

Performers Together is up and running!



Last year the combined thinking of 80 local organisations about a new performance venue in Farnham was made into a report at the suggestion of Jeremy Hunt, MP. It's called 'A New Theatre? Responses from Community Groups in and around Farnham' and is generally known as the *Blue Skies Report*

From among those responding emerged a group of keen volunteers. With Farnham Theatre Association acting as catalyst, they have held a series of meetings at Farnham Castle. A wide range of companies including Opera South, Alder Valley Brass, Farnham Rep, Hart Male Voice Choir, Waverley Singers, Farnham Youth Choirs and Farnham Rock Choir along with local professional actors and teachers are among those who have been involved since the beginning.

The group has named itself Performers Together and is now a Community Interest Company, a new form of business structure with charitable aims, whose title defines its identity and which is ideally suited to a venture of this sort.



Representatives arriving for a members meeting of Performers Together.

(Back row from the left) David Parker, Kerry Mann and Bob Cray; (Middle row) Roger Rendle, John Darker and Richard Sandars; (Front row) Mike Silver, Kika Mirylees, Abigail McKern and Anne Cooper.

Wonderful news from The Theatres Trust: Culture in the National Planning Policy Framework

You may have heard that the Government has published its long awaited final National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) which now gives protection to theatres. In its draft document, no mention at all was made of culture, the arts and theatre! FTA and many other organisations including The Theatres Trust raised the issue very forcefully, as it would have left theatres and other cultural institutions vulnerable to the NPPF's over-riding principle of 'presumption in favour of sustainable development', particularly where local authorities did not have their Local Plans in place.

Mhora Samuel, Director, The Theatres Trust said, "We celebrate a national planning policy that not only recognises culture, it also creates specific policies that both plan positively for cultural facilities and guard against their loss."

These policies give clarity to local planning authorities and to neighbourhood plan makers. The NPPF's guidance on Local Plans development specifically states that they should include strategic policies to deliver the provision of

cultural infrastructure. We are delighted to see that Waverley has now picked up on this in its Core Strategy of the Local Development Framework in its policy for Culture and we now hope to see a Neighbourhood Plan for Farnham which includes adequate facilities for theatre and music.

Farnham Town Council is in the early stages of producing a Neighbourhood Plan and the public are being given the opportunity to contribute to the 'Skeleton' document which is currently available.

For more information please visit www.farnham.gov.uk or email [Russell.reeve\(at\)farnham.gov.uk](mailto:Russell.reeve(at)farnham.gov.uk).

Alternatively please ring Farnham Town Council 01252 712667.

Both FTA and PT CIC will submit responses on your behalf, but individual comments can be influential

A THEATRE FOR FARNHAM

Thanks to Abigail McKern, (in the cast of *Travelling Light*), who set up a new petition that has been collecting names from luminaries at the National Theatre, we now have 128 signatures including these influential people:



Sir Nicholas Hytner



Simon Russell-Beale



Ciaran Hinds



Lenny Henry



Sir Tom Stoppard



Sir Anthony Sher



Alex Jennings

Our grateful thanks to all these wonderful supporters!

News from Maddermarket Theatre

'I have a vision for regional theatre'



This theatre is taken as the model for our theatre by consultant Genevieve Raghu, Artistic Director Maddermarket Theatre

In a previous newsletter we talked about this 310 seat mock-Elizabethan theatre in the centre of Norwich, how it has been used as a church, a market and

Michael Holden in the FTA Theatre Report and Business Study as it operates without local authority or Arts Council funding!

Just announced and featured in *The Stage* is their new artistic Director, Genevieve Raghu, appointed when she was just 23. A Norwich girl, she has already set up her own theatre company (Threepenny Theatre) and was fast making a career in London having already an impressive track record of assistant directing or directing opera in Spain and at the Warwick Arts Centre, as well as theatre at The Watermill, Newbury, the Belgrade in Coventry, Norwich Arts Centre, Cox's Yard in Stratford -upon-Avon and in the West End.

