**Minutes of the NODA SE AGM held at The Electric Theatre, Guildford**

**Sunday 12th June, 2022.**

**Present:** as per registered list.

Regional Councillor, Mrs. Kay Rowan, welcomed members and friends to the meeting, and thanked the staff of The Electric Theatre for their hospitality and assistance, and Pauline Surrey (district rep.) for her local knowledge and help. She then introduced the President of the National Operatic & Dramatic Association – Mr Gordon Richardson, and the district representatives as follows:

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| District 1 | Lance Milton-absent | District 12 | Gloria E Smith |
| District 2 | Brenda Gower-absent | District 13 | Marie Coltman |
| District 3 |  Anne Lawson | District 14 | Chris Horton |
| District 5 |  Gordon Harris | District 16 | Christine Blow |
| District 6 | Cheryl Marksford | District 17 | Mark Allen |
| District 7 |  Doreen Grierson | District 18  | Pauline Surrey |
| District 9 | Keith Smithers | District 19 | Graham Botterill |
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**1. Apologies for absence:** Sally McDonald, Barbara Wells, Priscilla & Robert Blanchard, Chelsfield Players, Mary Coyte, Lesley Nicholls, Nigel Finch, Roy Brown.

**2.**  **In Memoriam:** The following long-standing members of societies in the SE Region have died this year. They were remembered with a minute’s silence.

Richard Lee, Joan Eade, Vera Proctor, Bob Hedges, Jeanette Barnes, John Gould, Susan Hearn, Graham Lines.

**3.** **Report of the Annual General Meeting held on 28th March, 2021, via Zoom**:

Minutes of the meeting had been circulated and posted on the NODA website. These were not read out.

**4. Matters arising:** There were none, and the Minutes were duly signed.

**5. Councillor’s Report:**  It was a slow start to 2021 with all meetings held via Zoom, including the Virtual Volunteer Conference, but July opened up with several outdoor performances, including two in the grounds of the Bishop’s palace in Winchester.

In August the Council were able to meet in person at Warwick, however Summer School had to stay virtual. As you know I am passionate about NODA Theatre Summer School and try to encourage new students whenever I can. This fully residential week of intense training in all the disciplines of theatre is very good value for money and an experience not to be missed. To find out more about these and other courses taking place this year please go to the NODA website and click on the Summer School tab on the homepage.

The National Conference in Durham, when Gordon became President, was able to go ahead in September albeit with lower numbers than usual - lower numbers but just as much fun and an insight into the NODA family nationwide.

I truly revel in all the productions I visit and appreciate all those who invite me, and of course so do my regional reps without whom NODA South East would not function. They should be congratulated on the speed with which they get their reports out and the thoroughness with which they approach their tasks.

I have regularly joined groups to present awards - I particularly like that part of my role which enables me to congratulate and thank those who have given so much of their time and energy to their societies. In particular, Awards for Youth are a great pleasure as they are the next generation. I would encourage all those who run youth groups or sections to consider the NODA Youth awards for your youngsters.

One thing that did come out of the pandemic was the productions involving media – films, videos etc., so these have been included in in the Best New Show category. So many innovations and technologies to take on board. You will note that we have combined 2020 and 2021 in our awards for obvious reasons.

I continue to try and reach as many members of your societies as well as your committees with my Regional Newsletters which I hope are of interest to everyone. They are intended for each and every member of each society. We have also used the NODA South East Facebook page to great effect this year and the numbers are steadily rising.

Dale Freeman the Chief Operating Officer and his staff continue to support us most efficiently and without great patience. Considering there are only 4 paid staff to cover all our NODA requests they do a grand job. We have recently welcomed Justine Fitzpatrick as Executive Assistant to the COO and NODA Chairman and Michelle Callicot as Financial Controller. Dale is unable to be with us today, but he sent a message of support.

 We are now embarking on a membership drive and would ask if you could spread the NODA ‘word’. Your committee work very hard and I would like to thank them for all their efforts, including their tremendous support for me. I am looking forward to the remainder of this year and wish you all every success. This is my report and I offer it for adoption.

**6. Membership Secretary’s Report:** The Membership Secretary’s Report had been circulated and placed on the NODA website prior to the meeting. There were no questions and John Barnes was thanked for all his hard work..

**7. Treasurer’s Report:** The Treasurer’s Report had been circulated and placed on the NODA website. In the absence of Nigel Finch, the report had been put together by Kay Rowan and Stuart McCue Dick (Vice Chairman of NODA). Thanks were expressed to Nigel for all his work.

**A statement from Pete Lishman MD of L&W, broker for NODA Insurance.**

*“Everyone involved here at NODA Insurance are so proud to have helped NODA members over many years, and especially over the last 2 years. In these unprecedented times, we have helped societies more than ever. We have supported hundreds of NODA members, with total claims payments over £1.5 million over the last 2 years. We aim to help societies to have the best cover, with a “group buying power” to ensure that it is competitive.*

*We’re proudly part of the Benefact Group – a charity-owned family of specialist financial services businesses that gives all available profits to charity and good causes. and remain totally committed to our partnership with NODA.*

*As a side note, if your society has stopped, or reduced your cover over the last 2 years, we urge you review your insurance again, as we move into a more normal environment. Call our team on  01823 250 736 or visit nodainsurance.*[*co.uk*](http://co.uk/)*”*

**8. President’s Address:**

Lady Councillor, Past Presidents (Mr John Barnes and Margaret Coltman), Regional Committee, and Members of the South East – thank you for inviting me to attend your AGM.

