

**MINUTES OF THE 72<sup>nd</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BOURNEMOUTH AND BOSCOMBE LIGHT OPERA COMPANY HELD ON MONDAY 7 OCTOBER 2024 AT ST PAUL'S CHURCH, LANDFORD WAY, THROOP, BOURNEMOUTH BH8 0NY**

The Chairman, Darren Ellery, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

- 1 Apologies for absence were received from:  
Paula Gerken, Taylor Lewendon, Lauren Smith, Amy Alner, Lucy Alner, David Bate, Jenny Bate, Harriet Thomson, Louise Gundry, Dale Gregory, Becca Shaw, Bob Boyce, Hector Hernandez, Pippa Myres, Trevor Willetts, Peter Gutteridge, Jenny Byrnes, Judi Knight, Jason Knight, Chloe Hughes, Ian Metcalfe, John Rimmel, Jodie Saunders, Sallie Evans, Cherri Parsons, Lea Martin, Gabby Parsons, Matt Traher, Matthew Bott, Lauren Hardy, Jessica Dawson-King, Jasmin-Rose Marks, Jeremy Payne. Lilly Uzzell, Alastair Snell, Rhiannon Lawton-Read, Phillip Fry
- 2 **Minutes of the 71<sup>st</sup> AGM held on** Annual General Meeting held on Monday 30 October 2023 - acceptance **proposed** by Jo Uzzell, **seconded** by Laura-Jayne Hargrave Fletcher, and agreed by the meeting.
- 3 **Matters arising from the Minutes** – Item 5 Review of Subscriptions should read ‘... should rise to £120 pa (£10 pm) from October 2024 ...’
- 4 **Chairman's Report**  
‘Without a doubt we have had another successful year. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street was outstanding and everyone should be very proud of what we achieved. Whilst it was not a financial success, we had anticipated this would be the case due to the show having less commercial value than other recent titles, but due to the profit made on Joseph we were able to absorb this loss and we are hoping that the commerciality of both Charlie and Annie will help us to recoup these funds. We are now in a world where selecting shows that can ensure we put every member on the stage is nigh on impossible and it's because of this that we are looking at making the most out of the Bitesize group and encouraging non-performing members to still be heavily involved with the productions. Some shows will appeal to some members and not to others.

We are looking to spread the large workload that some do, to more people off the committee which overall will ensure more involvement and a better use of skillsets. After curtain was down on the show the work for some of us didn't stop as we moved full speed into planning and negotiating a full sort out and move into the new hall. My sincere thanks to those who gave up time and sweat to help and we did manage the move as a cost-free exercise, particular thanks to Jonathan and S-J Busk for borrowing a van, driving and donating the petrol. New members' auditions were also a great success and we welcomed 9 new members.

***My personal thanks go to the following people but the list is not exhaustive .....***

**Rachel Forsdike** -- for her continued support working tirelessly behind the scenes on publicity, programme adverts and The Prize Draw which continues to be a great success for us and Macmillan Caring Locally. Rachel balances her busy work and home life to ensure that deadlines are always met and as Vice Chair she has been a consistent support to me and she will be sorely missed from the committee as she retires this year. Rachel has kindly agreed to continue supporting with the programme advertisers off committee to build on and grow the relationships she has made. She will also assist and support Jenny Corbin who will officially take over the running and organisation of the Prize Draw.

**Matt Stockam** -- for his general work on committee and support in decision making processes. Matt also retires from the committee this year as he embarks on his own personal learning journey and I would like to thank him for the last three years.

**Sarah Stevens** – Thanks to Sarah for her support in the background as she continues to be a valuable member of the committee and with our new venue being closer to Sarah's home, we are hoping to see more of her back in the rehearsal room supporting us where she can.

**Jenny Corbin** – for her general work on the committee, particularly whilst focussed on being a new mum and her work on charity liaison and support with Bitesize. Jenny will continue to support in these areas alongside taking on the Prize Draw.

**Andy Blyth** – for his sheer dedication in looking after the website, company emails and correspondence. Andy balances this alongside his job and always manages to get things done. I also thank Andy for his continued support as membership secretary and his work as ASM on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street.

**Carole Gadsby** – for her continued work as Hon Secretary, for organizing civic night and front of house show week, managing the FOBBS and her work on the coffee mornings and social events, including allowing us to use her beautiful home for events such as the garden party. Thanks also go to Roy for supporting us.

