



Principal: Yvonne Lee
Vice Principal: Adrian Stevenson,

THEATRE USER'S GROUP MEETING MINUTES:- Monday 4th February 2008, 7.30pm

PRESENT

Linda Howe, Pat Clark, Doreen Fearn, Tim Wood, Christine Hunt, Iain Hunt, Steve Dootson, Pete Fines, Paul Boneham, Simon Birchall, Adrian Dobson, Gordon Kilpin, Kevin Clark, Joe Newcombe.

Follow up to Hind Leys Community Forum meeting:-

LH was voted in as chair of the above forum and Julieanne Biddles made a presentation about the role of the forum.

The group was advised of funding available from Charnwood which LH emphasised was available to theatre user groups for activities taking place before 30th March 2008.

There was concern over the College closing on Monday and Friday evenings, but PF and LH confirmed that this would not affect theatre bookings.

Companies making Theatre bookings during holiday periods will not have the benefit of cleaners in the theatre, foyer or changing rooms which means that groups will be responsible for keeping these areas clean and tidy. The first group affected by this arrangement will be the Spring Festival at Easter, and TW accepted the arrangements.

Access to cleaning equipment was discussed. LH will inform premises officers that theatre users may need access to cleaning equipment, and SD suggested in time that we provide our own "theatre" cleaning equipment.

AD suggested that groups consider charitable trust status as a means of attracting further funding, and also a cross section of College user groups, ie theatre, sport etc, were represented at the forum meetings.

1. Apologies:-

Diane King, John King

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.

SD reminded the group that the 2008 – 2009 chart which we had discussed at previous meetings was simply an agreement amongst ourselves and did not constitute a formal booking. SD also explained the idea to JN who had not been at the previous meetings. LH will always be consulted when booking request forms arrive at the office so we will be able to give some notice to user groups if somebody is after their space! There is no substitute however to getting your own bookings in early!

Julieanne answered a query from TW about the fixing of costs which would allow user groups to budget. The costs are to be fixed in April and will be announced at the next meeting, if not before.

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

Coalville Amateur Operatic Society and Loughborough Academy have used the theatre since the last meeting, as well as the college itself and Shepshed Junior Dance. SD and LH were pleased to report exemplary hand backs from both CAOS and Loughborough Academy which makes the whole process much easier for all concerned.

SD reported a minor problem with the COAS occupation in that the main tabs were operated by accident whilst being restrained by set. This resulted in slight damage to the header tape and carriers. SD managed to get some new (foc!) carriers from Custom Group (our current supplier of drapes) and repaired the header tape. Many user groups (including the college) use set which restrict the main tabs so SD will arrange for notices to remind people to isolate the motor be placed near the controls. For your information, the motor and isolation switch is in the wings, stage left, about 3 meters above the stage.

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

SD reported that progress had been limited due to the College production quickly followed by the Junior Dance Club production. The college High School Musical production account and theatre users account have both contributed to the purchase of new sound equipment, namely a Behringer 32 channel mixing desk, a subwoofer speaker and amplifier, a pair of new PA speakers with stands and a variety of audio leads. This completes the sound project which we agreed as a priority some time ago.

Several more radio microphones have also been bought. 6 x UHF units with lavalier or headset mikes and two hand held microphones. These are now installed alongside the 5 older VHF units.

The equipment will be available to user groups at a modest cost, proceeds from which will be fed back in to the Theatre users' account in the usual way.

A DMX lighting link from the lighting desk to a connection in the stage right wings (and return) has been installed with assistance from Paul Boneham. It is intended to add a DMX splitter in the wings when funds allow. SD has also spoken to PF about the installation of some high level mains sockets to provide power to DMX controlled units.

SD admitted that the 5-year development plan needs updating as we are about 18 months further on since it was first drawn up, and several projects have now been achieved. KC reminded the meeting that we are short of perimeter curtains and there are not really enough to form a full black mask in front of the cyclorama. There are other curtains with minor damage which need attending to before they get worse. It was agreed to add curtain replacement to the 5-year plan on a rolling programme. SD to prioritise.

SB mentioned winches for the lighting bars for rigging at a safe height, essential for the younger college students who cannot work at height. SD said that this was on the 5-year plan, albeit towards the end!

On the subject of drapes, CAOS have managed to locate some rollers which work on our older Furse tracks. CAOS have very kindly left these rollers behind for other user groups to benefit. A huge thank you to Coalville Operatic for this gesture!

