead up to reopening and of course once we are fully up and running once more.

The brochure distribution had been successful and both the Autumn and Spring brochures were beautifully designed, very stylish and comprehensive in the information that they offered. Members had done an excellent job in making sure that local businesses, libraries, schools, theatres, cafes and so on were kept well supplied with them. We have investigated various contra-deals with other arts venues and are stocking their information offerings in exchange for stocking ours.

Earlier in the year the publicity committee did have a discussion about the format of the programmes but having recently made some changes, the decision was made to maintain the design for the time being. This will be reviewed again in due course.

During lockdown the output of the publicity committee has been limited – with little to report on. It was great recently to be able to have some presence in relation to Bard in the Yard. We will look forward to playing a significant part in the reopening and future success of the Playhouse.

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### **Finance Report – Bruce Piper**

The Playhouse made a profit of £920 in the year which included the contribution from Minack of £26,700. This compared with a loss last year of £14,236 which had no Minack benefit. The deterioration in the Ilkley-only numbers is primarily due to a fall of 17% in audience numbers and the knock-on effects through ancillary activities. The contribution from events and room hire was static year on year, managing to consolidate the excellent progress from prior years despite falling audience numbers elsewhere. There was minimal direct impact on the year's results from Covid 19.

There was a cash inflow of £6,436 in the year being the net result of a trading cash flow inflow of £16,389, offset by capital expenditure of £4,306 and a £5,647 increase in working capital. Cash reserves at the year-end were £116,470.

The aim stated in last year's report was to achieve cash breakeven excluding any Minack contributions within two years - which was effectively achieved in 2018/19. However, falling audience numbers have impacted the finances significantly this year and we are once again reliant upon contributions from Minack to maintain cash flows.

The theatre was closed on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2020 due to the impact of Covid 19. All forms of possible financial assistance (government grants, staff furlough, voluntary donations) have been pursued but the impact on the Playhouse remains highly significant. We applied for the first round of Arts Council Covid related grants but were unsuccessful; we have just applied under their second scheme and are expecting to be informed in October of our status. We have financially modelled various options for reopening the Playhouse under the current social distancing rules but the results are challenging. The key issue, not surprisingly, is audience numbers and we are conducting surveys to try and establish the appetite for a return. More details will be discussed at the AGM.

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### **Secretary's report – Niccola Swan**

At the first meeting after the 2019 AGM, David Park was again elected chair of trustees.

The top ten risks for the Playhouse's future were considered and mitigation considered; unfortunately, a pandemic was not included amongst them. The two-page strategy document agreed by the trustees in 2018 was reviewed but more work is required on this. It has been noted that we need to do more work on diversity.

No decision has been taken to change our governance structure and it is considered to be working reasonably well at the moment with an active Executive Theatre Committee meeting regularly and planning to review its own structure. These strategic areas of work have had to be paused whilst the immediate challenges of the pandemic have been considered.

All committees are working well, even though more members would be welcome. We have had to manage with gaps in a couple of roles specified within our constitution and we hope that these will be filled at the 2020 AGM.

A new volunteer code of conduct has been concluded and the grievance and disciplinary policies have been reviewed. A new customer complaints policy, and work on a new environmental policy and action plan has been commenced. The trustees have reviewed our charitable commitments and activities to confirm this status is still appropriate.

Membership numbers total 466 as at the beginning of September 2020, of which 168 are life members and 57 are Greenroom members. Our peak in recent years seems to have been over 600 and so we have lost quite a few, and the biggest source of these is ordinary member non-renewals and under 25s who may well have moved away.

#### **Report back on actions from minutes of 2019 AGM:**

1. Publicity Committee: Distribution of posters and brochures

Response: This is always under review and more volunteers would be welcome. Brochures are increasingly requested rather than posters.

2. Publicity Committee: Updating of programme design

Response: Minor changes have been made but it has been decided to leave the design as it is for the moment.

3. Executive Theatre Committee: More informal clothing for volunteers

Response: This has been debated by ETC but deferred for the moment.

4. Office team: More photos on website

Response: A gallery page has been added to our website where photographs of productions from September 2019 can be found, a maximum of 20 per production. We have added Intimate Exchanges, Wind in the Willows and Teechers. We plan to add Blue Stockings. Caroline Mutton has taken responsibility for uploading the images and will continue this work once back off furlough.

