

BRISTOL OLD VIC THEATRE CLUB
Minutes of 72nd Annual General Meeting
Held in the Theatre. Bristol Old Vic, King Street, Bristol
Saturday 3 November 2018 at 10.30 am.

Over 50 members were present (sufficient for a quorum)

Fran Havard (Chair) welcomed everyone to the 72nd AGM of the Theatre Club.

Guy Keith-Miller (GKM) was thanked for his slide show of events undertaken by BOVTC during 2018. It will be posted on our website: www.bristololdvictheatreclub.org.uk

1. **Apologies for absence** were received from Ruth Watson. Robina Quinton, Neville Boundy, Margot Sampson. Chris Sampson. Vanessa Stevenson, Anne Hazell. Phil Hazell, Jon Thorne. David Chalmers, Bob Havard, Kay Gerrett and Rom Edwards.
2. **Minutes of 71st** AGM held on 11 November 2017 and published with the Newsletter were proposed as a correct record by Gary Gostelow and seconded by Gillian Seal.
The minutes were agreed by all present.

3. **Committee Report and questions or comments arising from it**

The following committee members delivered elements of the report:

Fran Havard (FH) summarised progress on the areas highlighted at the last AGM. and some of the committee's priorities for the next year. She thanked both committee members and many club members for their active involvement in running the club. It was observed that there are vacancies for committee members. Pam Turner (PT) spoke on the membership. noting the need for a focus on recruitment in 2019: Guy Keith-Miller (GKM) spoke of the increased use of emails as well as the monthly newsletter to communicate with members. Andrea Harrington (AH) summarised the range of In Conversations and In House Days; Gary Hall (GH) referred to the successful lunches and trips held this year; Alex Turasiewicz (AT) reported on links with theatrical venues including BOVs engagement work; John Bedford (JB) commented on the programme and good relationships with Bristol Old Vic Theatre School.

FH reported that following a period of illness Jo McDonald had sadly died in December 2017.

A summary of the report would be published in the December newsletter.

Questions

- Ernie Peck asked for the current number of club members. PT replied that these had reduced from 314 to 274. Of these 62 had left and there had been 22 new members.

4. **Treasurer's Report:**

- **Adoption of the Accounts 2017-2018:** the accounts had been circulated.
Gary Hall explained that the club had a deficit of £486. The accumulated fund is £9000:00. Of this £6000 is a reserve and £3000 in the current account.
Adoption of the Accounts was proposed by Peter Leppard and seconded by Ralph Togneri and was unanimously agreed.

Questions:

- Ernie Peck requested that the statement of Accounts be circulated prior to the AGM. GH apologised and said that in 2019 this would be done
- Ray Price asked how £500 donated to BOV had been spent. GH will identify to confirm that it had been spent on chairs and seats. A donation had not been made to the Young Company as BOVTC was awaiting an invoice from them.
- **Annual Subscription from 1st April 2019:** GH on behalf of the committee stated that subscriptions were to remain at the level set in 2017 i.e. £20 per person and £34 for joint membership.
- **Appointment of Auditor 2018-2019:** David Chalmers was thanked for auditing the accounts for 2017-2018 and recommended to continue as auditor.

The appointment was proposed by Julia Foxwell and seconded by Simon Inch and agreed unanimously

5.Nominations for Election to the Committee

Elaine Togneri (ET) had been appointed during the year. JB proposed the nomination and GKM seconded it. ET was unanimously elected at the meeting.

There are a further 5 places available on the committee.

6.Relationship with BOV:

FH thanked club members for their attendance today. She gave an overview of the clubs 72 year old history and the current relationship between BOV and BOVTC. FH described the ongoing discussions that had been held between the two organisations over the preceding 12 months concerning a potential merger of BOVTC with BOV's 'Friends' scheme. FH reiterated that a vote could not be taken today as a final proposal had yet to be made.

