

YEOVIL AMATEUR OPERATIC SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON TUESDAY 27 OCTOBER 2025 AT EDWARDS HOUSE, BUCKLAND ROAD, YEOVIL COMMENCING AT 7.30 PM

1 (a) Present: 40 members

Members present: J Ayres G Thresh N Mountjoy S Ball S Lowery S McConnell K & M Nichols D Hallett P Budzynski J Jesty S Long R & G Bullock L Capes R & H Reid N Toop V Whitchurch C Wanklin E Hooper L Gage A Meldrum S Meldrum A Best T Dewson D Jamieson L & F Whitchurch C & S Musgrove R Lodge P Withers P Warren G & S Burgess S Williams T Perry T Dyke S Matthews

Patron present: C Clive-Ponsonby-Fane

President: Garry Richardson

(b) **Apologies** were received from: C Jesty N Lawson C Riglar L Thomas J Holland-Brewer E Driver S Driver S Hansford V Hallett A Enticott M Parker H Long D & A Hardcastle

Before the meeting commenced the President, Garry Richardson, said how much he had enjoyed his year as Society President and looked forward to the next show.

2 MINUTES OF THE LAST ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING ON 6 NOVEMBER 2023

The minutes of the last Annual General Meeting (12 November 2024) had been previously read, confirmed and agreed as a correct record. (proposed Tricia Perry, seconded Mark Rudd, unanimous)

3 MATTERS ARISING

There were no Matters Arising.

4 SECRETARY'S REPORT

Paula read her 37th report to the Society.

Officers and Committee

Changes to officers and committee had been minimal. Mark Rudd was now taking over as Business Manager with Shelagh helping. Unfortunately, Pauline Withers had resigned as Patrons' Secretary and was thanked for all her help over the years. The Society was now looking for someone to replace her and also a Social Media Manager. Paula thanked Lucy Capes for all her help and support over the year.

Charity

The charity for 'Charlie' had been MND in memory of Nick Dyke and £1550 was presented to Trudy at the 'Come From Away' Open Evening.

Fund Raising

Fund raising through the Hendford Hill car boots raised £3,992.

Edwards House

Edwards House continued to thrive under Jack Ayres administration; a new printer and microwave had been purchased this year and the premises were booked by various organisations. All the videos of shows in the Green Room were now archived onto memory stick for posterity thanks to Geoff. Also, there were new different posters displayed which had been donated between the years 1930 and 1939; once again, Geoff was thanked for this.

Shows of the Year

'Charlie and the Chocolate Factory' This had been a truly magical show which was now up for 3 Rose Bowl Awards. Unfortunately, the show lost a colossal £15,491 even with a 76.2% box office take, mainly due to the high costs of hiring costumes and the hire of the Parish Suite for the orchestra. Again, Paula felt it imperative to 'reign in' expenses; the Society could not sustain such losses on every show or for future shows.

‘Come from Away’ A very different show for whom we welcomed Naomi Rose-Mock as Director and Matt Holman-Holmes as MD. The good news was that, with planning, the Society could put on a production like ‘Come From Away’ and keep costs down, so that with a reasonably sized audience the financial results would be in line with the budgeted figures.

Conclusion

So, a good year show-wise, but not so good financially. However, the Society still went on strongly and continued to educate and entertain the public.

5 TREASURER’S REPORT

David Hallett gave his report.

With a combination of membership and patron subscriptions, investment income, donations, 3rd party hire of Edwards House and fundraising the Society was trying to offset deficits on the productions at Westlands.

Fundraising efforts included the Car Boot parking and almost £4k was brought in last year, despite a couple of washouts.

A low-cost (for Westlands) concert as a fundraiser was organised for October, but disappointing ticket sales meant that instead of raising much-needed funds the result was a small loss of around £700.

The move from The Octagon had brought with it additional issues, as Westlands was not a theatre in the traditional sense of the word; the seats weren’t particularly comfortable, and this might put people off attending and the Society needed to adapt productions to fit the space available. Westlands cost just as much as the Octagon to hire, despite having little in the way of dressing room facilities.

Great efforts had been made to reduce costs by the Society building its own sets and sourcing costumes.

‘Charlie & the Chocolate Factory’ was a show where it was difficult to cut costs. The scenery and costumes had to be right and there were a few issues that resulted in expenditure exceeding the budgeted figures. The Society tried keeping ticket prices down to encourage families however the ticket sales still did not hit the target, at around 65% or so overall. It seemed that no matter the production, it was difficult to tempt people out on a Tuesday or Wednesday evening.

The generous bequest from Ray Bartlett meant that the financial position had remained healthy, though the Society was keen to ensure that the money received was not wasted and efforts made to balance the books in the future.

The accounts were in a different format this year due to changes in the requirements of the Charity Commission and Hal asked if anyone had any queries to contact him.

Hal was thanked for his report.

6 ADOPTION OF ACCOUNTS (2024/2025)

It was unanimously agreed that this set of accounts be adopted (proposed K Nichols, seconded S Williams).

7 ELECTION OF AUDITOR

It was unanimously agreed that Chalmers & Co be, once again, elected as the Society Auditor (proposed D Hallett, seconded G Thresh).

8 ELECTION OF OFFICERS

Geoff thanked everyone for their hard work over the year. All Officers were elected en bloc, unopposed. Geoff Thresh (Chairman), Nick Mountjoy (Vice-Chairman), Paula Budzynski (Secretary), David Hallett (Treasurer), Sarah Lowery (Stage Director) and Mark Rudd (Business Manager).

9 ELECTION OF COMMITTEE

The retiring committee was thanked for all their help and support over the year. The following were elected to stand for the ensuing year:

10 EDWARDS HOUSE REPORT

Edwards House Manager, Jack Ayres presented his first report. A new suggestion box had been installed in the corridor and the WiFi updated. The installation of a defibrillator had been investigated at a cost of £3,200 but it had been decided not to pursue this at the present time. Jack thanked Vicky Hallett for all her help during the year, Angie Best and Tanya Dewson for help with refreshments and also Daisy Reid for cleaning. Jack thanked Jessamy Bowditch and Sheila Driver, the main hirers of Edwards House. Finally, Jack thanked Nick Mountjoy for 'monitoring' him over his first year as Manager!

11 OLIVE EDWARDS AWARD

Paula was delighted to report that this year's recipient of the Olive Edwards Award was Amelia Meldrum.

12 THE ANNE BAYES YOUNG PEOPLE'S AWARD

Paula was delighted to announce that this year's award would be shared jointly between Thomas Carey and Noah Morgan.

13 TO DISCUSS THE CHOICE OF FUTURE PRODUCTIONS

'Dear Evan Hansen', 'Sister Act', 'Bake Off, the Musical', 'Merrily We Roll Along' and 'Company' were all suggested.

14 ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION BY THE NEW COMMITTEE

(a) Defibrillator

Trish Perry felt it was important that a defibrillator be installed in Edwards House and the Committee should follow this up in the future.

The meeting closed at 9.00 pm