

AUCHTERMUCHTY THEATRE GROUP

A.G.M.

Wednesday 31st March 2010, 7:30pm, Community Centre, Auchtermuchty

With Susan Drummond as Chairperson she welcomed everyone and opened the meeting at 7:35pm

PRESENT

Susan Drummond, Steven Robertson, Jean Keddie, David Arnott, Evelyn Myles, Ian Keddie, Valerie McKinnon, Liz Rowley, Peter Thomson, Sandra Whitelaw, Christine Harding, Raymond Harding, Roz Wall, Marj Keddie, Joan Potts

APOLOGIES

Cassie Lockhart, Lorna Lockhart, Dave Mole, Drew McCanney, Barbara McCanney, Allan Normand

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Ian Keddie asked whether the current situation regarding membership subscriptions and the role of publicity officer had been discussed, as noted in the minutes. The chair deferred discussion on both subjects as they were items already marked for inclusion under 'other business'.

The minutes were read and approved as a true and accurate account of the previous meeting:

Proposed by Peter Thomson

Seconded by Ian Keddie

REPORT ON GROUP ACTIVITIES

We began 2009 with our production of 'Men Should Weep' by Ena Lamont Stewart, a play of quiet desperation and a mothers enduring strength. The play was not only a success in terms of the audience reaction but also netted the group £600 profit, which goes to show the popularity of and perhaps need of the group during these wearisome economic times.

Our tangible assets continue to grow with the delivery of some lighting equipment. The ex-lighting director of Cupar AOS kindly gifted us several lanterns with part of their required peripherals. Although hiring certain lamps and additional kit is still necessary, this not only cuts our hiring cost but builds on our own property.

A key change to our operating practices in regard to advertising has proved to be a great success, as you will hear in the treasurer report. We have implemented a more aggressive approach to advertising by including more newspaper articles and radio announcements in concert with website & email notifications. This has resulted in an increase in ticket sales for all productions and should be maintained in the future.

The website is running well, with an average of 500 people a month visiting our site which now has pictures and information from almost every show. New additions to the website will be information on other amateur group's productions and a database of newsletters. The information about other groups is only

displayed when it doesn't conflict with any of our events and is done so as only a third of other drama groups have a website. Once our email drop is set-up newsletters will be sent prior to each event and will be used to send important information – they will not be used to send you a twitter like report every 5 minutes of the happenings of the theatre group. On which note, due to an upgrade in our website we now have 500 @auchtermuchtytheatregroup.co.uk email addresses. I know it is a bit of a mouth full but as members you are more than welcome to have one. They can be accessed either on line or via mail client such as Thunderbird, Outlook or Live Mail.

The pantomime reached another milestone in 2009 celebrating its 30th birthday, which is quite an feat for such a small community, only achievable due to our dedicated members and supportive patrons. Cinderella had all the elements to make it “the best panto yet” as described by a delighted audience member. The number of people from all different backgrounds, all bringing their own skill to whichever area they help in is truly remarkable and the thanks, not only from the committee but from the groups as a whole, go out to those who have given their time and effort to continue this Auchtermuchty tradition of festival entertainment. Which brings us to the ceilidh we held to celebrate our 30th which attracted members of years and years and years gone by as well as our current members, all together sharing the common experience of Muchty panto, proving we are still thriving at thirty. There is a book of memories that we urge you to read and add your personal thoughts, so that future members and perhaps even you can look back at in years to come.

February brings us back to the Scottish Community Drama Association's festival in Buckhaven. Our entry this year was 'The Dancing Fusilier' by Mike Tibetts, a trip down the road of an old man's memories set in and around World War two. This is a fantastic play, well produced, well written and by all accounts well performed too. From the festival we brought back the Fife District Quaich for third place and the Buckhaven Trophy for best moment of theatre. Due to the number of teams in the festival, we did not qualify for the divisional finals, however the word on the streets of Buckhaven was that we were robbed. Evelyn did what she always does – produced a play of a marvellous standard and rest of the cast did Auchtermuchty proud. We then put this play on with 'Blooming' Disgrace' and both plays were received well in Muchty. One of the more notable achievements for both plays from a committee perspective, was the number of new faces on stage. Both plays included actors who had never acted before or at least not acted for us, and that is what makes our little group that little special. Everyone is given a chance, everyone is welcome and everyone gives it their all.

