

CODS AGM 10 JUNE 2026 AT 7.30PM

at The Old Town Hall, Searle Strret, Crediton

(Draft minutes)

Present: Ruth Towers, Rachel Griffiths, Claire McGill, Buffy May, Nicky Gould, Rosanna Clark, Sadie Moden, Charlotte Ireland, Ceci Brayley, Gill Mackenzie, Joan Musty, Steve Gooding, Bec Gooding, Tasha Currie, Jo Smitheman, Mike Canning, John Musty, Graham Wallis, Paul Walker, Tom Whitmore, Tony Pugh, David Simms, Dean Morgan, Emily Morgan, Jo Acland, Claire Lethbridge, Richard Betts, Erin Zorlu, Owain Olsson, Charlie Addis, Georgina Broadhurst-Tennant, Zoe Weetman, Emelia O'Brien, Sarah Ruby, Jason Bomford, Rachel Hayes, Bridget Garrod, Jo Hooper, Leila Hooper, Katt Davies-Young, Victoria Woods, Carolyn Stoye, Yvonne Youles, Lyndsey Betts, Craig Phoenix with Alan Quick, Keri Storey and Helen Moore leaving at 7.40pm

1. Welcome from the President:

Carol Stoye welcomed members and friends

2. Apologies:

Steph Morgan, Jane Bailey, Jenny Holt, Anne Mitchell, Anne Ward, Margaret Snow, Sylvia Tonkin, Lauren Bradburn, Simon Lee, Heather Barlow, Emma Cavanagh, Adam Cavanagh, Tania Hayman, Adele Cox, Paul and Marion Evans, Hilary Lamb, Kelly Vallance, Paul Spear, Chris Snow, Holly Gould, Simon Gould, Mandy Tomlinson, Julie Cole, Rita King, Gracie Pearn and Hazel Price.

3. Presentation of cheque to Crediton Foodbank:

Keri Storey and Helen Moore collected the cheque for £1000 on behalf of Crediton Foodbank and briefly outlined how the money would help.

4. Minutes of the 2025 AGM:

The minutes were proposed by Yvonne Youles and seconded by Mike Canning. All agreed and carried.

5. Report of the Management Committee:

Carol handed over to Lyndsey Betts to read her Chairman's report on behalf of the Management Committee. Proposed by Nicky Gould and seconded by Bec Gooding. All agreed and carried.

6. Statement of Accounts:

Craig Phoenix presented the accounts showing last year's closing balance of £17,577.03 and this year's closing balance of £23,946.58. We were approximately £6600 up on last year's figures, due in part to a £2000 Crediton Town Council grant and a £1900 legacy from founder member Jean

Cope. There was a £3000 loss on the Easter show and Craig explained materials and costs are up year on year. Proposed by Richard Betts and seconded by Paul Walker. All agreed and carried.

Carol thanked Holly Harris for all she has done as Chairman and for her publicity skills especially on social media and stepping up as director for Joseph and the Technicolor Dreamcoat. She also thanked Craig Phoenix who was standing down as Treasurer but is remaining on the committee. Carol also thanked Sadie Moden who has stood down from the committee but is still involved in tickets sales and the MailChimp. She thanked Yvonne Youles covering the secretarial duties and Mike Canning for helping Craig.

7. Election of Officers:

Nicky Gould Chair, Lyndsey Betts Vice Chair, Mike Canning Treasurer, Yvonne Youles Secretary, Gillian Mackenzie Minutes Secretary. As the only nominations all were duly elected. Proposed by Graham Wallis and seconded by Bec Gooding. All agreed to adopt and carried.

8. Election of Committee Members:

Carolyn Stoye, Paul Walker, Craig Phoenix, Jo Strawbridge, a welcome back to Helen Clarke and a warm welcome to our four new committee members Georgina Broadhurst-Tennant, Claire Lethbridge, Hannah Zorlu and Richard Betts.

Proposed by Mike Canning and seconded Bridget Garrood. All agreed to adopt and carried.

9. Annual subscriptions/performance fee subscriptions

It was proposed that these remain the same as last year at £45/£35 per show for adults and £10/£20 per show for juniors. Proposed by Lyndsey Betts and seconded by Tasha Currie. All agreed and carried.

10. Becoming a Director of CODS:

Gillian Mackenzie explained that as an incorporated company (since 2015) we have directors. From nine directors in 2015 we are now down to four. We would welcome new directors, the only barrier from becoming a director is bankruptcy. She invited anyone who might be interested to speak with her.

11. Change of show venue:

Craig Phoenix explained that of late there are not enough people to help with the get in/ get out at the school. He estimates that we roughly bring in 4 to 5 tonnes of equipment to the school. He told us that the flooring is now not usable and could be dangerous. It would cost between £2/3000 to replace the wood plus several weeks to build if we could find somebody to do it - he said it's a big job! He therefore thought it logical to look at somewhere else. QES at Western Road has a purpose-built theatre area with seating but the only downside is insufficient backstage area. Using this site would save time and money and make the process more enjoyable. Only one van would be

required for transportation instead of two, saving costs. It could be a temporary change if another venue comes up in Crediton in the future. Nothing will change at the store - we will keep all the seating blocks - except for disposing of the floor. Chris Welch our sound and lights expert has been to the school with Craig. They have identified a room the band could use, where we could have more sound control plus there is space in the theatre if needs be. Lack of close by changing space isn't ideal but there are numerous rooms we could use, so that safeguarding isn't an issue.