She says of the theatre and its loyal audience: "There's a lot of love for this building. But at the moment it's not reaching out to a broad enough demographic and that's a shame when it has the resources it has".

She is keen to expand the programme and education work, wanting to shake things up a bit without alienating the core audience. "I want Shakespeare next to Caryl Churchill next to Calderon...I want to present a whole spectrum of theatre" Her typical programme will be "commercially viable to bring people in, but also do things that are slightly more of a risk."

The Maddermarket is set to be far more of a producing house and with these assertive aims, driven by an artistic director with inspiration, there's no doubt that this little gem is going to be more widely known and firmly placed on the map.

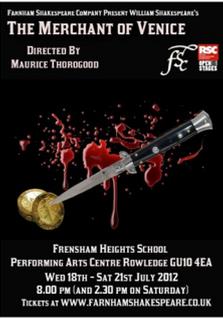


The Maddermarket Theatre, Norwich

(With grateful thanks to *The Stage* 10 May for allowing us to reproduce sections of this article).

Look out for these shows!

Farnham Shakespeare Company present *The Merchant of Venice*.



Directed by professional theatre director Maurice Thorogood, it's set in today's financial world.

Tickets from the Farnham Shakespeare Company website or directly

through the online booking service: <http://www.positickets.co.uk/eventdetails.php?>

Opera South

present a new midsummer afternoon entertainment Sunday 17 June, 2.30pm.
Contact Sarah Barnes 01428 643129



e: saba@haslemere.com

Waverley Singers



American Connections

Concert at All Saints Parish Church, Odiham, 16 June, 7pm.

For further details see: www.waverleysingers.com

FTA Aims and Objectives 2012

Many FTA members will be thinking how does the new Performers Together CIC relate to its parent company? To allay any fears we drew up these aims and objectives for FTA:

1. To preserve Farnham's long standing theatrical heritage and the memory of professional theatre at the Castle and Redgrave Theatres and to maintain and preserve the archive material, at present held in store at Farnham Museum, of the Castle and Redgrave Theatres.
2. To promote opportunities for residents of Farnham and its surrounding areas to continue to experience quality professional theatre and to encourage high standards in non professional performances and productions.
3. To ensure that if the Redgrave Theatre is not retained, that it is replaced in the town with a building that is of equal or of higher quality.
4. To ensure that a replacement building fulfils the needs of the performing arts groups of the community of the Farnham area and professional theatre companies, within reasonable limits.
5. To ensure that the needs of audiences from the catchment area of the new theatre building are satisfied, within reasonable limits.

6. To provide a focal point where the many local residents who have a specific interest in high quality live theatre may express their views and aspirations and find information relevant to the local situation.

Performers Together CIC

FTA will seek to:

- ▶ Work in partnership with Performers Together CIC to achieve a new flexible performance venue based in Farnham
- ▶ Play a guiding role within the CIC to achieve the aims of 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5
- ▶ Reassure FTA supporters that our aims regarding the CIC are in line with our existing memorandum and articles and charitable status.
- ▶ Encourage FTA members to become Members or Associate members / 'Friends' of the CIC.
- ▶ Assist the CIC with fundraising and publicity.
- ▶ Make available to the CIC any appropriate professional advice and expertise, research and/or experience acquired by FTA for the purpose of creating a new performing arts building and of its operation and to give advice on campaigning strategy.

More on Council Carborundum.....

Despite a huge public outcry - Waverley Borough Council has taken steps to appropriate the land it already owns at Brightwells and is to lease it to Crest Nicholson for the East Street development.

However, the land it does not own for this purpose is now to be subject to Compulsory Purchase. F&C, owners of the old cinema site and the



Part of the silent crowd of demonstrators at Waverley Borough Council protesting about land appropriation and Crest Nicholson's contested plans for East Street.