This is my seventh regional conference but only my fifth in person. This crazy couple of years have meant two have been online (including sadly my own home regions), but like many things over the last two years we in NODA have had to adapt and compromise There have been many processes streamlined in Head Office and I pay tribute to all at Peterborough for the superb service they offer. It is not just NODA that adapted but many societies have adapted to the new ‘normal’ they found themselves in and theatre may never be exactly the same again. Societies are finding to their concern that patrons are not pre-booking but rather waiting until the very last moment to book or to turn up on the door – not ideal if you are a society official needing to budget your production.

Hopefully this will be a temporary speed bump on the road as the pandemic is looking like it is something that we all just to have to ‘accept’. There is no doubt however that theatre is ‘back’ after a hiatus that has seen societies stream plays and online videoed concerts as well as combine together on-stage live performances alongside videoed inserts. As of today I have seen 98 productions since my inauguration (it would have been 100 but two months ago sadly I joined the covid club and had to cancel visits until testing negative), I’ve also had 3 presentations of awards held over from Lockdown, as well as attending one society AGM in the SW. I’ve also had my longest travel a couple of months or so past which saw me seeing a wonderful play up in Shetland (having been in Portsmouth the day before seeing Evita…)

I have had seven visits to the South East region to NOMADS, Guildburys, Centrestage productions, Encore Youth Theatre, Lindsley Players, Fareham Musical Society and most recently to see Chess at Milton Society – on each occasion I’ve been given a warm welcome and am due back in three weeks to see Calendar Girls the musical in Chatham with Kentish Players – this a show I was privileged to see the amateur Premiere of in Grassington back in September only 5 miles from the original calendar girls’ WI and indeed they were all there and it was such a honour to have a chat with them.

Youth has figured heavily during my travels, including two productions on my travels in your region - it is gratifying to see the youngsters so enthusiastic about theatre. Audience numbers have been high also with many 500-seater or more theatres being sold out for the whole run.

There are the inevitable popular shows as there are each year and it will come as no surprise to find that Kinky Boots, Shrek and Evita figure prominently during my visits. Indeed I saw Shrek twice in three days a week ago in Norfolk.

It is also pleasing to see some older shows get new leases of life such as Thoroughly Modern Millie, with a superb youth production of it by Encore in Winchester where the youngsters gave the old show a whole new twist.

As I embark on my last four months as President I find that my workload is ramping up and have travelled the equivalent of two thirds of the way around the globe and every county in England has been visited or travelled through – a lot of the trips have been by train which those of you who know me will know how much I dislike traveling by train…

I told a story at my inauguration about why NODA’s strapline ‘Be inspired by amateur theatre’ is important. I had been inspired from an early age, by friends and by family. At the inauguration I was presented with my 50 year, long service award at the gala dinner in Durham – the medal I wear today proudly near my heart is my dad’s medal and my mother’s gold bar. That way the people that inspired me are travelling the country with me sharing with me in my journey.

Not content with fulfilling the role of the President I, perhaps uniquely, took a week out to actually perform in a thrice postponed production in early May with the Caprian Theatre Group in Gateshead doing a cameo role in 9 to 5 playing a bombastic, slightly demented older man – so no acting ability required. I also will be taking a week out to attend NODA Summer School the first week of August. For those of you who haven’t attended Summer School I ask, why not? It is a week of intensive theatrical based training on various topics alongside like-minded people such as yourselves.

In the meanwhile I wish all my colleagues and dare I say friends within the family that is NODA South East (especially Past Presidents John Barnes and Margaret Coltman) all the best in their upcoming productions, and I hope to catch many of you at the ‘National’ as I hand over the ‘bling’ (very reluctantly) in Plymouth.

9**. Election of S.E. Councillor – Kay Rowan** – proposed by Gordon Richardson – under Rule 23 no other nominations having been received Kay Rowan was duly elected to serve as Councillor for the South-East Region.

**10. Election of Regional Representatives 2022-2023:** Proposed and re-elected en bloc as follows:

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**11. Appointment of officers 2022-2023**

Hon Treasurer Nigel Finch

Hon Secretary Pauline Catterall

Hon Membership Secretary John Barnes

**12. Appointment of co-opted members 2022-2023**

Hon Editor Gregory Gower

Hon Awards Secretary Margaret Coltman

Hon Web Manager Mark Donalds

Youth Coordinator Mike Mullen

Drama Advisor Margaret Fields

Media Guru Mike Mullen

**13. Regional Conference 2023**  – date and venue to be notified.

**14. Any other business**: A letter had been received from Lizzie Hales (one of the region’s musical directors) who is doing research into musical theatre, inviting members to take part in a survey she is conducting. The full letter will be forwarded to societies for action.

Thanks were expressed to all who had contributed to making the day a success and to members for promoting and supporting NODA within their societies.

**Presentation of awards:** The presentation of Poster & Programme Awards, Accolades of Excellence and Regional Awards then followed.