

CODS COMMITTEE MEETING 21st MAY 2024

Present: Mike Canning (MC), Carol Stoye (CS), Gillian Mackenzie (GM), Helen Clarke (HC), Lyndsey Betts (LB), Holly Harris (HH), Craig Phoenix (CP) & Yvonne Youles (YY).

Apologies: Alan Baker (AB), Paul Walker (PW) & Simon Gould (SG)

1.AGM

Agenda - add vote on remuneration, words to be agreed to go out with AGM paperwork.

The following comments were made:

FOR Talent may disappear if we do not pay members **AGAINST** Our finances are not so sound if we are paying members, and this could impact on choosing shows if we cannot afford to stage them. **FOR** There don't seem to be any other societies who don't pay members for directing or choreographing (Opinion - not substantiated by verified information) **AGAINST** We have had an increase in expenses of about £6500 over the last few years as we now pay for lighting & the store, and further additional expenses may lead to difficult decisions about how to reduce our outlay – e.g. use backing tracks as opposed to live band; reduce production values **FOR** To pay members you get Directors/ Choreographers with more commitment to the company; likely to be more emotionally invested and likely to be at all rehearsals. **AGAINST** Times have changed in terms of practical support to the society, and whilst in the past we had a sizeable band of volunteers to complete set build etc., we now have a much smaller team whom it is unfair and unrealistic to assume will be available for every production. Those who do participate in these activities often put in 100, 200 hours or more in work for the society. There is a possibility that we may lose more of our technical team if we are seen to pay for some roles, when arguably the tech crew put in just as much work, often with insufficient support for the membership at large. Given that some members have expressed objections to feeling pressured to help this could leave us unable to complete the technical work required to stage a show. **FOR** Not paying members may appear to outside directors/choreographers that we don't offer payments to anyone applying for these roles (bad press). **AGAINST** The committee struggles to attract new members to help shoulder the burden of the work that needs doing, and regularly take on multiple production roles owing to a shortage of volunteers. There is concern that the committee will face a decision by the society to pay Directors, Choreographers etc., but will not be supported by members in finding ways to fund the increased costs, and equally importantly, not be supported in carrying out any such ideas, resulting in further impacts upon a group that is already stretched. **FOR** By paying we are more likely to get a wider range of directors/choreographers coming forward with a greater selection of shows to consider Members may be willing to take a smaller payment versus non members In response to the reason the trial was put in place to begin with..... Have we attracted new inexperienced directors / assistant directors within the company to come forward? No A number of highly experienced members within the society are wanting to direct and choreograph for us but only if remuneration is reinstated

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS / COMMENTS

Is it workable? i.e. Where does the money come from against a background of increasing costs and limitations on our income owing to a ceiling on number of seats available and ticket prices? How do we determine who should be rewarded? Qualifications? Others not technically qualified put in as many hours, and /or may have extensive experience. How do we decide who is payable? Should we pay a nominal fee to all (and who is meant by 'all'?) is it false economy not to? Although members have not been paid for some positions (i.e. for roles such as Director, Chorus Master, Choreographer: other production roles carried out by members, such as set builder, production manager, front of house manager, bar manager, for example, have never been paid) there has always been the option for a member to request payment when expressing interest in a role. Can we limit payment just to member directors/choreographers as we struggle to recruit all areas of production? Is lack of payment stopping members applying for roles?

Historically, we have paid a director for the Easter show but not for the autumn production. Should we pay for both, as the autumn director is no less deserving?
Will we attract NEW members by offering remuneration?
If we offer a nominal fee for specific roles, members not wishing to be paid could donate their fee back to the society
Treatment of roles in different productions should be consistent (i.e. if we pay one director, we pay them all)
If payment to Directors and Choreographers is reinstated, it should also apply to Chorus Masters, as that is another role w=for which payment has previously been made, but this was suspended along with payment for the other roles, and requires a significant amount of work and expertise.

MC suggested sending a synopsis to everyone and giving them 48 hours to vote. YY will add item to the agenda 'Revisit remuneration to members' and send the synopsis to CP, HH, LB and GM before sending to the membership. MC will ask AB to set up a survey monkey on the Mailchimp to be sent out on the 16th June with a reply by the 23rd June. MC asked the committee who is standing for re-election - YY and SG are not standing. Subs for 2025/26- MC asked CP's opinion, he said it was due to be discussed by the finance committee and as the bank account is healthy at present it should stay as it is at £40 per annum plus £30 performance fee. HH asked if the children's performance fee was too cheap as it worked out to 50p an hour for the longer rehearsals. GM said with costs going up and with more expenses should we increase the cost to the members? It was suggested £45/£35 and £10/£20 proposed by YY, seconded by CP and agreed by all. New joiners for the main production in November have 18 months for the price of 12 at present. From the AGM they will pay £20 for the remaining part of the year. Proposed LB seconded CP all agreed.

2.The Men Who Marched Away

HH is not doing publicity for the year only for the Easter show. She will contact PW to put something on Facebook for the introductory meeting on the 3rd June. GM is doing set design but will not be at the meeting. CS will send a report as she is attending.

3.A Walk in the West End

Nicki Wilkes is back on the 5th of June.

4.Beauty and the Beast

HH to contact Nick Findell to design poster to go on social media.

5.2026 Musical

MC has put forward Oliver for the Easter musical, but if this is still unavailable, he would welcome a small group to get together to provide options. PW has put forward Wind in the Willows.

6.Winter Ball 22nd of November

HH has booked the Waie Inn and is going there next month to discuss menus and the room layout. She will aim to get a discount as we are tenants of theirs as we rent the store. The

maximum price for our meal is £23, the band have quoted £1675 for All Jazzed Up and require a 25% deposit. HH will ask James Billington to send an invoice which will be forwarded to CP for payment. The blackjack/poker tables, are £475 and Graham Prigg, our resident magician is charging £120 to cover his room and breakfast. Tickets will be priced at £40 and CODS will cover any shortfall if insufficient tickets are sold to cover the costs.

7. Audition process

GM needs to revisit this before the MWMA auditions. HH asked about the choral auditions & MC said Nicky Wilkes has suggested a date and he will check if an audition panel is required.

8. Any Other Business

CS would like to thank the lorry crew for putting everything away at the store after the show. She and Fenella are easily able to access all the music in the music room. CP has had a quote from RGB for the new stage flooring which is between £700 and £800 and not over £2000 as expected. HC will hold a barbecue at her house on the 10th August. The committee meal will be held at the Italian in Crediton possibly on the 6th July if everyone can make it

9. Date of next meeting.

AGM the 12th June

Next committee meeting 9th July

MC thanked everyone for all their hard work over the last 12 months

Meeting closed at 21.35