12. To discuss any matters notified to the Secretary, for a maximum of 20 minutes:

The Heart Project

Paul Walker gave us an update on what is happening with the Heart Project which has now been running for seven years. He told us their aim was to have a community building within the town with a large performing space. The site they have identified at Newcombes Meadow has the backing of MDDC and Crediton Town Council but the big problem in this economic climate is finding the money for a new build . QE school/Ted Wragg Trust has asked them to be involved in the conversion of the hall in College House to provide a performance space with 120 seats. This is also relying on funding but there are renovation and conversion funds available for this project. Paul pointed out that this isn't an alternative to their own project. A survey was carried out within the town and the overriding response was people would enjoy a performing space within the town.

Safeguarding and Code of Conduct

Lyndsey Betts is the lead on this but unfortunately was unable to speak at this time. The code of conduct is available on the website and all the CYTA families are aware of this. If anyone has any safeguarding concerns, please speak with Lyndsey or any of the chaperones.

13. Good Cause for 2026/27:

Five charities were suggested by members and friends:

The Amber Foundation by Paul Evans and Laura Bradburn

Turning Tides by Marion Evans

The Alzheimer's Society by Sylvia Tonkin

Crediton Playscheme by Ruth Towers

Leapfrog's Nursery by Emma Cavanagh

Voting by a show of hands was 17, 7, 7, 1,1 resulting in the Amber Foundation being our good cause for the next 12 months.

Before the meeting closed Carol thanked Lyndsey for stepping up as Chairman after Holly's resignation.

With no further business, Carol declared the meeting closed at 8.20pm

REPORT OF THE YEAR BY THE CHAIR

AGM Well... what a year! It's hard to remember another year that has managed to pack in quite so much excitement, success, drama, laughter and the more than occasional headache! In true theatre fashion, we've had a bit of variety. Shall we get the less glamorous bit out of the way first? Over the last year we've seen the resignation of our Chair, hence why I'm up here! and several other committee members. Now, we're all busy people. Between work, family, holidays, hobbies and trying to remember what day of the week it is, finding extra time isn't easy... trust me, I know! The challenge for CODS isn't a lack of willing people; it's that more and more of the workload is ending up on fewer and fewer shoulders and, to paraphrase Matilda, "That's not right." You'll hear later about the decision to move our Easter production to a different venue and, while there are several reasons for that, volunteer capacity has certainly played a part. The reality is that if we don't find more people willing to get involved behind the scenes, it becomes harder and harder to keep delivering the number and quality of productions we've all come to enjoy. The good news is that we have someone brave enough to step forward and take up the position of chair, and as a committee we will be giving her our full support. After all, we're all here for the same reason: a shared love of theatre, music, performance and the arts. Whether you're on stage, backstage, front of house or helping out behind the scenes, every contribution plays a vital part in creating something special. When we work together, we can continue bringing great theatre to our community and ensuring CODS remains a society people are proud to be part of. Now, onto the fun stuff! In September we travelled back in time with Sounds of the Eighties at the Boniface Centre. We know the combination of live entertainment and a meal isn't for everyone, but audience feedback has told us it's exactly what many people love about our concerts. It's something a little different and probably quite unique in the South West. The festive season brought Robin Hood and the Babes in the Wood (oh yes it did!). Yes, rehearsing a pantomime in the run-up to Christmas is exhausting. Yes, everyone promises they'll never do it again. And yes, somehow we all sign up again the next time! Seeing a hall full of excited children reminds us exactly why we do it. Our main production, Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat, played to sell-out audiences and was an enormous success. One particularly encouraging aspect of this show was seeing so many of our younger members taking on lead roles. Bringing new faces into the society is vital for our future, and Joseph demonstrated exactly what can be achieved when people come together. What a show! Financially, it's also worth remembering why our concerts and pantomimes are so important. Even with packed houses and fantastic audience support, Joseph is still projected to make a loss of around £3,000. The reality of modern theatre is that our productions help support one another. So if anyone was wondering where all the money goes, apparently it's not into a secret committee yacht fund! In May, CODS Youth Theatre Academy celebrated its first anniversary. What began as an exciting idea dreamt up one day in my living room, has quickly become a thriving group, and our growth has been so impressive that we're now preparing for our own first major production, Matilda Jr., this October. We couldn't be prouder of what CYTA has achieved in such a short time and I hope you'll all be coming to cheer them on and see what the future of CODS looks like, Spoiler alert: it's incredibly bright! As if that wasn't enough, ten of us attended the NODA South West Awards at Sandy Park, where we were nominated for four different awards, something no other society in the region

achieved. Beauty and the Beast received two nominations, while Sounds of the Eighties was recognised in the Best Compilation category. Although we didn't bring home trophies in those categories, we did win the Section 5 Award for Developing Theatre in the Community. That award recognised not only the four productions we staged across four different venues, but also the creation and success of CYTA. It was a tremendous achievement and one that every member of CODS should feel proud of. So where does that leave us? We have a thriving society, growing membership and an exciting future. More than 40 people are already preparing for the September concerts, around 35 are involved in Matilda Jr., and we're sure plenty more will be dusting off their leather jackets ready for Rock of Ages. I know I will! But as we celebrate those successes, we'd ask everyone to consider one simple question: What could I do to help? That doesn't necessarily mean joining the committee. It might be helping front of house, selling programmes, painting scenery, making tea, moving furniture or volunteering for a small task now and then. Every little contribution makes a difference. CODS has achieved some incredible things this year. If we continue pulling together, supporting one another and sharing the workload, there's no reason the next year can't be even better. After all, theatre is the ultimate team effort. No show succeeds because of one person. It succeeds because dozens of people each do their little bit for something they love. And looking around this room tonight, I'd say we've got a pretty fantastic team.

Lyndsey Betts