**Becky Bagnall** – for her hard work on the committee alongside playing Peggy in 42<sup>nd</sup> Street. Becky has supported in getting Bitesize to grow and become another part of BBLOC and we are looking forward to this gaining pace as Becky continues this work, helped by Jonathan Busk.

**Chris Smith** – for his work as company Treasurer and in particular the work he puts into predicted sales and budgets to ensure that we remain financially stable. Payments are always made in a timely manner and Chris always communicates the current financial position well and is prepared for all eventualities. A realistic voice on financial risk. I also thank Chris for his work as ASM on 42<sup>nd</sup> Street.

**Sarah Boyce** – for fantastic work on the committee in the new role of Communications Manager. For her work with the influencers and local media, for running of the Green Room show week, and for all her work on the upcoming 70<sup>th</sup> Ball. Sarah is always there to support and very much appreciated.

**Stevie Smith** – for her absolute dedication to the company and relentless support to me as Chairman. Stevie proofreads all correspondence that goes out, including the programme, minutes all our meetings and writes and sends these in a timely manner, prepares the AGM papers, makes and sources all the props, managing this with army precision, is always at rehearsal to open and close with me and is a voice of reason.

**Janine Long** – for continued dedication as Wardrobe Manager - 42<sup>nd</sup> Street looked stunning! Thanks also to all her team that made it work so smoothly.

**Lizzie Newson** – for ordering and organising of the show T-shirts, alongside fantastic support to Janine show week.

**Emma Wogan** – again we wouldn't be where we are without Emma and her dedication to the company – thank you for your work on the programme layout, design and marketing, liaising with photographers and printers to get the centre insert ready and having no sleep before opening night! Thanks also to Emma's sister **Theresa** for her work on the design.

**Jo Uzzell** – for continuing to manage rehearsal schedules with the production team, booking pianists, ensuring that we have a tea team in place for rehearsals, looking after holidays and absence and supporting off the committee

**Dawn Knight** – for continuing her fantastic work as ticket secretary and for her work backstage on the props team. Dawn is indispensable and a true unsung hero,

**Sophie Adnett** – for her role as Marketing Manager – producing quality work of a professional standard and managing all our social media.

**Duncan Hook** – for being a valuable asset to the company. Duncan's attention to detail is one of the core reasons that we can produce such high-standard and quality shows. We are blessed to have him in the company.

**Brenda Baker** – for her help organizing two very successful coffee mornings and dedication to the company

**Daniel Aubin-Clarke** – for supporting with social events and making these a great success over the last 12 months – please talk to Dan if you have any ideas for new social activities.

**Phil Lawton-Read** – for his support with headshot photography and storing our pit cover at his home.

**Heather Davis** – for her support with new members' auditions and for running FitSteps classes.

**Helen and Ian** – for continuing to put the company first and deliver the quality for which we are renowned - both of you go above the call of duty and this is truly appreciated by us all.

**Jennie Penney** – for always being there in all capacities to support the company and allowing us to store our costumes at her home.

**Clair Pannell** – for her support show week with the wigs and giving up her time to ensure that the show looked fantastic.

**Bob Boyce** – for his loyalty and support to the company, in particular the running of the Green Room show week

**Ed Brennan** – for his unfaltering support as Assistant to the Director in 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, contributing to the success of the show and highlighting what being a great member means.

**Amanda Alner** – for her support with catering at events.

**Simon Bagnall** – for his continued support with all things at the Pavilion.

**Jonathan and S-J Busk** – S-J for running a craft night at Christmas last year, Jonathan for his support organising Bitesize events and general support whenever it is needed.

**Sally-Anne and Simon** -- for their continued support as props assistants

**Natalie and Richard** – for their dedication and hard work as rehearsal pianists. We would like to thank Natalie as she moves on from us to concentrate on new projects and welcome Alex into the company as our second pianist – please say Hi when you meet him.

**Front of House Team** - for all their hard work show week

**Tea Team** -- for that welcome cup of tea in rehearsals. Jo will be forming a new team ASAP so please reach out if you can support this.

## **Deaths**

This year we said a sad farewell to Chrissie Brannan who sadly passed away after a long period of ill health, Chrissie was a stalwart of the company and loyal and faithful supporter as well as a good friend to many of us and she will be missed. George wanted me to express his thanks for our support during this difficult time and for those that sang at her service.

