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**MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of EWHURST PLAYERS**

Held at the Village Hall Wednesday 5th April 2023 at 7.30pm

**REGISTRATION**

Amanda Jones, Mike Humphries, Tricia Cooper, Iain Cooper, Meg Bray, Kelvin Jones, Barry Harrison Fudge, Mike Fanya, Marilyn Fanya, George Yates, Wendy Davies, Belinda Graham –Rack, Nikki Bradley, Nicki Payne, Bruce Dean, Victoria Helstrip, Juliet Garland , Felix Cuthbert, Tor House, Fee Fraser, Simon Fraser, Nicola Montague, Brian Davey, Clare Trowbridge, Liz Foley, Bob Foley, Trasna Palmer, Hilary Roberts, Penny Morris.

**APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Beryl Proffitt, Georgina Rushworth, Carole Coleman, Stephanie Kay, Sara Hurley, Eleanor Hurley, Lucy Burr, Johnny Burr.

**MINUTES OF THE 2022 AGM**

These had been issued to the membership prior to the meeting.

**ACCEPTANCE OF THE MINUTES**

The Minutes were accepted .

Proposed by Bob Foley. Seconded by Mike Fanya.

**CHAIRMAN’S REPORT**

Attached and included with these Minutes.

The Chairman concluded by thanking Amanda Jones for her work over the year and presented her with a bouquet.

**TREASURER’S REPORT**

This is attached and included with these Minutes .

Barrie Harrison Fudge asked how the balance at 28th Feb 2023 compared with the balance at 31st March 2022. It was noted there was an increase of more than £2,000. The meeting agreed this was very good.

George Yates put forward that in view of the healthy financial position the ticket prices, for the Pantomime in particular, could be revised down and children’s tickets made available. It was confirmed that reduced price children’s tickets had been provided in the past.

It was agreed this would be considered by the new committee.

Mike Fanya asked whether there is a limit to the amount the Ewhurst Players can hold in its account. The Chairman confirmed there is no such limit.

Barrie Harrison Fudge asked the committee to consider what else could be offered to Members to encourage more joiners. The Chairman pointed out that Members already benefit from 6 reduced price tickets to each performance but agreed in view of the surplus funds further benefits would be considered.

**JOHN PIDGEON AWARD.**

The Chairman was delighted to tell the meeting that he had presented the award to Will Shepherd at the Everyman Cinema bar in London, as Will was not able to join the AGM, and showed the meeting a photograph of the presentation. Will had provided the Players with many ideas and his expertise in sound and communication will be sorely missed.

**ELECTION OF OFFICERS.**

CHAIRMAN. Simon Fraser was re- elected unopposed.

SECRETARY. Georgina Rushworth was elected unopposed.

TREASURER. Two nominations had been received. There was therefore a vote and Nicola Montague was elected.

**COMMITTEE.**

There were 7 candidates nominated for the Committee. There was therefore a second vote and the following candidates were elected:-

Wendy Davies, Mike Humphries, Tor House , Nikki Bradley and Nicki Payne.

**A.O.B.**

* The Chairman asked the meeting whether the membership subscription (£5 per individual/£10per Family) should be changed. It was agreed to retain it at the same price.
* The Chairman raised the issue of whether proxy voting or postal voting should be considered for the AGM. The meeting rejected this unanimously by a show of hands.
* George Yates raised the issue of an auditions book which was maintained in the past and whose purpose was to ensure some fairness in the distribution of roles. The book recorded all those who had auditioned for parts and who had been cast in each production. This allowed the casting panel for a production to ensure a fair distribution of roles where those auditioning showed similar promise. It was agreed it would be worthwhile and not too onerous to reinstate this process.
* The Chairman confirmed that proposals for the November Production had to be made to the committee by 1st May.
* Wendy Davies asked to record the Players thanks to Simon Fraser for all the work he had put into creating posters, banners and programmes to advertise our productions. This was warmly supported by the meeting.
* Bob Foley proposed a vote of thanks to the Chairman and the Committee for all their hard work over the past year, again this was warmly supported by all those present.