5. Treasurer: Expenditure to improve comfort of seats in the Wharfeside Theatre to be reviewed after the Blue Stockings Minack visit

Response: All expenditure is on hold in the current environment



6. Office team: A more structured approach to volunteer recruitment

Response: Several new initiatives have helped to increase the number of backstage and front of house volunteers. A successful Open Evening was held as part of our volunteer recruitment drive; we now advertise on Volunteer Ilkley website, in our season brochures and on our website. A clear and efficient admin system is in place: office staff ensure that all new volunteers are introduced to the appropriate head of department who then arranges a meeting with the volunteer, provides a tour of our building and agrees a training start date. Jay sends a welcome note to all new volunteers. Our recently completed volunteer handbook is given to all new volunteers

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**Technical and House Report – Richard Speight**

We have carried out quite a bit of work such as the new escape ladder from the Wharfeside cab and fitted correct cable supports as advised by the 2019 Fire Risk assessment. This work was undertaken by myself and David Wallbank in our voluntary capacities.

Since we closed to the public in March we have not carried out any repairs or maintenance of any equipment and I have overseen the switch off of all non-important equipment such as heating, refrigeration and IT kit that was not required for security and safety .

I have done a few fire alarm tests sufficient to keep us covered and safe. During closure, I have called in several times to check for leaks and so on. We have had some issues with leaks from water heaters in the new cellar which will need sorting once we decide to open.

The asbestos removal was meant to have happened but was rescheduled due to some issues with plant location and water supplies and has now been postponed due to Covid. My suggestion is that we leave the rooms sealed and leave this work until we get more revenue coming; if we leave it alone, we will be ok.

I am concerned about the delays in essential licence-required works which should have been undertaken some time ago as part of the annual electrical inspections and general PAT testing which we have a duty of care to carry out. We need to get this work carried out before we start using the building to make sure we are both compliant with legislation and safe.

There will be repairs and works required once we start testing emergency lighting as this has not been run-tested since lockdown began. Normally this would be done during my normal paid work setting up shows but the problem is they need batteries discharged and recharged to prolong the life of the batteries and fittings as part of preventative maintenance.

## **Greenroom Annual Report – Andrew Leggott**

**Membership** The average attendance at the Junior Greenroom (ages 8-11), was 15-20, and at the Senior Greenroom (ages 12-18), 25 - 30. The classes meet every week to correspond with school terms, usually a total of 39 weeks per annum. From September 2017, the fees were set at £45 per term (£40 for additional siblings). They will be increased from September 2020 to £50 /£45.

**Tutors** This was the tenth year the writer (Andrew Leggott) had led the Greenrooms, and the third year for Lisa Debney. Other tutors guested from time to time, including Jay Cundell Walker and Damien O’Keeffe. Robbie Kay conducted two highly appreciated weeks of fight training for the Senior Class. Various members of the Senior Class assisted in the running of the Junior Class from time to time

**Activities** We try to balance learning with enjoyment, to ensure that the youngsters keep coming back for more. Exercises and topics might include, inter alia: script and poetry interpretation and presentation, the use of props, trust and status exercises, intractable arguments, seven levels of tension, seven ages of man (body language), thought tracking, cliff-hangers, angels and demons, conscience alley, theatrical speed-dating, mime, mask work, clowning – the list is endless!

**Annual Production – Senior Class** December 2019’s “The Wind in the Willows” accommodated all 20+ Senior Greenroom members who auditioned, in addition to a number of adults. Students continued to fill younger parts in the main programme on an ad hoc basis. The adult/youth production of “Treasure Island” scheduled for December 2020 has been postponed until December 2021 due to coronavirus. To compensate for the loss, a Senior Greenroom production of “Children’s Excursion” is planned for March 2021, in the Wildman Studio, directed by Andrew and Lisa.

**Annual Production – Junior Class** The January 2020 production was “The Snow Queen”, directed by Andrew Leggott and Lisa Debney. As usual, this was a sell-out. In view of the need for youngsters in the April 2021 production of “Goodnight Mr Tom”, no Junior production is scheduled for 2021, although a special Showcase, similar to the Coffee Morning, will be mounted nearer the summer.

**Adult Greenroom** These classes ran from September to December 2019 despite only being attended by between three and five members. They will not run in Autumn 2020 due to lack of interest, and coronavirus. These “Introduction to Drama” sessions are ideal for both “new starters” and “wanting to gain more experience” types. Talk to Andrew Leggott if you know anyone who might be interested for the future.

**Christmas Coffee Morning Performances** All the classes gave short performances at this event in 2019, as is now traditional. Again these were well received by an enthusiastic audience, and it is hoped that the 2020 event will go ahead.

**Coronavirus and virtual ZOOM classes** Classes were curtailed before Easter, and the Summer Term was lost. Andrew and Lisa ran free ZOOM classes (for the Seniors only) for the seven weeks leading up to the summer holidays. Whilst these are obviously not ideal, they were appreciated by the average of 13 regular attendees. As actual classes at the Playhouse cannot recommence until after the Autumn half-term, on 31<sup>st</sup> October, the tutors will continue the free ZOOM classes from 5<sup>th</sup> September for seven weeks, inviting former members of both the Junior and Senior Greenrooms to attend.

