

Minutes of the NODA SE AGM held at The Assembly Rooms, Alton.

Sunday 8th June 2025

Present: as per registered list.

Regional Councillor, Mrs. Kay Rowan, welcomed members and friends to the meeting, and thanked the staff of the Assembly Rooms for their hospitality and assistance. She then introduced the President of the National Operatic & Dramatic Association – Graham Liverton and his wife, and the district representatives as follows:

District 1	Susanne Crosby	District 12	Gloria E Smith
District 2	Brenda Gower	District 13	Marie Coltman
District 3	Anne Lawson	District 14	Chris Horton
District 5	Gordon Harris	District 16	Christine Blow
District 7	Doreen Grierson	District 17	Mark Allen
District 9	Keith Smithers	District 18	Pauline Surrey
District 10	Mark Donalds	District 19	Graham Botterill
		** absent	

1. Apologies for Absence: Graham Botterill, Marie Coltman, Mark Allen, Susanne Crosby, Brenda Gower, Lesley Nichols, Cathy Durrant, Hartley Players, Riverside Players, Kenley Holiday Workshop, Brighton Theatre Group, Kate Marshall, Sandie Thomson, Chrissie Blow, Keith Smithers, Millenium Players, Winchester Operatic Society, Leatherhead Operatic Society.

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. Sylvia Hall, Tom Williams, Ian Haynes, Phil Wilcox, Keith Macdonald.

3. Report of the Annual General Meeting held on 2nd June, 2024

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: Many of you know that today marks a significant milestone for me - this will be my final Regional AGM as your Councillor. If all goes to plan, I will take on the role of National President at the AGM in September.

One of the greatest privileges has been the opportunity to attend so many remarkable productions and meet countless dedicated and talented individuals and I've been especially moved by those who take the time to nurture and encourage the next generation of performers.

Over the years, I've travelled the length and breadth of this region, visiting every district - though I haven't quite managed to see every society. On average, I've clocked up more than 5,000 miles each year, and it's been worth every mile.

On the national stage, I've attended three Council Meetings — one in Warwick and two in Peterborough. These gatherings have been invaluable opportunities to exchange ideas and experiences with fellow trustees from across the UK. A particular highlight was the National AGM and Gala in Plymouth, which saw the inauguration of our President Graham Liverton.

Unfortunately, 2024 saw a dip in applications for long service awards -possibly a result of the post-COVID catch-up seen the year before. I encourage societies to take full advantage of the newer range of service badges now available, which provide a great way to recognise contributions well before the 25-year milestone.

I'd also like to highlight the new nickel version of our Long Service Medal — a more affordable option that maintains the look and feel of the original silver. The youngsters are not to be denied their badges and certificates either.

I continue to serve as Treasurer of the NODA Theatre Summer School - a beacon of excellence that attracts students from across the UK and beyond, including as far afield as Switzerland. In 2024, 19 students from the South East attended, with three receiving bursaries. This year we have 16 booked, though only one has received support so far. There's still time to register, so do check the NODA website for more information.

In 2024 alone, I visited 61 societies and submitted 14 production reports. Across the region, our dedicated Reps covered over 330 shows, and on behalf of all our Reps, I extend heartfelt thanks to the societies that have welcomed them so warmly. And a small plea: - early invitations make a world of difference to our planning!

Our Regional Committee met four times last year — twice via Zoom and twice in person in Barnham, Sussex. I am constantly impressed by the commitment, thoughtfulness, and passion that this team brings to our shared mission. A variety of topics are discussed including items brought up by societies and individuals and national topics including updating rules for the Poster & Programme Competition.

While I could name many individuals who have supported me throughout my tenure as Regional Councillor, I'd like to take a moment to acknowledge one person in particular – John Barnes. John preceded me as Regional Councillor and has been an invaluable mentor. Your Regional Committee is a remarkable team, and I thank them all for their dedication.

Finally, I want to thank you for the unwavering support you give to NODA and to each other. As volunteers, we do our best to support both societies and individuals, and it has been an honour to be part of this effort.

Here's to the future, and to the continued brilliance of theatre in the South East. Thank you.

6. Membership Secretary's Report: In 2024 we had a total of 225 societies and 39 Life, Individual or Joint members. We are now halfway through 2025 with a total of 217 societies affiliated to NODA; giving NODA SE a total membership of 256. We look forward to welcoming back those societies who have not yet renewed their membership.

In giving this report, which is the last one of my tenure, I would like to thank all the societies, individual and joint members for the support they have given to NODA and particularly to NODA South East.

Members were reminded to send details of any changes to their committees to the NODA Head Office and NODA SE Membership Secretary.

There were no questions and John Barnes was thanked for all his hard work.

