

Minutes of Cowton Arts & Theatre Society Meeting held in the Beeswing at 7:30pm on Wednesday 19th February 2025.

Committee Members Present: Nick Smith (Chairman), John Shields (Secretary), Susan Shields (Treasurer), Elaine Simpson, Pat Watson, Geoff Green, Jane Green, Margaret Walton, Cristina Peacock, Tracey Cramond.

Apologies: None

Agenda Items:

1. 2025 Production - Update:

- Prompt – MW volunteered to be the prompt for both evenings;
- Curtains – it was agreed that Rebecca Morgan (RM) be approached as she normally carries this out in her role as stage manager. **ACTION** NS/JS to check with RM. **NOTE:** RM agreed if we were unable to find anyone else she would do it but preferred not to as she wanted to concentrate on her stage Mgr role. ALL Seek another volunteer;
- Cast Seating – JS explained that RM had requested that the front right row of seats be reserved for the children taking part in the production. It was stated that this would keep the children involved and place them where they could quickly be called when they were due on stage. This was agreed;
- Number of seats – it was agreed that the number be limited to 80 for both evenings as this kept space at a comfortable level for all involved;
- Price of Tickets – after discussion it was agreed that ticket prices would continue to be held as low as possible to encourage sales. Prices were agreed at £8.00 for adults and £4 for children (under 16). The Beeswing, Village Shop, JS and ES agreed to sell tickets. **ACTION:** JS to print tickets and arrange distribution;
- Bar – it was agreed that prices at the bar (to be confirmed by NS) be held at the same level as the recent Dickensian Event. Current stocks, left over from the Dickensian evening, would be checked and topped up as required. These, along with prices, would be finalised via the committee Whatsapp group. MW stated John Walton would do the bar and GG offered to help. This was gratefully accepted by the committee. **ACTION:** NS/SS to agree current stock and what level to hold for both evenings and confirm via CATS Whatsapp group. JW/GG to staff the bar both evenings;
- Raffle – after discussion it was agreed that a raffle would be run at the door. Any donations would be warmly welcomed. JG and PW offered to cover this along with the door. JG also informed the committee that Liz Bramley (LB) had offered to help with this which was gratefully accepted. **ACTION:** JG/PW/LB to arrange;
- Sweets – it was agreed that, following their success last year, bags of sweets would be offered for sale. **ACTION:** JS/SS to arrange these;
- Video – TC stated that she still had access to the video camera used to record the event last year and offered it for use again. This was welcomed by the committee;

- Lighting at rear of VH – CP stated that as there are a few scenes in this production which require access via the main hall entrance, that consideration be given to looking at the lighting situation at the rear entrance of the village hall so that the cast were safe when going round to the main entrance. NS stated there was a light there but it was not working at the last event. ES stated she would ask Geoff Simpson to provide a light for use on the two evenings. It was agreed that this issue be raised with the Village Hall Committee so that a permanent solution could be put in place. **ACTION:** JS to discuss with Jim Crabbe. ES to discuss temporary solution with Geoff Simpson.

2. **AOB**

- Projector Update - JG asked what the current situation was regarding the projector. JS informed the meeting that the application for a grant (£1200) from the National Lottery had been turned down but he and NS were looking at the application with a view to reapplying. JS stated that the potential for a bulb blowing in the run up to or during a performance remained and reiterated that, having checked, replacement bulbs cost iro £325 but were not readily available given the age of the model. **ACTION:** JS/NS to examine the recent application to the National Lottery for a grant of £1200 with a view to amending and resubmitting it.

3. **Future Events:**

- The potential for future events was discussed and it was agreed that:
 - The murder mystery script work be continued with a view to putting it on in or around September. **ACTION:** JS/NS/OR to continue to refine the script once the current performance was completed;
 - Consideration be given to putting on a themed fancy dress event for the younger members of the village. It was agreed this would be explored at a future meeting;
 - GG/JG stated that the Dickensian event be rested this year as variations to keep it fresh are limited. It was suggested that a Christmas supper buffet dance be considered as an alternative. After discussion it was agreed that a Christmas music event with suitable buffet be explored. This will be revisited once the 2025 production is over;
 - The idea of another Cowton Has Talent was discussed and it was agreed that after the poor response for volunteers to the previous attempt to put this on, it was not viable. The idea however would be kept under review.

4. **Addition to stage lighting:**

- JS explained that the agreed additional lighting control had been identified and would be purchased in the near future. Costs, with wiring, would be within the previously agreed spending limit (approx. £100). It is hoped this will be installed before the 2025 performance. **NOTE:** This unit along with associated wiring has now been purchased – price £80.99 (with discount) and will be installed as soon as practicable.

5. **AOB:**

- SS stated that she had finalised the H&S/Risk Assessment documentation for the upcoming performance. This was accepted by the committee and SS thanked for preparing this;
- SS confirmed that the paperwork for the Temporary Event Notice (TEN) for the performance had been completed and would be sent to the relevant authorities this coming week;
- ES asked if the cladding work on the VH would cause any H&S issues i.e. with scaffolding. SS stated that if this work were to go ahead, the H&S/Risk Assessment would have to be amended. JS stated he would ask the VH committee and report back via the CATS Whatsapp group. **NOTE:** This has been clarified and the work will not commence until after the 2025 performance;
- CP stated that she had approached Jim Crabbe regarding costs to CATS for the use of the VH for rehearsals. She informed the committee that JC was open to some form of reduction due to CATS block bookings and would discuss it with East Cowton Village Hall Committee. **NOTE:** It was since been agreed that CATS would receive a 10% reduction on block booking fees for this performance and CATS would arrange to discuss future events with ECVHC;
- The provision of pizza for cast members following the Saturday performance last year was discussed and it was agreed this was very warmly welcomed by cast members. It was agreed to approach Mark Craggs (MC) to see if he would be willing to do the same this year. It was also agreed that he be offered payment to, at least, cover his costs. This was agreed by the committee. **NOTE:** JS has discussed this and MC who stated he is happy to it but does not want payment as it is for the village.

6. **Next Meeting:** The next meeting to take place following the 2025 performance.

7. No other business was raised and the meeting closed at 8:20pm.