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### **Ilkley Playhouse Wardrobe Report – Rosie Bond**

We are very grateful to all our helpers, who have been involved in hire , maintaining and costuming plays this past financial year. We continued as usual up to and including “Ladies in Lavender” and we closed our doors to the public in March due to COVID-19.

Unfortunately, it is not certain when we will be able to reopen costume hire at the theatre with the current hygiene and social distancing regulations and if that will be later in the autumn or not until 2021. Plays are hoping to resume next January. Details regarding re-opening dates will be posted on our web-site, [www.ilkeleyplayhouse.co.uk](http://www.ilkeleyplayhouse.co.uk)

For future reference, our hire stock can be viewed on Facebook and Instagram or, when we re-open, we can take enquiries by phone and email. Contact: Sacha Denney-Rodwell on 07842 846968, [www.facebook.com/ilkeleycostumes](http://www.facebook.com/ilkeleycostumes) or [ilkeleycostumes@hotmail.com](mailto:ilkeleycostumes@hotmail.com), also on Instagram:@ilkeleycostumes.

The Playhouse was host to another of Jill Coulson’s Vintage Fairs in October 2019 which was a very successful event including the coffee bar. Unfortunately, the April 2020 and October 2020 fairs have had to be cancelled, but we are hoping the Vintage fair planned for a Saturday in December 2020 may still be able to go ahead.

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### **Little Theatre Guild Report – Rosie Bond**

The Little Theatre Guild grew out of a common idea that independently controlled amateur theatres might benefit from regular meetings to discuss problems, experiences and standards. It now comprises 113 member theatres throughout the United Kingdom. The LTG’s web-site can be found at [www.littletheatreguild.org](http://www.littletheatreguild.org) and they issue a quarterly newsletter and an annual yearbook listing all member theatres and their productions.

Throughout the pandemic lockdown of the past few months, we have been relying on theatre update information sent out nationally via the LTG Committee and re-laid to us from the Society of London Theatres(SOLT) and from the DCMS( Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport). The LTG have been providing proactive support and arguing the case for amateur theatre in the emergence from lockdown.

Last autumn, Nantwich Players Theatre hosted the **Northern Regional LTG Conference, “The Art of Theatre Excellence**, 25<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> October, which I attended on behalf of Ilkley. Nantwich Players are based at their theatre in the centre of Nantwich, Cheshire and it is another of the smallest theatres in the LTG with only 85 seats, a former Quaker meeting house. With a small stage with limited depth

and wing space, proscenium arch; an additional attached building holds the dressing room space. A bar/coffee bar area and entrance, rehearsal room, set building workshop and some storage rooms, including costume store, complete the facilities, from which they stage 7 plays in a season, each for 8 performances with additional Fringe productions. There were **two seminars** offered: on **Festivals Adjudication** and **‘From Page to Stage’ – the design process for stage and costume**; both were excellent.

#### **“Adjudicators.....what do they know!”**

Robert Meadows from GoDA spoke on adjudicating competitive festivals, based on his experience on working on over 50 festivals across the UK and beyond. He has worked professionally as a writer and director of community theatre plays in the North west region.

#### **“From page to stage – my basic process as a designer”**

Jess Curtis (nominated for the UK Design Award in 2018) trained at the Motley Theatre Design Course (now at Drury Lane) with Margaret ‘Percy’ Harris and is a set and costume designer for Theatre, Opera and Ballet. Her session was the approach to designing a recent new production in Leicester from base text using models, sketches and drawings.

The **Sunday keynote speech** was given by **Professor Ray Johnson MBE**, a long service member of Equity, with a very wide experience of acting, directing and producing plays on radio, television, film and in the West End and at major provincial theatres. He is currently the Emeritus Professor of Film Heritage and Documentary at Staffordshire University. **Two plays** were performed for us, on Friday **‘Swallow’ (Stef Smith)** by their Studio (Fringe) team and on Saturday, **‘Jeeves & Wooster in Perfect Nonsense’ (Goodale Brothers)** by the Main stage team, both were staged in their auditorium.

**The LTG NATIONAL CONFERENCE and AGM 2020** was due to be held at **Questors Theatre, Ealing, London** from 17<sup>th</sup> to 19<sup>th</sup> April 2020, but eventually sadly had to be cancelled due to COVID-19. It is being held virtually on 5<sup>th</sup> September. It has also been decided not to hold Regional Conferences this autumn, possibly these will be held also on a virtual basis only. The next conference will be the **NATIONAL CONFERENCE** to be held in **Southport** in **May 2021**.

I am your LTG – Ilkley Playhouse Rep, so you are welcome to contact me or check the noticeboards in the theatre for details of future LTG events. - Rosie Bond

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