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The AGM was closed at 8.55pm.

Amanda Jones

Retiring Secretary

6th April 2023.



**Chairman’s Report 2023 AGM**

Ladies and gentlemen

Well, we had an unusual start to the year, for which there are two principal reasons, one which, hopefully, we will never see the likes of again, and one which, sadly, we will definitely not see the likes of again. I refer to the pandemic and her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth the second.

As you will recall from my report at last year’s AGM, the effects of the pandemic were still being felt in the winter of 2021-22, causing us to delay our January 2022 production, *Best of the West*, until early March. As a result, this left precious time for any director to cast and rehearse a fully-fledged production and put it on in the May half term.

However, Her Majesty rode to the rescue, probably side-saddle. The Players have a well-established reputation for marking significant national events with anthologies, and the committee agreed that the Platinum Jubilee should be no different. We approached Mike Fanya, master of all things anthological, and asked if he would be willing to take it on. Of course, he said yes and *Majesty, A Platinum Jubilee Celebration,* was up and running.

The Parish Council was keen that no single society in Ewhurst should dominate the Jubilee weekend, and we were allocated the Saturday slot. Logically, this meant the evening. Cue great concerns about ticket sales as that was the night of the big concert in The Mall due to be televised on the BBC. Although, I must say that having watched some of the concert later, I think that those who attended the evening performance of *Majesty* made the wiser decision. The only thing they had that which was worth watching was a CGI Paddington. However, we needn’t have worried as we had a full house for not only our evening performance, but for the matinee too.

So, a big thank you to Mike for writing and directing, to Victoria, Amanda and Meg for their assistance and to the cast and crew of the show.

The only fly in the ointment was the very disappointing turn out the following morning to help return the hall to its natural state. The email I sent out certainly ruffled a few feathers – and I’m not going to apologise for that because I believe it is the duty of the chairman to speak out when things don’t go right. Plus, I believe the end justified the means – as we shall see.

At the beginning of July, we held our Summer Garden Party in the beautiful surroundings of Old Plough Farm, courtesy of Mike and Jan Humphries. The event was attended by 36 members, a slightly disappointing number, but maybe in line with what we should expect from social events. My thanks to Amanda, Kelvin, Mike, Jan and Tor for her magnificent cake. Musical accompaniment was provided by my good self and the much missed Will who left us at the end of the summer to take up his theological training.

And so, we come to autumn and the run up to our October production, a time interrupted by the death of Her Majesty the Queen, the UK’s longest reigning monarch, and the election and resignation of the UK’s shortest reigning prime minister.

*Theft* by Eric Chappell was our play in October, directed by George Yates, assisted by Amanda Jones, with help from Victoria, Barrie and Marian. Overall, we played to 80% capacity – ideally we’d like a few more bums on seats – but the comedy was very well received. In fact, one audience member was so impressed that they decided to become a sponsor with immediate effect. The eagle-eyed amongst you will have noticed a new advertiser in in our panto programme - BrightCare.

*Theft* was followed by two social events, the first of which was our Murder Mystery Evening at the end of November. Directed by Meg, The Little Willey Murder had everything a murder mystery evening should – a rich cast of characters from an amateur dramatics group – (Meg seems to like productions that hold a mirror up to our world), a rather convoluted plot (well, I couldn’t work it out) and the eventual revelation of the murderer. With a fish and chip supper and plenty of booze to wash it down, it was a great evening and I’d like to thank Meg and the cast for an excellent show.

Our next event was the Quiz Night, held at the EYSC at the end of January. Originally scheduled for the Village Hall, disappointing ticket sales caused us to move to a smaller more intimate setting and me to send out another of my admonitory emails. I’d like to take this opportunity to say that sending such emails gives me no pleasure, but they are necessary. I really do hate to see people’s efforts wasted.

