

Stage Management Association

Minutes of the 2020 Annual General Meeting

30th July 2020 17:30 by Zoom

Present:

Andy Rowley, Ali Wade, Ruth Sidery, Owen Thomas, Arran Pallan, Katherine Montagu, Julia Reid, Amy Wildgoose, Jane Williamson, Sarah Yelland, Catherine Simpson, Mark Shayle, Anna Hill, John Blunden, Sharon Hobden, Frances Howell, Andrew Killian, Alison Pottinger, Adam Harrison, Luisa Braun, Antonia Collins, Gail Pallin, Diana Fraser, Louise Gregory, Emily Palmer, Kevin Mullery, Claire Litton.

Apologies:

Emma Hansford

The 2020 meeting was held via Zoom due to the Covid19 pandemic and the restrictions in place preventing an in-person event.

It was agreed that throughout the meeting we would use a show of hands only for objection or abstention, not approval, due to the limitations of using Zoom for the AGM.

Andy Rowley (AR) confirmed that no proxy voting forms had been received ahead of the AGM

1. Election of Chair for the AGM

Ali Wade (AW) was elected as chair of the meeting.

2. Minutes of 2019 AGM for approval

Minutes of the 2019 AGM were approved without objection and without any abstentions.

3. 2019 Accounts for approval

AW introduced Luisa Braun (LB), the SMA's Freelance Chartered Accountant and invited her to talk about the 2019 accounts.

LB stated that the turnover looked better than previous years, with costs balanced to turnover. LB reminded members that we are a non-profit organisation and that this means income is spent rather than accrued as profit and we should therefore not expect to see a substantial profit reflected in our accounts. Software recently purchased has enhanced reporting. LB stated that she felt that as long as Stage Managers keep doing what they do, and the SMA continues to offer its services, there is no reason that finances should not be in good shape beyond the pandemic.

AR answered a question posed by Adam Harrison (AH) regarding the seemingly high IT costs shown in the accounts, stating that these reflect the fact we bought a new website last year; we had previously hired a developer 2 years earlier who had not completed the project they were contracted for and had reimbursed us and now contract a different developer, The Website Department. The cost of the website itself is relatively small but the costs shown in the accounts reflect instalment payments for the development of the new website, as well as the monthly running cost, which is around £59/month. We also have general IT costs of around £180/month. We work with ITD for this IT support, who also work with ABTT.

The accounts were approved with no objections or abstentions.

4. Board Members due to be reconfirmed and New Board Directors

AW introduced Board Members due to be reconfirmed for a further term of 3 years and new Board Member Nominees, and shared their statements to the screen:

- **Emma Hansford** standing for a second 3-year term;
- **Ruth Sidery** standing for a second 3-year term;
- **Owen Thomas** standing for first 3-year term. Owen was previously co-opted partway through the year and has been leading on engagement with stage managers in Scotland, where he has been doing fantastic work;
- **Arran Pallan** due to be co-opted, with a view to becoming a full board member when he transitions from Graduate to Professional membership, as rules currently state that elected Board Members must be professional, retired or honorary members. Arran is keen to lead on SMA work which aims to increase diversity in backstage roles. Arran is also based in the Midlands which will be useful for SMA representation in that area;
- **Katherine Montagu** standing for a first 3-year term. Katherine teaches at Bath Spa University and has extensive experience in the dance world, an area of work not currently represented on the SMA Board.

No objections or abstentions received and therefore all nominees were elected and welcomed on board with an impromptu round of applause.

AR asked all new Board Members to wave to show themselves to the meeting and acknowledged the hard work that board members do which often goes unseen.

AW noted that the SMA Board now has really good representation across the UK and can no longer be said to be London-centric.

5. David Ayliff Lifetime Achievement Awards

There were 2 nominations for the David Ayliff Lifetime Achievement Awards: Jason Barnes and David Edwards. Jason was admitted to the meeting at this point. David was sadly not well enough to attend.

Andrew Killian was invited to talk about nominee Jason Barnes and Antonia Collins was invited to talk about David Edwards.

AR offered some background to the history and process of the Lifetime Achievement Awards and announced that this year we had decided that both nominees should receive the award. This was followed by a round of applause.

Jason Barnes made an acceptance speech thanking his nominators and SMA members, also commending David Edwards.

6. Questions and statements from the floor

Andrew Killian let the meeting know that Terance Dickson had experienced difficulty accessing the Zoom meeting and was disappointed not to be in attendance, but sent his best to all.

Sharon Hobden asked how many members the SMA currently has. AR answered that this was a complex issue as we had extended the membership grace period over the pandemic for those

experiencing financial difficulties and finding themselves unable to pay, thereby allowing them to retain membership for the time being. Additionally, we had introduced a new monthly payment scheme for those struggling to meeting quarterly or yearly payments. Despite the pandemic, the SMA was in good financial shape with around 600 professional members and around 700 members in total. Reporting the exact number of members at this time was difficult as we had allowed people in financial difficulty to remain in the membership, on the basis that at this extremely difficult time, they needed the support of the SMA more than ever. The SMA have also had some financial support from Southwark Council.

7. Any other business

AR reminded the meeting about the weekly Zoom session that have been taking place on a variety of subjects and also that the SMA have entered into an alliance with others representing offstage professions: AAPTLE.

8. Discussion about Lockdown and the regeneration of our industry

AR led a group discussion about Lockdown and the regeneration of our industry. Discussion included the topics of writing risk assessments for Covid, how bubbles work, anxiety about travelling on public transport when returning to work, additional duties added to the stage management workload, additional training, and the necessity for a stage management originated strategy of what we need to return to work safely.

9. Vote of thanks to Sarah Yelland

Finally, AW proposed a vote of thanks to Sarah Yelland for her 7 years of service as a Board Director.

After parish notices of various upcoming Zoom sessions across the Stage Management community, the meeting closed at 18:40.