## **Births**

This year we have welcomed 3 new babies into the family, most recently baby Zara to Matt and Charlotte Dean-Traher, Baby Elliot to Jenny Corbin and Baby Emi Bear to Sean and Lauren Hardy.

## Future Plans

We now move at pace into a world of pure imagination! The production team will be fronted by **Helen, Ian and Heather**, with **Duncan** continuing his role as Production Manager,

**Emma** will be managing our children, supported by **Rhiannon Lawton-Read** and **Jo** as safeguarding officer.

**Janine** and **Stevie** remain as Wardrobe and Props Managers

CATCF will have very structured cast numbers and you are urged to come to the presentation night to see what this looks like in detail. We will also be looking for some off-stage singers for this show meaning that more people will be able to be involved.

## New Rehearsal structure

Rehearsals will take a slightly different format and the production team have agreed to ensure that the schedule is followed as planned. This new venue allows us more areas to break out and the coffee room will be the place for you to be when you are not actually on the floor or not needed, which we hope will create a more social atmosphere and prevent the need to ask people to stop talking. Rehearsals will start at 19.15 to ensure we are set to make the most of the time. The hall will be open from 19.00 for those who can come earlier and help set up. We will be introducing a new app which all cast will have on their personal phones or tablets. This will be the actual score from our version of the show and will break down parts for you to be able to practise at home to help us facilitate a different way of working in the rehearsal room, reduce the amount of pianists we need to hire in and give cast members more control of their personal learning of the show. We would like to ask people to keep their bags in the side corridor and sound room to keep the rehearsal floor clear.

## New Venue expectations

We will be sharing the venue with several other groups. On a Wednesday the Brownies will be in the side room until 20.00, so we need to be mindful of this and on a Wednesday, the Food Bank have a distribution service from 21.00 in the other side. We must always use the front door and any smoking or vaping must take place out of the car park and on the road. We need to be mindful of our neighbours when leaving and do this quietly as we are in a residential area. When leaving the venue at night the caretaker will come along to lock up and set the alarm - what this means is that we must leave promptly. The coffee and tea will always be on a rolling basis as we want to encourage people who are not in the shows to come down and be social, meet friends etc in this area.

We need to continue to look for ways to make savings and raise funds. Our rental on the hall is £600 pcm along with paying a pianist and our insurance. Our subs from membership do not 100% cover these costs therefore the extra activities that we do are vital to our comfortable survival. Weekly raffles and tea sales dropped during the last show and historically these have been a helpful source of income - any ideas for how to make this more engaging would be welcomed.

Alongside this we do need to talk about our publicity events. We are aware that all members have different work/life balance and not everyone has as much time to spare as others but I implore you to think not about what you can't do but what you CAN do. There still seems to be a mindset that if you are not in a particular show then you do not need to support it. As a committee we are at a loss to understand why this should be. This was the first year we couldn't do certain events due to not having enough people – which is a great shame and will no doubt have had an impact on sales. We don't want to come across as negative or pushy each week as we do understand it is a hobby, but at the same time ALL members need to play a part to ensure we can continue delivering the scale and quality that we do in a professional theatre.

I need to ask the question - why do you think during the last show it was harder to get people to commit to publicity events?

- *Points raised from subsequent discussion:*
  - *If not on FB group, people don't hear what's going on*
  - *Events need to be publicised earlier*
  - *Events get lost on FB*
  - *If Andy is notified, they can be put on the Website*
  - *A weekly message from Andy?*
  - *Charlie will be an opportunity for members not in the show to help*

We are also desperate to ensure that we keep as many costs down as possible. This year we will see a further increase in the rental on the theatre which is now at circa £21K and we can do this by using the manpower that we have. As an example - one technician from the Pav to support with the get-out is £54 per hour - if we had 3 of these for 3 hours that completely wipes out 4 members' annual subscriptions and that is simply to move the set from the stage to the trucks etc. We must have more volunteers for this - husbands, wives etc - but to stop costs escalating, we need to do what we can as we would rather be spending the money on effects for the show.

Overall, we are in a good position but we cannot afford to make a loss on our next two shows as we do not have the reserves to cover this, which would mean we would be unable to pay the bills and we would go bust.

