



Principal: Yvonne Lee
Vice Principal: Adrian Stevenson,

THEATRE USER'S GROUP MEETING MINUTES:- Monday 1st October 2007, 7.00pm

PRESENT

Linda Howe, Pat Clark, Doreen Fearn, Tim Wood, Diane King, Christine Hunt, Steve Dootson, Pete Fines, Paul Boneham, Adrian Dobson, Gordon Kilpin, Kevin Clark.

1. Apologies:-

Julieanne Biddles

2. Minutes of last meeting.

All agreed – a true and accurate record.

3. Matters Arising.

All matters arising had been included as Agenda items for later in the meeting.

4. Provisional and regular Theatre User bookings.

This item had been included to give regular theatre user groups the opportunity to discuss theatre bookings with each other rather than individually through the office. This was welcomed by the group, although Easter and examinations being “moveable feasts” are the only things likely to affect any regular booking slots.

Attached to the minutes are the bookings which were discussed between the groups present. SD reminded the group that this form is simply an agreement between ourselves as user groups. Although it will be used by the office in the first instance as a guide to booked dates, an official booking form and deposit will still be necessary in the usual way, when the new theatre diary becomes available in the New Year.

The College still has to reserve the right to negotiate changes to any Theatre User bookings. Such changes could be necessary to accommodate exams for example.

5. Handover / Hand back Forms:- Feedback from recent Theatre bookings.

AD made some positive comments about communication between user groups and the college. SD commented on how Theatre User Groups had generally left the Theatre in good condition. PF thanked SD for his contribution, and LH thanked all groups for their cooperation and patience with the handovers and hand backs which did not take place at the weekend.

6. Technician's report / Theatre 5-Year Development Plan –

The ongoing sound project, identified last year as our first priority, was discussed. SD said that the cable trays down the auditorium sides are now just about finished. Thanks to GK for all his help with this project. SD and PF thought that the main PA speakers were past their best. SD will seek some advice and locate some suitable replacements. A sub-woofer bass system was also discussed. Again, SD will look into the possibility of installing such a system.

PF suggested that the band PA system also needs updating, and it was possible that the High School Musical production account could perhaps contribute to this project.

During the discussion, SD also reiterated that the main PA speakers had been separated from the above stage monitor speakers which allows for independent foldback from the sound desk if required.

Whilst work on the cable trays has been going on, the next project was being discussed between SD and PB. It is our intention to work towards full DMX capability for lighting control. During discussions for the first phase, ie the installation of the DMX control circuits themselves, a small problem was discovered.

The current DMX installation from the control box to the stage was found to incorporate ordinary electrical wiring rather than shielded wiring. Not only that, the cabling was in the same conduit as the mains electricity. This will almost certainly be the cause of our persistent lighting problems, ie the lights coming on dim on their own due to spurious signals. This is the problem that contractors have been out to fix on many occasions but have failed to do so.

A new DMX link, including a backstage splitter will be installed in the very near future which will not only increase flexibility, but also, hopefully, eliminate this ongoing problem. Although the cable trays are now in place, the new link will avoid having to run DMX cables from the box. Thanks to PB for spending a good deal of time on this project for us.

CH enquired about the changing room monitoring system. SD said that although we had been concentrating on sound as our first main project, this had in fact been overlooked! PF had previously installed the system some years ago, and the wiring is still in place. SD said he would look in to changing room monitoring, but in the first instance, needed to know which rooms were now being used as changing rooms.

7. Theatre User's Account:- Balance and money due.

LH talked about the budget and thanked all User Groups for their contributions over the years. It is now generally understood that the only money which goes directly back in to the Theatre for our use is the money we receive from our own user groups in the form of donations or music equipment hire charges. The upgraded sound system is such an example. LH asked for future donation or music equipment hire charge cheques to be made payable to **HLCC Theatre Users' A/C**.

