**DITCHLING PLAYERS**

**ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Monday 31 July 2017**

**Held at Ditchling Village Hall**

**Apologies**

Maureen Campbell, Gill Pinchbeck, Mike Trayler, Bill Colbourne, Christine Colbourne, Gerry Fleuss, Joan Dowling and Pam Gaskin.

**Attendees**

Sarah Trayler, Pat Tettersell, Penelope Bennett, Judy Walker, David Tettersell, Nan Crofton, Brenda Franchi, John Merrett, Douglas Wragg, James Olsworth-Peter, Diane Burman, Ian Clayton, Mike Hanna, Sue Hanna, Jill Hewer, Maureen Devereux, Alec Gaskin, Liz Gee, Dorcas Kalani, Susie Beer and Neil Iosson.

**Minutes of Last Year’s AGM**

Maureen Devereux thought she attended last year’s AGM. Sarah Trayler checked the AGM signing in book and said that Maureen was not listed as attending. Sue Hanna asked if there were plans to have a second Patron. Jamie Theakstone is currently a Patron. Nan Crofton replied that this was being looked into. The minutes were then agreed and signed by Nan Cofton, Chair.

**Matters Arising**

None

**Treasurer’s Report**

Pat Tettersell handed out copies of the Income and Expenditure for the year ended 31 May 2017 which were kindly audited by Dick Marshall. PT reported as follows. The figures we are looking at are on the left hand side. As you will see the first thing to mention is that there was just one production in the previous year, there were two productions for 2017. This has obviously had an impact on our expenditure and income, but has resulted in us having a reduction in the current year, which I can explain, in part due to the fact that we had to replace and have re-fitted the traverse curtains. The cost of this was £732.00 even though the damage to the curtains was not wholly our fault, we agreed to pay £300.00 of the total cost. Unfortunately the balance from the Village Hall of £432.00 was not received until the beginning of June, so will be reflected in the current year records. Also there was an increase in the General Equipment figure as we had to have PAT testing on the lights, which is a necessary requirement and also the purchase of a new Sound Board, thanks to Peter Kirk. These two amounts of expenditure came to a total of £846.00. I shall be looking at what we actually spent on advertising as some has been shown under printing, when it really should be advertising. We also had to re-new our website licence which had increased by £87.00 in just one year. A new advertising board had to be made which was damaged following Blithe Spirit. Pat Tettersell answered Jill Hewer’s question and confirmed that the ticket sales were from Blithe Spirit and Duets. Pat Tettersell also answered Ian Clayton’s question and confirmed that the £5.00 recorded was interest.

**To Receive and Adopt Audited Accounts**

Proposed by James Olsworth-Peter and seconded by Penelope Bennett.

**Secretary’s Report**

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Congratulations to Jill Hewer. She again directed a very successful play for the Ditchling Players. This time the ever popular Blithe Spirit by Noel Coward. With her talented cast, the show entertained audiences each night and word spread that this was a production not to miss. We were pleased to welcome some new faces to the Players – Karin Grierson – Ciaran Keilly – Sue Blair Fish – Dorcas Kalain and Kate Taylor. We were also lucky to have Penelope Bennett back with us to direct Duets by Peter Quilter. Another winning production. A comedy in four acts, the play is a funny examination of the chaotic world of love and relationships. Again we welcomed new faces including Karen Blakesley, Kirstie Negus and Ronnie Whitehead. This play kept the audiences on their toes and was enjoyed by all. Thank you to everyone involved in these two productions, greatly enjoyed by the audience who tell me that they appreciate all the hard work which goes into a production and all the talent they see on stage.

In March, the Players sponsored the local village quiz organised by Henry Upshall to raise funds for our local hospice St Peter and St James.

We have continued with our play readings which continue to be popular. Our next play reading is on Monday 21 August and is being led and hosted by Sue Hanna. If any member would like to lead or host a reading then please get in contact with one of the Social Committee – Susie, Sue James or Sarah. Sue is organising a backstage visit to Chichester on Saturday 4 November.

On Saturday 22 August twenty two members of the Players got together for a Summer Garden Party. British weather can never cease to amaze and the predicted downpour meant it was turned into an Indoor Summer Garden Party. We were entertained by Nan, Judy and Bill, had delicious food provided by members and Susie professionally organised our now world-famous raffle. And moving onto festive events, the Jack and Jill in Clayton did us proud again last year and so the Soc Com has booked the Jack and Jill for our 2017 Christmas dinner on Friday 8 December.

**Chairman’s Report**

It doesn’t seem a year since I was giving you my first report as Chairman of Ditchling Players. In reviewing the year, thanks are due to so many of our members, both on and off the Committee.

I am delighted to report that Jill Hewer’s deferred production of Blithe Spirit by Noel Coward, was very well received in November by appreciative audiences, as was the May production, Duets by Peter Quilter, directed for us by Penelope Bennett. Grateful thanks go to both directors, to their hard working crews both front of house and backstage, and to both dedicated casts, who entertained us so successfully. Financially, we are keeping our heads above water, as both productions brought in a small profit, thanks to our loyal audiences.