## 5 Treasurer's Report and Receipt of Accounts for Year Ended 31 August 2024

Stevie presented the report on behalf of Sarah and Chris and there were no questions.

It was another two-show year starting with Joseph and ending with 42<sup>nd</sup> Street. At the start of the year, we had £18,952.29 in the bank. This did include net income of £9,410 in advance of Joseph. Joseph was a phenomenal success both theatrically and financially. It made a net profit of £29,301. 42<sup>nd</sup> Street, whilst no less of a fantastic show, was a hard sell, selling only 3,782 tickets. This resulted in a net loss of £21,075.

Other income and expenditure during the year saw a net outflow of £1,743. This included subscriptions, rent, expired rights and sundries. Included for the first time was income from a very successful first year of Bitesize, generating £807 of income. There has already been £4,504 of expenditure towards the production of Charlie and the Chocolate Factory.

Following all this activity during the year, the bank balance has been quite erratic, peaking with a nice healthy balance of £38,532 after Joseph and retuning to a significantly lower £13,115.56 at the end of the year. Looking forward to 2025.: In the financial reporting period, it is a one show year. Charlie and the Chocolate Factory is set to be our most expensive production yet, more than £130,000. Ticket sales will need to be near Joseph levels of 6,000+ just to cover the expenditure. That said it should be a very popular production and with a cast of around 40 including 10 children, which should really help sell those tickets. The year will also incur advanced expenditure and commitment for the October production of Annie. Chris and Sarah will continue to monitor the account very closely to ensure that we remain in a position to pay our bills.

Finally. Macmillan Caring Locally remains our nominated charity and we have raised a further £1,596.91 during the year.

**Proposed** by Jenny Corbin and **seconded** by Jonathan Busk that the accounts be accepted.

- 6 **Review of Subscriptions** – Set at £120 pa (£10 pm) from October 2024 as agreed at the last AGM.
- 7 **Donations to Charity** – Agreed that we continue with Macmillan Caring Locally as our chosen charity. We are now one of their Golden Partners and benefit from their publicity on our behalf. We have raised a further £1,596.91 during the year.
- 8 **Proposed alteration to Rule 3** – Darren explained the reasoning behind this proposed change to increase the entry age for new members from 16 to 18 years. We have had a recent influx of 16-year-olds which could change the dynamic of what an adult group is. Whilst wishing to be inclusive, events such as parties where alcohol is involved, were presenting a safeguarding problem as far as the 16-year-olds were concerned. Current 16-year-olds would of course remain as members

The revised rule would now read:

*The Company will consist of Active and Associate members, aged 18+ and may also include as Life Members, persons who have served the Company for 20 years or more, and as Honorary Life Members, such other persons who the Committee consider have rendered special services to the Company.*

**Proposed** by Sandie Amat and **seconded** by Kim Geliot that Rule 3 be changed accordingly.

- 9 **Election of the Committee** – with RACHEL FORSDIKE retiring under Rule 19 and MATT STOCKHAM also wishing to retire we were left with 2 vacancies. The following nominations for the 2 vacancies were received and no election was required:

SARAH-JANE BUSK – Nominated by Becky Bagnall, Seconded by Fiona Fox

FIONA FOX - Nominated by Sarah-Jane Busk, Seconded by Becky Bagnall

The new committee, which will take up their responsibilities after this meeting, will be:

DARREN ELLERY, CAROLE GADSBY, SARAH STEVENS, CHRIS SMITH, SARAH BOYCE, BECKY BAGNALL, JENNY CORBIN, SARAH-JANE BUSK and FIONA FOX with ANDY BLYTH and STEVIE SMITH remaining as co-opted members

