

Playhouse Company EGM Wednesday 10/11/2021, 19:30, Green Room Bar

Minutes taken by: Harriet Tarpy (HT)

Present: Lloyd Spencer (LS), Jamie Kitson, Harriet Tarpy, Ben Pugsley, Jasmine James, Anna Lambert, Caroline Young, Toby Shergold, Mark Izard, Peter Young, Denise Medicot, Steven Rayworth, Mary Peterson, Liz Maisey, Tony Maisey (non-member), John Morgan, Lyn Morgan, Carol Merdith, Charlotte Wilson, Phil Ward, Richard Williams, Elliot Westhoff, Tanya Lebedeva, Simon Byrne, Cliff Hancox, Dan Gilbert, Anne Chandler (non-member)

Apologies:

The meeting was opened at 19:48 by LS, who welcomed everyone

LS started off by talking about what an uncertain time this has been and thanking everyone for coming

Reason for calling the meeting, getting an agreement in principle to merge PHC with a new subsidiary of Playhouse Theatre, Playhouse Arts

Playhouse Arts will be running all in-house productions – film nights, music nights, etc

The reason we have proposed this, responding to previous AGMs – our membership and skill base is dwindling, more and more time and effort is being asked from a smaller group of people

We have been talking with the theatre about what can be done to alleviate that pressure

We are constantly on the back foot

In addition to alleviating the pressure, there are many benefits: Playhouse Arts will have a full time paid technician who will be able to help us; the accounting and membership side of things can be dealt with centrally, automatic reminders, card for Playhouse Arts membership; publicity and advertising through PT channels; creates an identity; cohesiveness of planning

Mary asked about theatre membership – PA and PT will be covered by the same singular payment. Anyone who has paid subs tonight will be covered for 12 months. Life members will by default become members of PA, they may need to fill out a separate form to be added to the database (although we have taken forms this evening, which will be passed on to PA)

Who will be running this? There will be a board/panel instated by the board of trustees, a couple of people from the current committee will join that, it is open to join if people want to be involved at that level

Caroline Young – finances, will people come in from outside if we have this set up? Professional shows will appear under the banner of PA. PT (CIO) is still responsible for contracts to hire the theatre. Technically therefore, nothing changes to the system. PA has applied for CIO status. Any money that PHC brings over is all ringfenced for productions only, nothing to do with the building.

Caroline Young – how much money have external companies brought into the building, and where's it going to come from?

Caroline Young – what will happen about wardrobe? Assets of the company will become part of Cheltenham Playhouse, we will have access to them but they will be owned by Cheltenham Playhouse

LS went through current accounts; we're not hurting for money, it's more the operational side of things

Mary – what will change in terms of getting involved? Things won't be voted on, the board will make decisions

Anna – who are they? PA will be us! We used to be directly tied to the theatre, then split. This is somewhat going back to those roots

Is there still the opportunity for life membership? No, but there will possibly be at future points different 'types' of membership

We hoping to take a flexible approach, things can change

Elliot – PHC has a healthy reserve of cash, where do ticket sales go? There are costs to hiring the theatre, room hire, etc. Anything that we make goes back into the PA account. There is even the possibility of the theatre absorbing any loss on ticket sales

Simon – we're here to put on productions, how is it that we can make the best of two charitable bodies to maximise our impact, put on productions that are significantly better than we have put on before. Let's do something!

It feels like a step in the right direction

Steven – the art itself. If one has a play in mind, does every play put forward need auditions? Under PA, not every production would require auditions. We would try to keep a proportion auditioned

Caroline Young – are we here to entertain people or include people? Fear of creating a 'closed shop'. Everybody needs to be able to get opportunities. Ambitions long term to put on 6 shows a year. CY would like it to say somewhere that there must be opportunities to audition and volunteer. Toby S, ambition is to be for the community, maybe have a minimum number that are auditioned per year

Tanya – have we thought about studio theatre and home-written pieces. Once Project Playhouse starts, as PA we will be able to perform at other venues, and there will be more opportunities to do smaller productions

Elliot – what happens to this group, would there be a new constitution? Won't necessarily have a new constitution, there will be no AGMs, we will have a mission statement and ToR etc. Would be good to have a memorandum in the meantime

LS proposed a vote, yes no or abstain

Unanimous Yes, the motion is passed

Thanks to all the membership

Decisions made

PTC will merge with House Full to become Playhouse Arts, beginning once accounts have been set up and membership of the Playhouse Arts board has been decided.

Meeting closed at 20:33