In the email, I asked for the membership for their thoughts on social events. Response came there none – causing me to wonder how many people actually read the newsletters - but one member did tell me in person that in his opinion the Players’ job is to put on plays and shows, not social events. On the plus side, the email did elicit a few more ticket sales.

Having said all that, the quiz was a great success – and I’m not saying that because I was on the winning team. Tor did a fantastic job organising, catering, writing the questions and keeping us in order when the answers were disputed. So, thank you Tor.

In February, Wendy took the helm of *Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood* by Ben Crocker, our first pantomime since 2019. For many, it was a rather un-panto-y panto. The usual sparkle and glitter and Fairy Godmothers were replaced by tree stumps, dungeons and mud. After all, glitter balls didn’t really feature in the middle ages.

We were delighted to be joined by a number of new members for the pantomime, most notably Nikki Bradley, who really was thrown in at the deep end as Robin Hood, Claire Trowbridge who brought some very impressive efficiency to the world of props, and Pippa Simpson as one of the Rabbits.

The cast were given excellent and inventive costumes by Fee, including Felix’s gothic Sheriff of Nottingham, George’s wedding dress embroidered with skulls and Rory McTavish’s kilt, brilliantly fashioned from an old car rug. For those of you who think that costumes just magically appear, you really need to wake up and hear the sewing machine. Researching and sourcing costumes on the internet, from charity shops and wardrobes across Surrey, takes a phenomenal amount of time and effort. So thank you Fee!

I must also mention Felix’s performance as the Sheriff and Fudge in his first appearance as a Dame. In the programme he said he couldn’t wait to give it heaps, and he certainly didn’t hold back – although the image of his padded arse, unintentionally minus the Union Jack underwear is now seared on my brain.

There were disappointing sales for the first weekend of the panto, but word of mouth quite rightly saved us and the last three performances were sold out. Overall, we played to 86% capacity. The reaction to the panto was universally positive, with many saying it was the not only the best panto we’ve ever done, but the best they’ve ever seen. High praise indeed, so congratulations Wendy and all the cast and crew.

Our final event of the year – which falls into the new financial year - was our Barn Dance a few weeks ago, organised by Lucy and Johnny Burr and ably supported by the committee. Lucy very kindly agreed to step in and take the reins when Johnny found himself unable to due to family and work commitments.

Unfortunately, Fee and I were unable to attend, but I’ve been told it was an excellent evening, one on which the Players made a new friend, a gentleman by name of Dilip – or Philip - Modha who decided to just turn up. In his subsequent email of thanks, he said “I came to your Barn Dance yesterday evening and wanted to say a big thank you to all of you for such a wonderful event! It was truly a pleasure to be a part of it.

“After umming and ahhing for a while, I decided to come to the dance after all, even though I felt a bit nervous as I was on my own, but I must say that I am so glad that I did, as I had such a great time! Everyone was so incredibly friendly and welcoming! I have never met such hospitable people in all my travels!”

This year we have made some investments, most notably in sound equipment, including new speakers – which we propose to hang a little closer to the stage – new mics and a new sound desk. We also have a new iPad, bought with a grant from Cranleigh Lions. I’d like to thank Mark Westbrook who has taken on the mantle of Technical Director and handled the purchase and installation of our new kit, and to Will Shepherd who kicked off the whole process over a year ago with a very sensible set of recommendations.

We’ve also invested in a new poster frame by the Village Shop, kindly erected by Chris Dews and another Chris whose surname I never caught. So thank you to them.

I don’t wish to tread on the toes of the treasurer’s report, but I must mention the fact that during this year we have donated over £2,600 to charity. We must never forget that the Ewhurst Players are an integral part of our community – in fact Will refers to the Players as the jewel in Ewhurst’s crown – and part of that role is to give back when we can.

Finally, I’d like to thank the committee for their help and support over the last year. In particular, I’d like to thank Amanda who has put in many hours on the society’s behalf in her role as secretary. Sadly, her horses have had to take a back seat – or should that be saddle - over the last year, and I know she is looking forward to giving them the attention they deserve. I expect Kelvin will get a look in too. So, thank you Kelvin for the support you have given her and the Players’ over the last year, and thank you Amanda.