The committee would like to thank you all for whatever part you played either on stage, behind stage, on lights, on sound, selling raffle tickets, lending costumes, buying tickets, putting up with family members being away, putting up with family members being home and asking for help with their lines, the list could go on and on. Your support is appreciated and without it hundreds of people would not enjoy the entertainment that you provide.

Additional Comments

The chair added her thanks to the committee for their hard work and commitment throughout the year managing the group. Susan also gave thanks to Liz Rowley and Evelyn Myles for their efforts in directing the pantomime and plays respectively.

TREASURERS REPORT

The financial report was distributed in the format required by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator. The report was independently examined by James Jack of VONEF.

This year proved to be very profitable for the group illustrated by the £1500 increase from the close of the last financial year. Although reduced production expenses were a factor the main reason is due to an increase in ticket sales. We also chose one charity to donate to this year which was the Namadzi Church in Malawi, this allows us to retain some of our profits for future development within the group.

Liz Rowley asked if we were allowed to give donations as we are a registered charity. Jean explained we generate our own revenue and we can do what we like with our money, we would not be able to if we were to receive grants from external sources.

Raymond Harding asked the reasons behind us being a registered charity. It was explained that we were registered as a charity when the group was formed and it does give us reduced rates for certain purchases, tax (if our revenue met the threshold) and would help us in the future if we needed to apply for grants etc. Raymond then asked if we could explore the possibility of getting a grant from some source, possibly the council, to paint the hall for example. Ian Keddie informed the group Fife Council have money for arts projects and are seeking applications at the moment. It was mentioned that, as stated before, we would not be able to donate if we accepted external grants. The chair then deferred this topic to 'other business'.

Susan thanked Jean for compiling the accounts and for her work throughout the year.

PANTOMIME

Cinderella was a great success and the dedication from Liz Rowley, her team and everyone involved was commended. Liz let it be known she really enjoyed directing the pantomime but has decided not to direct the next one.

No decision has been made regarding a new director or pantomime however, the process is in motion and we have several options to choose from. The final decision will be made very soon and the group will be informed.

It was noted that the advertising campaign for the pantomime worked very well this year which included information on the website and emails with notification in the press and on the wireless – this should be continued in 2010. It seems the best form of advertising is word-of-mouth, this should be encouraged especially with our large pantomime cast and crew.

DRAMA GROUP

An excellent production of 'The Dancing Fusilier' was performed at Buckhaven for the Scottish Community Drama Association Festival. Everyone who saw the play agreed it was a first class performance from all involved when it was performed in Auchtermuchty along with 'Bloomin' Disgrace' which was also well received.

Evelyn is currently reading plays for our next production including some murder mysteries.

ELECTION OF OFFICE BEARERS and COMMITTEE

Susan stood down as chairperson for the election. Steven thanked Susan for her work as chairperson. Raymond Harding took the chair.

Position	Nominated	Proposed by/Seconded by
Chairperson	Susan Drummond	Jean Keddie
		Evelyn Myles
Vice-Chairperson	Peter Thomson	Marj Keddie
		Christine Harding
Secretary	Steven Robertson	Peter Thomson
		Roz Wall
Treasurer	Jean Keddie	Ian Keddie
		Evelyn Myles

Raymond stood down and Susan Drummond took the chair.

Cassie Lockhart gave notice she would not be re-joining the committee.

The following were re-elected to the committee en-bloc:

Member	Proposed by/Seconded
Valerie McKinnon	Roz Wall
Marj Keddie	
Lorna Lockhart	Liz Rowley
Annette Robertson	
New Member	
Roz Wall	Valerie McKinnon
	Christine Harding

Marj suggested that Steffan Hoggan be asked if he would consider joining the committee due to Cassie leaving - it being advantageous having a committee member representing the youth element of our group. As we could not speak for Steffan in his absence, it was decided to approach him with the offer and if accepted he would be co-opted on by the new committee.

