

FARNHAM THEATRE ASSOCIATION LTD.

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Company 17th October 2015, 3-00pm , The Daniel Hall, Farnham

Attendance: (see attached list)

The Chairman, Anne Cooper, welcomed everybody.

1. Apologies: (see attached list)

2. To approve the minutes of the previous meeting (12 October 2014)

That the minutes be approved and adopted, proposed by Chris Reeks, seconded by Mary Ann Coombes, was carried nem con. The Chairman signed them. For matters arising, see 7.4. below.

3. To re-elect Directors of the FTA Ltd.

One Director, Richard Sandars, stood down.

That Richard Sandars be re-elected, proposed by Olive Graham , seconded by Norma Dunbar was carried nem con.

The Chairman reminded those present that any member may stand for the post of Director, and if anyone wished to stand to let her know.

4. Treasurer's report

The Director's report and Statement of Accounts had been circulated to those present (attached). The Treasurer went through his report highlighting changes from year to year. He pointed out the much appreciated increase in donations which included one from the Community Play funds after closure of the project, and the considerable decrease in spending on printing stationary and copying. There were no questions.

5. To approve the accounts of the FTA Ltd. (Company limited by guarantee)

That the accounts of FTA Ltd. be approved and adopted, proposed by Chris Reeks, seconded by Eric Coombes, was carried nem con.

6. Chairman's report (summary – full report attached)

The Chairman, presented her report (circulated to attendees) informing of FTA's activities and highlighting significant events:

Last Summer an exhibition had been held in the Tindle newspaper's Lion and Lamb office to commemorate the Redgrave's 40th anniversary, which resulted in recruitment of new members and reports in the local press, which gave FTA good publicity. Many tributes had been received to Ian Mullins, a former Director of the Redgrave Theatre and founder of the New Farnham Repertory Company, who died in New Zealand last November.

A selection of material from FTA's archive collection of the Redgrave and Castle Theatre were added on long term loan to the collection already at the Surrey History Centre at Woking; The rest is in store with a view to eventually make it available to the public.

FTA supported a Performers Together fundraising event last autumn, a Georgian evening at the Frensham Pond Hotel, and intends to support their new idea of a 'Flash Theatre Festival' in 2017.

In January some 55 supporters attended a meeting with Andrew Welch, a previous manager of the Redgrave and the Chichester Festival Theatre, and Michael Holden, when they presented a case for the retention of the Redgrave Theatre, which should once more be successful.

On 23 January a meeting was arranged with Jeremy Hunt MP to discuss the CNS planning application to demolish the Redgrave, hoping Andrew Welch could meet the MP and explain the viability in retaining it. However, Jeremy Hunt reiterated the reasons stated by WBC to support its closure and demolition.

On 26th January WBC Joint Planning Committee met to decide on the Brightwells Listed Buildings Demolition Application, to which 341 objections had been registered. BBC South Today TV cameras were outside the Council Offices to give an account of the proceedings and interview Andrew Welch. At the meeting, despite the efforts to oppose the application and advice from English Heritage that the Brightwells redevelopment should be redesigned, WBC put forward the predictable arguments and approved the application.

FTA's campaign to raise the profile of theatre and to replace the Redgrave has resulted in Farnham becoming a 'theatre town', with an awareness of the value of theatre in education, in that 2 new school theatre buildings have been created; also improvements to the Maltings' Great Hall are in progress and the UCA has introduced courses in performance for film and television students. However, Farnham still doesn't have a real theatre to satisfy the needs of the public, a venue to experience the full range of entertainment throughout the year. FTA will continue to campaign.

There is some hope of achieving this. Michael Holden has prepared an alternative plan for Brightwells, supported by Michael Blower. The plan was well received at FTC's AGM and it was presented in more detail to the Farnham Society's Residents Association meeting in April and has since been shown to some leading members of FTC and WBC.

After her report, the Chairman invited Director Mike Silver to speak about 'Performers Together', its activities and future events.

7. AOB

1. Celia Sandars informed the meeting of a community based workshop arranged by the South East RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) at Farnham Maltings over the weekend 30/31 January. S.E. RIBA Chairman along with his professional colleagues had chosen Farnham as an ideal test subject to 'examine the integration of housing targets on a historic town'. The idea is to instigate proactive discussion with the community on how they can 'organically grow Farnham, whilst sympathetically enhancing the town and maintaining its intrinsic character. The results would be put together by architects in a public exhibition.'

Mrs Sandars pointed out that a local group, PLACE (Planning, Architecture, Conservation and Engineering) based on the Government Review of Architecture and the Built Environment by architect Sir Terry Farrell, supports the RIBA event and she invited FTA members to participate in the January workshop. It will be an opportunity for Farnham residents to 'have their say' in how they would like their town developed.

One aim of the local group for Farnham being used as a national PLACE test case is to achieve a Design Panel for future developments. Though funding needs to be secured, this has been generally well received by important local organisations, and WBC has set up its own new Design Review Panel.

2. Chris Reeks asked what Woking was doing with the archives. The Chairman explained Woking has kept historical documents which were stored for future reference and which include samples of all the Redgrave productions. FTA has the remainder of the archives in secure storage and ideally aims to put these on exhibition for public access, but that is difficult. It was mooted that an exhibition could be part of the Performers Together 'Flash Festival'.
3. An attendee, Rowan Suart informed that a group member of Performers Together was planning to produce an on line video and was fund raising for the required £2000.
4. Re agreement at last year's AGM that a letter be sent to all candidates competing in the next WBC election to ascertain their attitude towards the Redgrave and theatre in Farnham, an attendee asked what the responses were. The Chairman explained that owing to illness and cancelled meetings in the pre-election period, the Directors had decided not to send letters which would be needed for the huge number of candidates, and considered that this exercise had not been productive in the past. It was thought that letters to elected members could produce a better result and this could still be undertaken.

After refreshments Michael Holden talked about his alternative plan for the Brightwells site.