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**Chairman’s Report for 2021 AGM**

Dear Members,

It was agreed in the Executive Committee this year to present officer’s reports to each member before the AGM, electronically. The aim was to minimise the time required to deal with housekeeping items and thus the overall length of the meeting. There will still be an opportunity for questions to the officers, and as usual an opportunity for any other business not covered in the reports presented.

I will look forward to seeing you all, after this extended gap of one year without an AGM. The Government restrictions at this time last year did not permit us meeting in person, and it was agreed in committee that there was no point in navigating the technical pitfalls of holding an online AGM at the time. Theatre operations had ceased for a while by the usual time of the AGM and there was no immediate prospect of the doors opening to the public.

It was also voted in committee before the AGM that the existing members would continue to stand for an extra year and the officers agreed to continue in their current positions. This gave a useful continuity to manage the situation as the ever-changing guidelines were presented to us and we tried to plan in a very variable environment.

This brings me straight away to my first thank you. As we went into our first phase of lockdowns our Chairman was Les Edwards, but into the second season Les decided to present his resignation as Chairman. Les steered us, with great commitment and wisdom, through many issues that were concluded, and ongoing, during the time of his chairmanship. We are also indebted, and mustn’t forget, all his wonderful help in fundraising during out Studio building phase and also his ever-present help in so many aspects of the theatre life for many years.

As vice-chairman at the time I took up the position of Chairman to carry on Les’ good work.

I, and many others I believe, found meeting online a difficult task with participants numbering up to 15 sometimes, as the natural flow and interaction of face-to-face conversation was absent. Some larger matters such as the Vision programme were put on ice for now, and day-to-day matters were concentrated on. We can now start to move forward on items of planning again in the new season. The largest of these is the implementation of Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) which Mark will update us on at the start of the meeting.

I would now like to thank the all many people who have seen us through this difficult period and gone well beyond their normal theatre tasks to see us through this period. All those that have supported Les and I on the committee and in their officer and management positions. There are too many to name individually as all departments were affected in some way. Special thanks has to go to Mark for his incredible work in stabilising our expenditure while there was minimal income, and for the vast amount of work in successfully raising grants to support us for two years.

As so much business has been conducted online recently can I make a timely reminder about electronic communication protocol.

It was agreed in committee a few years ago that subjects that concerned individuals in their department roles would not be discussed in committee unless the officer or head of department affected was present at the meeting. This only fair for correct procedure on deciding matters.

The same should be upheld in electronic communication as well, particularly when generating and replying to emails. The content should be considerate and respectful at all times and the circulation should include the person concerned. When including new people into the email chains, as often happens when subjects expand, don’t forget to click the option to include previous content. I have often had to request the previous email string, once a subject has included me. When dealing with passionate issues I find it advisable to write the email then walk away for a period and return to it to check it’s content. There was a time when communication was not as immediate as now, and a small breathing spare can focus ideas more precisely.

We are going through a period of difficulty at filling some roles in running the society and theatre. We have drawn attention to this matter in recent newsletters and direct communication.

Some roles are vital for sustaining operation during and between show dates, others are actually a *legal requirement* when we open our doors to the public. Some roles need filling at this AGM in order that we can continue to run shows. The major roles are Front of House manager, refreshments, wardrobe, publicity and marketing. We also need many more people to fill positions in the teams of: front of house, bar and refreshments, backstage, technical, set building and stage crew.

My message is `**take a supporting role’.** If you are involved, say, in one or two shows a year in acting, backstage support, or front of house support, get thoroughly involved and help in another role. The friendship, camaraderie and knowledge gained can be the most rewarding part of being a member. Expanding knowledge in other departments and in meeting the public in front of house roles, can be a very rewarding part of the membership experience. Take on a new `second role’ during the year and make the most of your yearly membership. All details of how to get involved have bean circulated in previous newsletters and can be obtained from Elliot on the `membership’ email address.

The next year is still likely to still be one of uncertainty and we may have to prepare ourselves for similar situations sometime in the future, we just don’t know, but we will all be better prepared due to the wonderful work done by the members over last couple of years, which I personally thank you for. Here’s to a successful and artistically rewarding coming year.

Chris Lane

Chairman

The Bancroft Players