

Wadhurst Dramatic Club

Annual General Meeting

Minutes of the Meeting held on Wednesday, 13th February 2019
at 7.45pm in the Commemoration Hall, High Street, Wadhurst

Present: Jan Lynam	Catherine Whitehead
John Bush	Marianne Johnson
Penny Bones	Gill Gordon-Williams
Tina Reed	Tom Madden
Alison Bolland	Annamay Porter-Reed
Jonathan Bolland	Muriel Williams
Tony Bailey	Holly Sturman
James Edwards	Fi Tuck
Peter Dwyer	Lisa Hart
Nick Jeal	Russ Kirton
Amanda Dann	Colin Hand
Jane Austin	David Austin
Tim Knight	Ros Knight
Ann Bush	Jill Haskell
Jayne Baldwin	Nance Fyson
Diane Wale	Dot Smytherman
Xan Kite	Joe Trotter
Denise Beedell	Merlin Beedell

1. Apologies for Absence

None received.

2. Minutes of the last Annual General Meeting

Catherine Whitehead proposed that the minutes of the last meeting, held on 27 November 2017, be accepted as a true record. This was seconded by Amanda Dann.

The minutes were agreed without amendment.

3. Report from the Chair: Review of the Year 2017-2018

(copy attached)

Jan Lynam presented her report for 2017-8.

The year started with a 'showbiz' quiz in Greyhound Inn. It was a fun evening and well-attended. In February, rehearsals began for the May production, '**Allo 'Allo**', directed by Russ Kirton with Lisa as his stage manager. A few weeks before the opening of the show, Russ suggested having a French cafe in the forecourt of the Commemoration Hall for the local residents and visitors. It was a great idea and gave WDC the opportunity to talk to passers-by and make them aware of the forthcoming show. Staff from The Mount provided the refreshments and the students assisted by waiting on the tables. It was a very special collaboration. The show was a great success; the set was second to none as too were the period costumes. Special thanks were given to Nance and Colin for the set, and Jill, Penny and Gill for the wardrobe, and John Bush and his team for their continued support.

In the summer holidays, Beth Martin made contact regarding a joint social event with the Culture Group. A Ceilidh was organised which took place in the Commemoration Hall on 12th October. The event was reasonably well attended, but a little more support would have been welcomed.

Later in the year, a number of members were involved preparations for **Over The Top**, planned for Remembrance Day on Sunday, November 11th to pay tribute to those who lost their lives in the First World War. OTT was devised, organised and directed by Jo Daykin, and Russ acted as

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the compere. The event was a wonderful idea; it brought together a whole range of groups including the WDC. At short notice, Jamie Crawford pulled together a group to direct a **BlackAdder Goes Forth** sketch, and others performed poetry readings and sang songs from the era.

WytKidz presented an early taster of **Private Peaceful**, a wonderful poignant play, produced and directed by Amanda Dann.

Special thanks was given to all those who helped behind the scenes.

In October rehearsals started for the January 2019 musical, **Bah Humbug**, directed by Kay Sasada. (This will be reviewed in next year's report.)

All in all, it had been a busy year and Jan recognised that much of the work happened under the radar when putting on a production and coordinating all the other activities associated with the drama club. She commented that going forward it would be great for productions to become more of a collaborative effort where everyone had an equal opportunity to be properly involved so that the load was shared.

Concluding her report, Jan notified the meeting that she was now standing down as Chair. Acknowledging all the help and support she had received from Catherine Whitehead when she took over the role 15 months ago, she wished the new Chair all the very best and offered her continued support.

A special vote of thanks was given to Jan for her work as Chair. Individual members also expressed their sincere appreciation for the time, energy and enthusiasm she had given to this role.

4. Financial Report

Marianne Johnson, the Club's Treasurer, presented her financial report for the year ending 30 June 2018. Copies of the Income and Expenditure Account were tabled together with the Club's Balance Sheet as at June 2018.

Marianne reported that the Club's finances remain healthy and the following points were noted:

- The year finished with £3509 in the current account and £6576 in the reserve account. No major investments had been made.
- 'Allo 'Allo - the only performance during the year - was very successful. The total proceeds were £2223. This included the proceeds of the French Café.
- 'Allo 'Allo programme donations were rounded up by the club to £300 and this had been donated to the Samaritans. (This will not show until the next set of accounts.)
- *Can't Pay Won't Pay* programme donations were rounded up by the club to £200 and this had been donated to Parkinson's UK Charity. (Both charities were the directors' choices, the former Russ, the latter Grainne).
- The 2018 accounts had been audited and passed by Kate Metcalfe.
- From the finance point of view, Marianne suggested that WDC should aim to have at least 2 performances a year to cover costs and allow future investments, as not all performances necessarily make money,

The accounts were accepted as a true record.

5. Election of Honorary Auditor

Marianne explained that Kate Metcalfe was once again willing to act auditor for the club. However, it was noted that Kate had now retired and had not renewed her registration. The Committee had approved her re-appointment, assuming this was acceptable to members, providing WDC's legal status as a non-profit making organisation remained unchanged.

