

# **Minutes of Cowton Arts & Theatre Society Annual General Meeting held in East Cowton Church Annexe at 7:00pm on Saturday 13th May 2024.**

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

The meeting was also attended by a number of community members who have been involved in CATS productions.

**Apologies:** Susan Shields (Treasurer)

## **Agenda Items:**

**CHAIRMAN'S ADDRESS** – Published as read out by the Chairman.

I want to begin by thanking the Secretary (John Shields) and the Treasurer (Susan Shields) for their hard work and support since the last Annual General Meeting. I also want to thank the committee for their input, hard work and support including the co-opted members and also Bridget Stewart who has now left the committee.

CATS have agreed that the committee, which was made up of 7 members in the past, should be increased to 12 and an amendment to the constitution will later be voted on to allow that to happen. So we will need new committee members, oh yes we will, so be afraid, be very afraid.

Since the last General meeting we have staged 3 very successful productions. The Wind in the Willows, which was well received, the Dickensian Christmas night which was so successful we are planning on doing two later this year and the recent pantomime, Snow White and the Seven Dwarves or should that be the Magnificent Seven, which has been described by a number of villagers as our most successful production so far.

I would like to thank all the actors, directors, producers and backstage helpers because without you, none of these productions could take place, never mind be successful. I would like to particularly thank Elaine Simpson and her team of costume makers because for every production, everyone expresses their surprise at how fantastic the costumes are and Snow White was no exception. We have had a number of new volunteers in all roles and their input has been most welcome.

We are currently in our strongest position for a number of years with new lighting, new sound and a working projector. We have more actors and other volunteers than we have ever had before and as a result we are planning for a busy schedule in the next 12 months and we hope to keep everyone's continued support. We are also looking at a large scale Pantomimes to ensure everyone gets a part.

From a financial point of view both the Dickensian night and Snow White made small profits despite us trying to make sure tickets are affordable for children and families in particular. Over the three shows we will have made a profit of £348.27  
Our accounts will show, when the Village Hall cash their cheque, a healthy Bank Balance of £2731.58.

LIGHTING - It was agreed that this project had been a success and John informed the meeting that it had been formally handed over to East Cowton village hall committee for the use of the community. He also informed the meeting that a recent CATS meeting had agreed, provided sufficient funds remain after completion of the sound loop, that a separate controller and wiring would be added to enable this to operate independent of the main stage lighting.

SOUND SYSTEM - John explained the installation of the new sound system was almost complete and would soon be handed over to village hall committee. The only outstanding work was the installation of ducting to hide the lighting wiring and also the installation of the hearing loop antenna and microphone. John also stated that money remained ring fenced in the budget to pay for the completion of the project. John also asked that thanks be recorded for the invaluable help of Geoff Simpson and John Yorke in progressing this work.

CATS CONSTITUTION – Nick put forward an amendment to the CATS constitution to allow more members to join the committee. Nick explained that doing this would help lighten the load by having more committee members to assist in planning and putting on events. He also explained that the new number of committee members would mean the Chairman would have a casting vote if a decision was tied in committee. This was accepted by vote by all present.

CATS COMMITTEE – In accordance with CATS constitution, the current committee stood down but was re-elected unopposed by those present. Cristina Peacock and Geoff Green, who had been co-opted to the committee, were elected as full committee members by those present along with Ollie Rose who volunteered to join. Under the amended constitution, this leaves three (3) posts vacant.

ACCOUNTS – CATS accounts for the year had been completed by Susan Shields (Treasurer) and agreed at a recent CATS meeting. These were read out at the meeting and are available (on request) for anyone who wishes to examine them. It was confirmed CATS had kept ticket prices low on the last two productions to encourage attendance following the Covid 'lay off'. As a consequence, recent events made a reduced profit meaning CATS is not in a position to acquire further equipment or make any donations this year.

PERFORMANCES - It was agreed that the performance of Snow White had been a great success and had attracted a significant number of new members both on and off stage. It was also agreed that CATS would stage further performances next year. These will (hopefully) include, 'Cowton has Talent', a cabaret show for local talent, a murder mystery performance where those attending the show will be asked to solve 'who dunnit', our Dickensian Christmas event and another pantomime performance.

Those present were asked which panto they might prefer from Ali Baba, Dick Whittington, The Pied Piper or Treasure Island. Nick also welcomed any other suggestions from those present. Treasure Island received most support so this will be taken to the next CATS committee meeting for approval before work on a script begins.

AOB - No other business was raised and the meeting closed at 7:45pm.