I would also like to acknowledge with thanks the contribution made to both productions by Chatt Estates, who acted as our Box Offce, and also provided the large advertising boards, and to Peter Kirk, Gerry Fleuss and David Tettersell whose hard work on publicity is invaluable. Gerry also produces our Newsletters.

Thank you to those who host our monthly play readings, arranged by our Soc Com, Sarah, Susie, Sue, Diane and James. Attendance has been variable, but a good variety of plays have been read.

Whilst thinking of plays, we hope to see you all at Liz Burton’s production of Emlyn William’s The Light of Heart, on 22-25 November. It was chosen because this classic, thought provoking play is seldom seen, and deserves an audience.

Whilst rightly celebrating successes, on a more sombre note I appealed to members last year for help backstage and front of house. Only one, already busy member, has offered help.

Many of our neighbouring drama groups are, sadly, no more, mainly for financial reasons. Ditchling Players are now really struggling for people power to help with set building, wardrobe and front of house. Please, don’t let our next production be our last. Those on whom we rely so heavily at production time are all a year older, and life being what it is, are becoming fewer and fewer in number. With the best will in the world, the volunteers who solider on can no longer do what they could do five or ten years ago.

We are in urgent need of a Set Raising Manager to oversee the building of our sets. As he has done for many years, Ian still designs our sets, but is no longer able to stay on site to manage the build. More hands are needed on construction day, or to paint the sets. We always need a willing volunteer to brew tea or coffee during the build. Expertise is very welcome, but not essential. We also need: a relief Stage Manager for Sue, who currently gives her time to both productions, a Front of House Manager, whose role is primarily to co-ordinate the front of house team and a Wardrobe Mistress and helpers. Please think about it.

Finally, I would like to thank our President, Ian Clayton, for all his wise advice and support, our active Vice Presidents, Sue Hanna and David Tettersell and lastly but not least the Committee of 2016-17, Sarah Trayler, Pat Tettersell, Susie Beer, Diane Burman, Brenda Franchi, David Tettersell, James Olsworth-Peter and John Merrett, and our ex-officio members, Sue Hanna and Gerry Fleuss. Without your loyalty, continuing support, and invaluable contribution, there were would be no Ditchling Players.

We none of us can see what lies ahead, and, since writing the above report, events have moved on swiftly. So it is with the utmost regret, that tonight I am standing down as Chairman of the Ditchling Players. I had fully intended to complete my three year term of office, but, I have had an on-going health issue that has not been resolved. Chairmanship requires levels of energy, that, sadly, I am no longer able to give. I owe my sincerest thanks to Ian for his support and understanding over the last few days. However, waiting in the wings is someone who has put themselves forward as a possible Chairman. Diane Burman, who has worked in the wardrobe department for ten years has expressed an interest. With sadness, I shall step down, and invite Ian, as our President to take the meeting forward. Thank you.

\*Ian Clayton thanked Nan for all her hard work and reminded us that she first joined the Players fifty years ago. Diane Burman was then elected as the new Chair of the Ditchling Players and continued to chair the rest of the meeting. All members were in favour of Diane as the new Chair.

**To Confirm in Office the President and Vice Presidents**

Ian Clayton, President

Proposed by Sue Hanna and seconded by Jill Hewer

David Tettersell, Sonia Stock, June Loadsman, Sue Hanna and Dee Grainger, Vice Presidents

Proposed by John Merrett and seconded by James Olsworth-Peter

Diane Burman to report to the committee about June Loadsman

**To Elect Chairman and other Officers and Members of the Committee**

Diane Burman, Chair

Proposed by John Merrett and seconded by Sue Hanna

Sarah Trayler was re-elected Secretary of the Players. David Tettersell proposed and John Merrett seconded. Pat Tettersell was re-elected as Treasurer. Sue Hanna proposed and Douglas Wragg seconded.

Susie Beer (Social Committee), John Merrett (Membership Secretary) and David Tettersell (Publicity) remain on the Committee. Sue Hanna (Social Committee) and Gerry Fleuss (Newsletter) remain ex officio. Liz Gee proposed and Brenda Franchi seconded.

Neil Iosson was voted on to the Committee. Propsed by Nan Crofton and seconded by Maureen Devereux.

James Olsworth retired from the Committee as Membership Secretary and Brenda Franchi retired as the co-ordinater of Front of House. Thanks was given by Diane Burman for all their hard work and contribution to the Ditchling Players.

**Any Other Business**

\*Diane Burman to continue organising wardrobe

\*Someone is needed to organise front of house

\*David Tettersell reported that the village hall chairs are being replaced and help is needed getting them ready for each performance. It was hoped that the new chairs would be easier to handle

\*Douglas Wragg commented that the shortage of help for productions was common in all amateur groups and suggested that it was a good idea for the different groups to work together

\*It was suggested that perhaps we could encourage youngsters to get involved with the Players. Susie Beer to contact Nick Beeby from Hurstpierpoint about this.

\*Jill Hewer commented that Henfield, Wiveslfield, Hurstpierpoint and Ditchling all had their production dates close together.

\*Diane Burman asked the question is it necessary to have the Ditchling Player productions always in May and November

\*As of yet, there are no Directors for 2018. Diane to approach Frank Titford and Alan Carter**.**

**The meeting was closed at 8.40pm by Diane Burman, Chair**