Woolmead buildings, together with Greene King who own the Marlborough Head pub, have so far resisted requests to sell their land. Will they be tempted to sell now that commercial land prices have fallen? We will be very interested to see what happens next.

STOP PRESS.....STOP PRESS.....STOP PRESS....

Following Waverley Borough Council's decision to proceed with compulsory purchase orders on land there will soon be a new Planning Application for East Street. Be prepared!

"It's so sad to see the Redgrave Theatre still derelict. I was a designer there in 1978-80 and it was some of the happiest times I ever had in the business. David Horlock was Artistic Director, Joe Vanek Head of Design. I was an Arts Council sponsored designer.

The shows I designed were: *The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie*, *See How They Run*, *Confusions*, *A Samuel Beckett Double Bill*, *Wizard Sid*, *Archtruc*. They were they Golden days when theatre was well funded by the Arts Council and the standards at the Redgrave were equal to anything the West End could offer.

The auditorium was a joy with near perfect stage/audience relationship. The lack of a fly tower was never a problem and only meant we, as designers, came up with ever more ingenious methods of scene changing which often got a round of applause. Other plays during the season I was there were *Privates on Parade*, *Mary Rose*, *Sweeney Todd* and many more since it was a three weekly Rep.

Incidentally, I trained at Croydon College and my tutor, Suzanne

Adams had also worked at the old Castle Theatre, also her colleague Brian Currah".

Tony goes on to ask: "What is the current state of play with the building and developers ? Anything I can do?" That's a long story as members will be only too aware and was answered separately.

And to that, Tony replied saying: "I've been battling for the past 30 years with my own local Council over many developments. I guess Bromley is pretty much like Farnham. My philosophy is never give up. You never win anything unless you are persistent.

All the best

Tony Banfield"



Alas Through the Looking Glass - a new story

In which Alice ponders what life is like on the other side of Waverley's looking glass and finds she is able to step through it to an alternative world. Here everything that was sane and normal in her own life is now topsy turvy.

The Red Queen astonishes Alice with her ability to run at breathtaking speeds over thousands of planning objections. So many out-of-the-way things had happened lately with the Council and Crest Nicholson's scheme, that Alice had begun to think that 'very few things indeed were really impossible.'

The Red Queen points out that anything sensible like a comprehensive traffic assessment or a full air quality survey are not to be carried out until after the building work is approved and started. Alice recoils in horror.

She then meets the fat twin brothers, Tweedledum and Tweedledee who represent all the councillors, voting as one and who speak in duet about the glories of the plans and how the public will be delighted to receive these wonderful benefits.

"You might just as well say", added the March Hare, (who was listening) "that 'I like what I get' is the same thing as 'I get what I like'!"

Alice next meets the White Queen, who boasts of her ability to remember future events before they have happened. She predicts a glorious transformation for Farnham after Crest Nicholson have completed their scheme. "Why, sometimes I've believed as many as six impossible things before breakfast" she says to Alice. "Now please just try flying through these drawings."

"Did you ever see a drawing of such a muchness?" mumbles Alice, feeling quite dizzy.

Humpty Dumpty, sitting on high and pontificating, spouts official policy and cannot conceive of any reasoning beside his own."

When I use a word,' Humpty Dumpty says in rather a scornful tone, 'it means just what I choose it to mean — neither more nor less."

"The question is," says Alice, "whether you *can* make words mean so many different things."

Alice soon finds herself in the Chamber in company with Queens and Councillors who relentlessly confound Alice with all manner of tricks and contortions to thwart her attempts at logical discussion. A hundred thoughts crowd into Alice's head as she tries to present her case for common sense, but she continues to be fobbed off.

"Sentence first, verdict afterwards" screams the Red Queen, "Usual suspect! — Off with her head!"

Finally, the author attempts to insert an epilogue which suggests that life itself is but a dream. But we know reality is all too clear.