A.O.C.B.

Subscriptions

The subscription was first introduced to help cover the expense of the insurance premium and it has been linked to that ever since. During the 2009 AGM it was decided that the money paid to the group, by members, be a subscription for membership which covers; affiliation with SCDA and NODA, covers you for insurance and for being part of the group, allowing you to participate in productions and events held by the group. Roz Wall was concerned some parents would only pay the fee if they thought it was for insurance but it was argued the cost was for membership which included insurance which is outlined in the welcome letter given to new members. When the membership fee is due was also discussed as people come along for some time then do not return. It was put to the group that subs were due on the night of the reading or in the case of production crew their first rehearsal, and no-one could take part until paid. Constitutionally subs are due from the AGM and members should be encouraged to pay them at that time. It was also agreed that the fee was paid regardless of the members' role in the group. These new rules were agreed upon by the meeting and they would be advertised prior to a reading so people were aware of the situation and their commitment. Our current fee of £3 is a fraction of what other amateur theatre groups

charge their members and it was suggested that we increase this amount for those members 18 years old and over to £5 and retain the fee for under 18's at £3, this was agreed. It was also agreed that the committee would have the discretion to waive the fee for those who were, for example, only there for one or two nights painting. These people would not be considered members but would be covered by our insurance if anything should happen.

Publicity Officer

As Ian Keddie mentioned, the role of publicity officer was not filled however, this year the committee as a whole took on this task and the results are reflected in the ticket sales for the productions. The role of the publicity officer would be to manage the advertising by delegating to other committee members and being the single point of contact for publicity. A suitable person will be appointed to the position for 2010.

Victoria Hall

A discussion took place regarding the current 'state' of the Victoria Hall. The committee will contact the council and ask if we can do some decorating, such as painting the entrance hall or even the main hall – we would be willing to meet the council part way with costs and labour. It was mentioned the Festival Society received a 50% reduction in rates last year but Jean said that it was unlikely either group would be allowed this again. When the committee contacts the council they will enquire about a reduced rate or perhaps an annual rate as we are the main users of the premises.

Group Funds

The committee will need to look at our future developments, such as the curtains, the stage extension, lighting equipment, make-up supplies and permanent sound and video connection from the balcony to back stage. The feasibility of these will be looked at by the committee.

Loft/Attic Space for Costumes

Steven drew attention to the incredible amount of clothing that we have accumulated over the years and asked if any of it could be removed. Valerie and Susan have agreed to put a team together to address this problem.

Additional Activities

Valerie suggested that a play reading group be formed to source, read and discuss plays which would broaden the plays that could be done and give feedback before going to formal readings.

It was suggested that we advertise internally and go to see more plays as a group, both professional and amateur productions, not only for the social aspect but it also gives us the opportunity to support other groups who may reciprocate.

As the ceilidh was such an enjoyable evening, another social event could be planned for theatre group members but not in a theatre setting, such as a barbeque or similar.

All these ideas will be considered by the new committee and the members will be informed of any decisions.

Working with Children

Liz Rowley mention about the responsible person when working with children and vulnerable adults. Steven explained the group has in place child protection and vulnerable adults protection policies and several key people have been cleared to supervise children with Disclosure Scotland. Valerie suggested the wardrobe mistress also have a disclosure, Steven has the forms and will distributed them to anyone the committee decides should have one.

Workshops

Liz asked about drama workshops, Steven informed the group SCDA are now running workshops and information will be distributed to members when relevant workshops arise. As we are affiliated with SCDA these workshops are inexpensive and are usually run in Edinburgh and could greatly benefit the group as they cover many aspects of theatre. Members will be informed via the newsletter and email drops.

This being all the relevant business the chair thanked all for attending and closed the meeting at 8:57pm.