The hire charge for the baby grand piano was briefly mentioned, as was the possibility of locking it. PF had requested this at the outset, but was informed it was not practical. It was felt that our own User groups were responsible enough only to use the piano if they had specifically booked it (and paid for it!).

It was also emphasised that the electric piano was still available as part of the basic theatre package, providing it was asked for on the booking form, or prior to the handover!

8. Control Box Redesign

SD submitted a basic drawing of a proposed control box redesign, which included an extension on the door side to accommodate the sound crew, and a gallery above to accommodate the follow spot.

There were several good points to come out of the following discussion, such as having the sound crew upstairs, or the follow spot centrally upstairs. TW said this would cause their company some problems as they communicate all the time with the sound crew. PB also stated that to have the follow spot in a central would not be as effective as at an angle. Two follow spots from either side would be better still!

PB also observed that current theatre trends are to have both the sound and lighting desks open at the back of the theatre, and not enclosed in a control room at all.

SD would welcome the thoughts of the user groups technical people as to their suggestions for making the theatre more "user friendly".

A very basic line diagram for the proposal is attached to the minutes.

9. Minutes & Agenda via Theatre email address. – theatre@hind-leys.leics.sch.uk

More and more people are choosing to receive their minutes and agenda via email. Two more email addresses were received tonight. Thanks to all those choosing this method as it cuts down on the time and resources required to send out paper copies to all user groups.

SD also agreed to attach the minutes of the previous meeting to the agenda for the forthcoming meeting. This used to happen on paper, but was found to be too costly.

10. Community Council

LH reported back to the user group regarding the annual College Community Council meeting in September. Many representatives from user groups throughout the college eg. Swimming groups, Badminton, Gymnastics were at the meeting to listen to the views of the College Principal and Assistant Principal with regard to the future of community services at the college.

It became apparent that the Theatre User group were seen as an experienced group of people who meet every term to discuss the way forward. LH requested (having been elected chair of the council) that the next council meeting could include all groups that use the college facilities for a short gathering before the user committees met with each other. Tea, coffee and biscuits would be available from 7 – 7.15 p.m. in the staffroom. All agreed that this would be good way of meeting others and hopefully be mutually beneficial to all. PF backed the idea and AD suggested further progress could be made at future meetings eg. A cheese and wine evening to raise money for the college users.

11. A.O.B.

AD asked about the arrangements for the bar, and TW asked about the canteen area. Clarification of how both the bar and the canteen area will be sought from Julieann Biddles.

PF stated that the College is preparing a bid for specialist arts status and requested user groups to send in supporting letters backing the use of the college facilities. PF apologised for the time scale, but asked for letter by the end of the week! He also stated that money from a successful bid could well be directed in to the theatre to support some of the projects discussed tonight.

LH mentioned that last year we received a donation from the Thomas Harley fund, and asked if we were likely to receive another donation this year.

PF suggested it may be time to contact East Midlands Airport again to enquire about the possibility of a little more funding.

PB had previously discussed a lighting course with SD. The course would be open to anybody who wished to learn a little about lighting. Whilst the idea was originally directed at college students wishing to do lighting, it was soon extended to user group representatives by request. SD stated he would be on the course too! We will look in to the implications of putting such a course on and let people know of any developments asap.

SD also suggested a similar course on sound, and asked if anybody knew of any sound technicians who may be interested in delivering such a course. AD suggested someone who has worked for Act One, who SD was about to contact in any case for advice with High School Musical. Again, user groups will be informed of any developments.

SD said that now the DMX lighting control circuits were in hand, mains electrical supplies would also be needed for the lighting bars. SD asked how to go about getting this done, and PF suggested a letter to the Senior Management Team.

KC reminded us of some electrical circuits being diverted from the theatre to elsewhere in the college. SD would include this information in the letter to the SMT to make sure this is taken in to account.

PF finally reminded all user groups that tickets for the Hind Leys College December show High School Musical are now on sale and selling fast!

12. Date of next meeting:- 4th February 2008 7.00pm