

Report from Dale Freeman – Chief Operating Officer

To all the NODA volunteers in the South East, I extend grateful thanks on behalf of NODA for your commitment and dedication in supporting and working with NODA members in this region, each and every week of the year.

It is important to re-emphasise that NODA is totally committed to providing the best and most accessible range of services for the benefit of all our members directly and indirectly. And we can take great encouragement and positivity for the future of amateur theatre as we emerge fully now from the more damaging impacts of Covid-19.

We are currently in the midst of the annual subscription renewal period for all society members. Just to remind you, society membership runs from April 1st until March 31st. If you have already renewed – thank you. A prompt renewal saves us resources and indeed money; particularly with postage costs as they are. If you haven't renewed, please return the form that was sent to you in the post or call us at head office to renew over the phone, or, as many are doing now, you can renew online via the website. If you haven't received a form please contact head office for a copy.

The membership structure, in terms of banding, is always based on your ticket revenue received for the previous year. So, the information we need to renew your membership is your gross box office takings from April 1st, 2023, to March 31st 2024. I stress this is the gross figure, not the figure after you have paid out all expenses.

Legal Advice

NODA, whilst not being a governing body, is in a position to provide advice and guidance from specialist professionals in their respective fields of expertise and knowledge both on a one-to-one basis or through our highly informative factsheets. The NODA Legal Helpline is provided by Counterculture LLP who are based in Sheffield, and Health and Safety Advice provided by NODA Safe, a 3rd party company. These are invaluable resources and are used on a regular basis by many members.

The dedicated NODA pantomime website (pantoscripts.org.uk) with the facility to examine scripts, order perusal copies and complete licensing arrangements is going from strength to strength. 2023 saw a substantial increase in pantomime licences being issued. We have many new and

fresh authors in our stable and the number of licences we are issuing is testimony to the writing quality of the scripts. I urge you please, if you haven't considered NODA pantomimes, to have a look at the titles on offer.

Long service awards continue to be offered to the membership and continue to sell well for us, in fact one of our 3 key income streams. Thank you to those that purchase these and I know many of you have for many, many years.

Don't forget also that NODA are able to process **DBS** applications for you, NODA being an umbrella body. This is another service that is exclusive to NODA members. We are currently processing dozens on behalf of our members every week of the year.

This year sees **NODA's 125th anniversary**. NODA was formed in 1899 and we are proud of our organisation and equally proud to be still here, still supporting amateur theatre, still relevant and still looking at ways to ensure we are here for the next 125 years for our 250th. What a celebration that will be!

Future CHANGE

The coming 12 months will see a revised phase in our rolling 5-year plan to include:

- An exciting new **marketing** and **branding** strategy.
- Enhanced **volunteer training** program.
- New Investments in **technology and web site design**
- Improved **social media communications** with our members, already happening in earnest.

Front and centre in our plans will be a **NEW BRAND STRATEGY** for NODA and this includes new branding – a new logo included.

This has been some 18 months in the planning to ensure we get it absolutely right. It is a significant investment and must be right, hence the time it has so far taken.

THE 'NEW NODA' WILL BE LAUNCHED AT THE NATIONAL AGM & CELEBRATORY WEEKEND IN SEPTEMBER IN PLYMOUTH.

Future Challenge

- The challenge is for us all to make sure that NODA is - and is known for, and respected for being - **relevant, visible, and valued**. Let me elaborate briefly...
- **Relevant:** If we are to thrive, we must make sure that we celebrate, support and champion all amateur theatre and provide the support and services our members need and continue to inspire and to create opportunity for individuals, groups, and their communities.
- **Visible:** Take a leading role in promoting the unique benefits and positive impacts of this wonderful pastime - supporting our members to spread the word. Inspiring all the audiences and stakeholders who can help our members, and NODA, to thrive.
- **Valued:** NODA must recognise that we are here for the benefit of our members and volunteer community, with the highest quality services helping to create opportunity; so that we can help them to be the best they can be.

The first signs will be a new brand identity for the organisation; It will be at the heart of how we build and design a new website and online tools for NODA members. Embedding this new brand into our plans and activities beyond marketing and communications.

The strategy articulates a new definition of the role of NODA; making clear what we are here to do, why we are here: and how we partner with our members so that the greater number of people and communities, everywhere can enjoy the fantastic benefits and impacts of the unique pastime that we love so much.

On closing, thank you for your time and I trust you have had yet another enjoyable NODA South East conference and I send you my very best wishes to you and yours for 2024.

Dale Freeman – NODA COO.