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

Decimated! SD is working with two budgets in the Theatre. Our own "theatre users" budget, and a college maintenance budget. The theatre user account has supported the sound equipment, and as the college year end is approaching, the maintenance budget has been used to buy spare bulbs.

8. Lighting and Sound Courses

The idea of technical theatre courses has snowballed a little since Paul Boneham's kind offer to provide an informal lighting course to local technicians. SD has since approached Simon Birchall, who works with CAOS amongst others, to provide a similar course based on sound technology, to which he has kindly agreed!

This is a fantastic opportunity to college students, as well as any user group representatives who are interested. It would seem that the courses will begin in September, using the college production of "We Will Rock You" in December as a focus. (Course attendance would not mean having to be involved with We Will Rock You!)

SD has done some background work on the courses and come up with two distinct and parallel routes. It will be a great benefit to the college if the first route, our local courses, ie with Paul and Simon, could be based on the BTEC syllabus. SD circulated some BTEC documents around the meeting. PF will look a little further in to this one and meet with SD, LH, SB and PB in a few weeks.

The other route which has emerged is a series of BTEC courses run by the AETTI (Arts and Entertainment Technical Training Initiative). These are professional courses which could use Hind Leys as a host venue. There are three courses:-

Stage Lighting, Rigging and Operation
Theatre Sound Rigging and Operation
Technical Skills in Live Entertainment

Again the information was presented to the meeting by SD, and will be attached to the minutes for those who choose to receive their minutes by email. (Others can request a written copy if they wish to).

The aetti courses cost £375 and are 3 day courses, as opposed to our local courses which would be run during the evening at a nominal cost to cover expenses. Hind Leys would benefit by being able to add "in-house" technicians for.

SD emphasised that the two routes are not in competition with each other, the aetti course would probably be for a wider geographical audience, whereas the local course would be for people closer to home.

Could we please ask anybody who is interested in either course to register their interest using the theatre email address:- theatre@hind-leys.leics.sch.uk , (or 'phoning Steve Dootson on 07919416310) stating which course(s) they would like to consider.

This is only a declaration of interest and not binding (yet!). If you know of anyone else who may be interested then please ask them to register!

9. Control Box Redesign

Ideas are still invited with reference to the redesign of the control box. Most User groups set up their sound desks on the remote side of the control box door which isolates the sound crew from the rest. A short term issue suggested was to provide a second doorway to provide a walkthrough. As ever, funding will always be an issue, but it would be good to have some ideas to work towards. It should be emphasised that there is a substantial air conditioning duct above the existing box which limits what we can do, but raised balconies either side are always an option, indeed preferable for follow spot location.

10. 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.

11. A.O.B.

- i) CH of CAOS thanked the College staff for their assistance during their recent production
- ii) CH pointed out that the sign for the overspill car park was now in the wrong place and causes confusion when the car park is busy. PF to mention this to the Senior Management Team. There were also enquiries as to who should be using the car park, eg Shepshed Dynamo football team.
- iii) There was a request for a "No Smoking" sign to be positioned outside reception to support the college no smoking policy. Again PF to take to the college management.
- iv) CH emphasised that the nursery was an excellent place for the changing rooms for a variety of reasons and asked if that could be considered during any development or planning meetings.
- v) Questions were asked about user groups using the coffee bar to provide their own service. It was suggested that those interested in such an arrangement contact Julieann Biddles at the college.
- vi) AD mentioned the 21st February and asked if the parents evening would conflict with Act One's theatre booking. PF advised that the theatre was not being used for parents evening and was a low profile post 16 evening which should be coming to an end by the time car parking was needed by theatre goers.

vii) SD reported on the stage video link which has been installed backstage, already used to good effect by the college production and the CAOS production. All user groups are welcome to use the link as long as the TV is not required elsewhere for curriculum use. If this occurs, groups could always bring in their own (PAT tested!) TV's for this purpose.

viii) SD recalled that CH had added changing room monitoring to the wish list. SD said he would take advice from both SB and PB to identify and cost an appropriate wireless system to achieve maximum flexibility. A wired communication system for backstage / control box crew was also suggested. SD said this was already on the 5 – year plan, but some time away.

12. Date of next meeting:-

19th May 2008 at 7.00pm (Place to be advised as the college may be closed on Mondays by then!)