7. Treasurer's Report: The South East region held no chargeable events in the year, so received no Income other than an allocation from central funds to enable the payment of costs and expenses. The South East region also has very limited costs. The breakdown of Expenses and Costs for the year is as follows:

	2024	2023
Show visits:	£ 2,314	£ 2,679
Workshops:	----- -	£ 25
Regional conference	£ 1,211	£ 869
National conference	£ 428	£ -
Committee meetings	£ 536	£ -
Bank Charges	£ 71	£ 36
Total Expenditure	£ 4,631	£ 3,609

Expenditure has increased this year due to additional involvement in both the Regional and National Conference, and with attendance at Regional Committee meetings. These are the only items in Receipts and Expenditure for the year.

Martin Sampson - NODA SE Treasurer

8. President's Address: I live in Devon in a place called Sidmouth where I was born. I was Counsellor for the Southwest before I became National President. From last October, my wife has driven me over 23,000 miles and I am indebted to her. Together we have seen well over 130 musicals, plays, concerts and pantomimes.

I want to take this opportunity to thank and congratulate your councillor Kay Rowan for all the good work she does for your region; she is an outstanding member of Trustees. At the end of September Kay will take my place as National President and I know she will make a great president. Thank you, Kay, for all you do for NODA; we are fortunate to have you.

I am continually amazed by the passion and commitment of everyone involved in NODA. From the smallest village halls to the grandest theatres, the heart and soul poured into our productions are astonishing. It is remarkable to see how theatre brings people together and one of the most delightful aspects of my visits has been witnessing the camaraderie and enduring friendships that flourish within our societies. There is a unique magic when people of all backgrounds come together to create something extraordinary, each contributing their talents, enthusiasm, and energy.

It is essential to celebrate the incredible work of our volunteers who run everything from ticket booths to lighting rigs often behind the scenes. Their dedication ensures that each performance is a success and for that they deserve our utmost gratitude, each one of you contributes to making NODA a vibrant and welcoming home for theatre lovers.

It is also worth noting the exceptional commitment of those who have dedicated their time to mentoring and inspiring the next generation of performers. Encouraging the youth within our communities to engage with the arts fosters the longevity of NODA's mission and by providing them with a platform to showcase their talent we lay the foundation for a vibrant and sustainable future.

As National President on behalf of NODA, I want to thank all of you for what you do. You serve the community, you give them terrific entertainment and bring audiences such joy in their lives, so without you NODA would not exist, so a deep heartfelt "thank you" to you all.

There are currently some changes afoot within NODA, to ensure that NODA remains relevant, visible and valued, and you will be advised of these as soon as we know.

I would also like to thank your Regional Councillor, Kay, and your regional team for their unstinting help and encouragement to the many groups that make up NODA South East, and for arranging this AGM and Celebration Event. The AGM is a legal requirement, whilst the celebration, is a celebration of NODA and of our hobby; but so much work goes into the organisation of these gatherings and without the regional reps. and all the regional teams I am not sure there would be a NODA for us to celebrate.

This is a good opportunity to remind everyone that all NODA Societies can invite the President to their productions. I am always delighted to be invited, and if I can possibly come, I will.

I think we have the best hobby in the world, providing as it does, friendship, camaraderie and a real sense of achievement as you continue to entertain local audiences to such a high standard. Carry on the great work. Thank you, NODA South East!

9. Election of S.E. Councillor – Sue Sampson – under Rule 23 no other nominations having been received Sue Sampson was duly elected to serve as Councillor for the South-East Region.

10. Election of Regional Representatives 2025-2026:

Proposed and re-elected en bloc:

District 1	Susanne Crosby	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 7	Doreen Grierson	District 17	Mark Allen
District 9	Keith Smithers	District 18	Pauline Surrey
District 10	Mark Donalds	District 19	Graham Botterill

11. Appointment of officers 2025 -2026

Hon Treasurer	Martin Sampson
Hon Secretary	Pauline Catterall
Hon Membership Secretary	John Barnes
Youth Coordinator East	Susanne Crosby
Youth Coordinator West	Mark Allen

12. Appointment of co-opted members 2025 -2026

Hon Editor	Chris Horton
Hon Awards Secretary	
Hon Web Manager	Mark Donalds
Media Guru	Mike Mullen

13. Regional Conference 2026 (to be confirmed)

14. We have received a message from the Chief Operating Officer Dale Freeman and I propose that a copy is made available on the South East section of the NODA website and also in the next newsletter.

15. Any other business: A report on Summer School by Graham Botterill was read by Gloria Smith. Thanks were expressed to all who had contributed to making the day a success and to members for promoting and supporting NODA.

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