As for the coming year, we can look forward to *A Chorus of Disapproval* directed by Meg at the end of May and rehearsals are well under way.

As for what comes after that, I’m afraid I can’t say, not because I’ve been sworn to secrecy, but because I simply don’t know. Submissions for the November 2023 production close on 1st May and I’m looking forward to seeing what we can come up with.

One thing I do know is that next year is 2024, the year of the Ewhurst Players’ Golden Jubilee – and I’d like everyone to have a good think about how we can mark such a momentous occasion above and beyond our usual 3 shows. I have one idea, and while I have already shared this with the current committee, I’m going to keep that under wraps for the time being.

Until then thank you – and I’d like to propose a toast to the Ewhurst Players.

Thank you



**Treasurer’s Report 2023 AGM**

As many of you are aware this has been a challenging year as we have been without an official Treasurer for the whole period. Belinda Graham-Rack stepped in to deputise in making and receiving payments so we were able to continue to operate, for which we thank her very much. I have prepared the Year End Accounts for 2023 over the last few weeks from the records and documents available to me. I have come into the process at the tail end of the financial year and this means I do not have the in depth knowledge of the finances to which the Treasurer would normally aspire. Therefore I ask you to forgive me if I am not able to answer every question that you put to me tonight. However, I am hopeful indeed anticipating that we will soon have a new Treasurer to take over the reins going forward and all will be well for the coming year .

This year’s accounts cover an 11 month period as we had an extended period for the last accounting period to encompass “Best of the West”. Nonetheless the period has been a successful one. We have achieved a charity production and two profit making productions in the past 11 months, as well as four social events for our members.

Majesty, our tribute to the late Queen on the occasion of her Platinum Jubilee raised £1,482 for charity which was divided between The Ewhurst Church of England Infants School and The Sayers Croft Trust, and it was very well received by our audiences.

Theft, our November production, made a profit of £2,338 and Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood made a very healthy profit of £3,745. You can see from the figures for each of these productions that a deduction has had to be made to reflect the fact we have not received invoices for the use of the Village Hall. Whilst we can estimate the cost, it is an irritation not to have had the invoices despite many requests for them to be sent. They have now been received.

Following these successful shows we made donations to The Cranleigh Food Bank of £434.00 and to WeCare of £723.10, being the profit made from the raffles at those performances.

In total we have donated £2,639.10 to local good causes during this accounting period.

We have attracted some new members and our membership fees received in the period totalled £530.74 and £190 worth of members fees for 2022-23 were included in the last set of accounts. The reason for the odd figure is that in two cases payment was taken on Square. This leads to other accounting problems as well as a cost to the Society and it is recommended that going forward all payments for members’ subscriptions will be made directly into the Ewhurst Players’ Account.

Our Social Events have become increasingly popular as we leave the fears of COVID behind us and get back into the swing of meeting up and enjoying each other’s company. Over the period we have made a profit of £ 325 on these events and have had a lot of fun into the bargain.

The general purchases and running costs over the period are largely self-explanatory. Our most significant purchase this year has been new sound equipment which was installed just prior to the performances of the Pantomime. This has proved to be a “sound” investment and our audiences certainly appreciated the improvement in sound quality.

The balance sheet shows net assets of just over £17,410. So all in all the society is in a sound financial position going forward into the next year.

In closing, I would like to thank Brian Davey, retired Chartered Accountant and member of the Players, who has audited the accounts in detail and at short notice. We very much appreciate his kindness and expertise.

Amanda Jones

Hon Secretary Ewhurst Players

5th April 2023

Matters for the Committee to consider:-

1. Ticket prices ;
   1. Childrens tickets for the pantomime
   2. Ticket prices for all performances
2. Additional Benefits for Members: to attract new members
3. Reinstatement of the Auditions/Castings book for use by casting panels.