**Proposed** by Emma Wogan and **seconded** by Amanda Alner

## 10 Any other business

### 1 Social Report from Dan Aubin-Clarke

- i. Started the year back in March with an aerial and circus skills party which went amazingly
- ii. The following month saw a Sunday Funday for Ed's birthday at the Slug and Lettuce
- iii. Our usual socials for show week with a fun after-show party - this is something we do at the end of every show week and if anyone has any ideas or offers of houses for the after show for next year, please let us know
- iv. Carole and Roy hosted the BBLOC summer garden party - always a great day out with a great turn out
- v. Shortly after we held a pool party at Carole and Roy's, which was a real splash Carole and Roy have agreed to let this be an annual event
- vi. And most recently we had Darren's birthday celebrations.
- vii. Alongside all the above social events we've supported fellow companies by attending The Little Mermaid, The Wedding Singer, Summer Spectacular and Ghost.
- viii. Dan is planning a theatre trip to see Christmas Spectacular for Friday 20 December for which numbers are currently low so if anyone fancies it, please let him know.
- ix. Going forward, in the next few months we have BBLOC's 70th Anniversary celebrations at the Marsham Court Hotel on Saturday 9 November as well as a Christmas get-together at St Paul's on the 16 December.
- x. Dan has lots of exciting things planned for next year so would love all your support by attending as many as possible, and if anyone has any suggestions or ideas, he's always open to hearing them.

### 2 Report from Becky on Bitesize

- i. Bitesize had a great start last year.
- ii. 1 Dec - Northbourne Lodge for Masons with a Xmas themed set list
- iii. 12 Dec - Parkstone Lodge was the second of the Masonic Xmas bookings
- iv. A smaller selection of the Bitesize pot of people was required for these, dictated by the space and the client's requirements.
- v. 30 Jan - FOBBLOC coffee morning at the Miramar Hotel
- vi. 29 Feb proved to be our most difficult gig to date and took place at Da Vinci's restaurant, entertaining between courses and interacting with diners. We had to send out singers with strengths for this particular gig. They were all amazing and coped brilliantly with pressures and rehearsals so extra thanks for the hard work put into this one.
- vii. 19 April - Poole & East Dorset Art Society dinner- another event involving entertainment between courses but more stand and sing.
- viii. We were then deep into 42<sup>nd</sup> Street so Bitesize had a short break. We have regrouped with our first meeting held at the end of September to gauge interest for our Xmas bookings and going forward into 2025.
- ix. We have been asked back to perform for Masons Northbourne for Xmas and Da Vinci's restaurant in February. We also have BBLOC Xmas coffee morning and our annual Xmas evening and had interest to provide entertainment at Parley Place Care home. We are also in talks with John Lewis Branksome to utilise space to entertain shoppers and promote our forthcoming shows.
- x. Whilst we try to be as inclusive as we can and use as many performing members as we can, some gigs are limited due to space and the client's needs. We must always remember we are representing the best of our wonderful company too So will only send out content of high quality. We welcome any nonperforming members who wish to help with technical aspects at gigs if they have that skill set.
- xi. To date Bitesize has raised vital funds for BBLOC of around £800 which is fantastic.  
Well done and thank you to all involved and special thanks to Jenny Corbin for coordinating set lists, tracks and organising; Jen Byrne and Rachel Boucher for help with all things musical and Jonathan Busk for liaising with clients and coordinating everything with precision!

### 3 Presentation of Life Service Awards

- i. Life Service Award to Sally Wheeler for 20 years' continuous service



4 **Points from Darren:**

- i. We will be looking to form some sub-committees over the next few weeks and these will be vital to sharing the load and getting more ideas and better outcomes. Starting with a publicity team headed up by a member of the new committee, so please come forward and support.
- ii. Also looking for someone with the relevant skill set to take on the poster design to save having to pay for this and lighten the amount of work Emma must do. Needs to be in place for Annie.
- iii. Charlie tickets are on sale and the Early Bird rate will run to 31 January. Please get orders to Dawn asap as we have held back the front rows and these will be put back on sale at this point.
- iv. Thanks to Sarah Boyce for her work on organising the Ball on 5 November. More numbers are needed to allow us to hire a DJ.
- v. Please support FitSteps on the next 2 Mondays.
- vi. Please do not go to the Production Team to discuss show-related matters or absence. All such matters should go direct to the Committee – or in the case of absence, direct to Jo Uzzell.
- vii. Please sign up as many people as you can – and at least one person each - to Friends of BBLOC. 40 new friends would equate to £1000 pa which would pay for our insurance.

5 Jane – our NODA rep - drew attention to the recent **article in the NODA magazine re our 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary.**

6 **Jo will include her number** on the rehearsal schedule so please put this in your phone.

7 Emma suggested **that performance fees be varied** to make it fairer to people with a smaller part in shows. The new committee would discuss this.

***The meeting finished at 8.54 pm with wine and cheese kindly arranged by Carole and Amanda***