After consideration, it was agreed that Kate should continue to act as honorary auditor for the club. This was proposed by Dot Smytherman and seconded by Di Wale.

It was agreed that the club should continue the gesture of giving Kate two lifetime complimentary tickets for all shows.

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6. Election of Officers

6.1. Chair

Marianne Johnson had agreed to stand for the role of Chair. Her appointment was proposed by Nick Jeal and seconded by James Edwards.

Marianne Johnson was duly elected to the role of Chair.

6.2. Treasurer

Russ Kirton had agreed to stand for the role of Treasurer. His appointment was proposed by Amanda Dann and seconded by Pete Dwyer.

Russ Kirton was duly elected to the role of Treasurer.

6.3. Secretary

It was noted that Jill Haskell was stepping down as Secretary and Jane Austin had agreed to stand in her place. Her appointment was proposed by Jill Haskell and seconded by Russ Kirton.

Jane Austin was duly elected to the role of Secretary.

7. Election of Committee Members

The following committee members agreed to stand again:

Jan Lynam	Catherine Whitehead	James Edwards	Merlin Beedell
Jill Haskell	Penny Bones	Amanda Dann	

It was noted that Dot Smytherman would be stepping down from the main Committee but would continue to participate at sub-committee level.

Two new committee members were nominated:

Lisa Hart – Proposed by Nick Jeal and seconded by James Edwards

Fi Tuck – Proposed by Catherine Whitehead and seconded by Jan Lynam.

All nine members were duly elected to the committee.

8. Statement from the Newly Elected Chair

Marianne thanked everyone for electing her and once again expressed her thanks to Jan for all the effort, time and energy that she had given to the club over her time as Chair. Marianne went on to say:

“Following last year’s awards and nominations, WDC has raised the bar in regard to standards so let’s hope we can keep it up.

I am very pleased that we have all agreed to have more structure in the committee, I am sure with people taking on individual responsibilities and decisions taken by the full committee, that everybody will thoroughly enjoy themselves by doing what they want to do.

Having been the Treasurer, I realize from the financial point of view that we need 2, preferably 3 performances a year to generate enough income to allow us to improve our standards, invest in up-to-date equipment and to be able to put on high quality shows.

Drama is one of the few clubs or societies, where people of all ages can work together to create something really special and forge friendships across generations.

I think we need to ensure that younger people are brought in to all aspects of the drama club to ensure our future. For instance, training new directors, stage managers and all the crew, who are all so important.

It is also important that we all continue to try to recruit as many volunteers as possible so that we can call on a large pool of people.

We are also aiming to introduce systems in line with legal requirements for the safeguarding of children involved in productions. This is in line with the requirements for WytKidz.

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The whole point of this is for everybody to have fun and enjoy themselves, and be part of the most satisfying creative team that you can think of.

Our next production will be “A Bunch of Amateurs” directed by Russ. Russ is in the process of organizing a director’s assistant; a function which is very important for communication between all sub committees, treasurer and chair as well as taking some of the pressure off the Director.

Finally, I would like to say how lovely it is to have a fresh face and brain, so welcome Jane who is now our new Secretary and we all look forward to working with you.

And now I hope that Catherine is going to tell us how brilliant we all are!”

9. National Operatic and Drama Association (NODA)

Catherine Whitehead explained that NODA is a national body founded in 1899 to support and represent amateur theatre. NODA is organised into regions and districts, and our NODA representative (Anne Lawson) is invited to and attends all WDC productions and then writes a review, which is circulated to us and a précis posted on the NODA website.

Catherine was delighted to report that our May 2018 production, *‘Allo ‘Allo*, had won a NODA Drama Accolade of Excellence Award, and Russ Kirton and John Bush together with other members of the cast and crew will be attending the awards ceremony at the NODA Day of Celebration in Guildford on March 24th.

WDC was also a finalist in the running for the Basic Programme Award for *‘Allo ‘Allo*, thanks to Nick Dann’s highly professional design.

WytKidz was also a contender for a regional Youth Award for its powerful production in November 2018, *Private Peaceful*, directed by Amanda Dann.

To continue this excellent work, Catherine appealed for more volunteers to come forward for the sub-committees. If you would like to volunteer, please approach any of the committee members.

10. Social Events

The possibility of organising a *Murder Mystery* evening at the Bell in Ticehurst had been explored and Merlin Beedell asked for members’ views on whether to progress this.

Dot Smytherman suggested a *Mad Hatters Tea Party* for the summer.

Other ideas for social events/activities are always welcome. Please contact the Chair or any other officer or committee member if you have any suggestions.

11. Any Other Business

Thanks - Jill Haskell expressed her thanks to everyone who helped to return the costumes after the performance. Merlin Beedell proposed a round of appreciation to the wardrobe department for their efforts in putting together superb sets of costumes for all the productions.

Storerroom - John Bush reminded everyone that the underground storage area needed to be cleared and tidied up. There were also some DIY jobs to be done. Anyone able to offer any assistance was asked to contact John to arrange a convenient time to begin these tasks.

There was no further business and the meeting closed at 8.25pm.