A copy of the report that FH presented is to be circulated

Club members were invited to forward their thoughts on today's discussion, by email or post, to the committee

Questions and Comments:

- Peter Leppard (PL) asked if BOVTS were involved with the discussions and was informed that Paul Rummer (School Principal) was aware of them. PL asked if a merger took place between BOV and BOVTC would support of BOVTS be allowed. JB responded that there was no objection to support for BOVTS but unsure if funding would be available to them. The relationship with BOVTS is a key item for BOVTC in all discussions with BOV.
- Tony Statham asked what advantage there was in being part of the 'Friends' scheme. FH explained the levels of Friends' that existed currently, and the benefits of the basic (36 pa) membership. Full information is available in the theatre and on its website.
- Ernie Peck (EP) asked how many members there were in the 'Friends'. GH advised that the impression is that the number is low: and that the existence of two organisations creates confusion. EP observed that it is noticeable that BOVTC literature is no longer in the Theatre. It was confirmed that this is at BOV's request.
- Peter Leppard asked what would happen to BOVTCs £9000 if there was a merger. He was advised that the clubs constitution states that a vote would be required by club members on its dispersion.
- FH observed that currently BOVTC programme of activities will continue. However there will be a substantial increase in cost due to new charging arrangements by BOV,
- Sally Andrews commented that BOVTC held occasional In Conversations at other venues in the city. She asked how a merger would affect this. FH replied that the outcome is unknown. However BOV give information on theatre at other venues from time to time.
- Ray Price (RP) observed that a merger would result in BOV using the energy and knowledge of BOVTC as voluntary labour. Most club members would be lost if subsumed by BOV. RPs experience was that a change in managers results in a change of focus and remit. FH responded that the club was valued by BOV staff. She was conscious that the written word was necessary to ensure clarity and continuity of undertakings, particularly at a time of change of senior personnel.
- Sally Andrews questioned whether a committee and chair would be elected if there was a merger. JB replied that while it had been discussed, he was unclear if BOV understood the implications of such a structure. BOVTC had proposed a working party to work up potential arrangements that could make for a successful merger, but this had not been accepted by BOV.
- Ernie Peck queried the interface between BOVTC and 'Friends. FH replied that any merger referred to the lower level of 'Friends' and that the two parties would become one body.

- Julia Foxwell asked if there was a time limit on discussions and what the cost implications were for collaboration. FH replied that the first communication was received in January 2018 and no deadline had been set - the committee is determined to achieve the best possible option before putting any decision to the club. Meanwhile, BOVTC will be charged as an independent club, for use of the theatre as a venue, from January 2019.
- Margaret Cartledge asked if changing venue to BOVTS would result in costs. FH explained that BOV is a central venue that most members find much easier to access. BOVTS has limited space and smaller numbers of members attend events held there.
- Val Pearce observed that for those living in the central area of Bristol, BOVTS is difficult to access as it involves taking two buses.
- Barry Moore asked what BOVTS's views were as there used to be a BOVTS friends scheme. FH replied that they wished us well in the current discussions.
- John Lancaster asked the club members present, if the merger went ahead, how many would become Friends'. FH replied that no meaningful vote could be taken today as the terms of any new arrangement had not been agreed.
- Gary Gostelow suggested that if merger went ahead, any monies should be ring fenced for BOVTS. FH replied that this was a matter for the membership to decide.
- Jane Newton asked why the Friends' don't join us. FH replied that BOV need the Friends scheme as a fund raising element.
- Christine (surname not noted) asked what benefit there is in BOVTC joining Friends'. FH acknowledged the benefits are unknown
- Lyn Conway joined the club recently due to her interest in theatre. She stated that she will not walk away if there is a merger.
- John Luckes asked if the ultimate decision is for Friends' to be run by BOV staff. JB commented that they would like us to organise events.
- Maggie Davies asked if there was a professional fund raiser or marketing person within BOV. JB replied that there are both and that BOV is considering asking ex-BOVTC members to assist BOV's Development team achieve its goals.

7. Consideration of any Resolutions received:

None received

8. Any other business:

A reminder was given that

21 November - BOVTS are holding an open rehearsal of *Mrs Beeton Says* - 5 tickets still available

8 December - In Conversation at Bristol Old Vic with two of the leads of *A Christmas Carol* – Saikat Ahmed and Felix Hayes.

The meeting ended at 12 noon