

HANGER FARM ARTS CENTRE CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

Minutes of the Hanger Farm Arts Centre Consultative Committee held at the Hanger Farm Arts Centre at 7.00pm on Monday 30 November 2009

PRESENT : Councillor L.E. Harris – Chairman
Councillor A. Weeks (representing Hampshire County Council)
Councillor Mrs. D.M. Brooks (representing New Forest District Council)
Mrs. P.M. Hibbert – local resident
Melissa Carter – Hanger Farm Arts Centre Co-Ordinator
The Deputy Town Clerk and Administrative Officer

CHAIRMAN

It was proposed by Councillor Mrs. D.M. Brooks and seconded by Melissa Carter and unanimously agreed that Councillor L.E. Harris be Chairman of the Committee for the forthcoming year.

INTRODUCTIONS

As there had been changes to the administrative officers servicing the meetings from the Town Council, the Deputy Town Clerk and Administrative Officer introduced themselves to those present at the Meeting.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were noted from Councillor J.M. Sawyer, Mr. D. Thomas (Assistant Principal, Skills, Totton College), Mr. T. Malcolm (Totton College), and Rob Iliffe (Hanger Farm Arts Centre).

MANAGER'S REPORT

The Arts Centre Co-Ordinator presented her report. The Autumn / Winter 2009 / 2010 programme had seen a new method of advertising material distribution to the area, via Schools and it was noted that there had been a positive response through the bookings. Although the Centre was noticing the current economic downturn, it was identified that the Centre had seen a small increase in the attendance numbers at 60% of potential audience capacity.

This compared favourably to 37% in 2007 and 57% in 2008. The management team had been working with Hampshire County Council in an arts initiative called "Never Seen Live". This scheme offered free tickets to Hampshire residents for selected events, with discounted tickets at future productions as a gradual build up to becoming a regular customer. In addition to events, the Committee continue to accommodate as many other bookings, especially from smaller local productions. It was proving a positive move insofar as there were now very few weeks of the year without any bookings for the theatre. In the future it was hoped to increase the usage of the Meeting Room for business meetings and courses, which would optimise the Centre's income potential.

The former Technician left at the end of 2008, and following a reorganisation the position was split into three parts. The new Technician is employed on a casual basis; with a further new recruit of Arts Centre Assistant who is able to cover when others are not available. The third position is deployed via Totton College when assistance is required for productions and exams.

CURRENT PROGRAMME AND FUTURE FUNDING

It was noted that there had not been any approach to the County Councillors of Totton South and North, for a donation from their Civic Funds that were allocated to Worthy causes. Councillor A. Weeks said he would certainly consider any approach made by the Centre, and pointed out that this could be done through the Hampshire County Council website. "Hog The Limelight" continued to be sponsored by the Town Council up to the sum of £1000 per annum.

MAINTENANCE ITEMS

The Centre Co-Ordinator was pleased to report that the previous problem with roof lead being stolen had ceased following the installation of ridge tiles. She also mentioned the problem of inoperable lights outside the Centre, which made some staff feel vulnerable later in the evening, although this was being overcome by temporary use of existing bollard and wall lights. The Deputy Town Clerk said that an engineer was shortly due to examine the lighting, which was controlled by light sensitive cells that may need a degree of fine tuning based on the hours of light and darkness.

Mrs. P.M. Hibbert enquired if the Centre directional road sign on Ringwood Road had been replaced yet. The Deputy Town Clerk replied that he would investigate and pursue Hampshire County Council as the sign was their responsibility.

The occasional high temperature in the auditorium was discussed, and The Deputy Town Clerk stated that the Town Clerk had discussed installation of air conditioning but was unable to proceed due to the high cost. It was hoped that some grants may be available however none had yet been identified. As the building was "listed" care had to be given with any equipment installed, and operational noise bearing in mind the needs of the theatre itself. This would also prove problematical in respect of natural ventilation.

ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Councillor A. Weeks suggested that the Centre might wish to engage a "big" name performer, which would in turn assist in the publicity. The Arts Centre Co-Ordinator suggested that this may not be cost effective as the fees levied by such performers often outweighed any potential profit margin – when the theatre was limited to an audience of 200 at any one time.

Councillor A. Weeks enquired whether there could be a joint publication between the Arts Centre and "Your Local News" that was produced and circulated at the Civic Centre. The Administrative Officer said he would follow this suggestion up with the Town Clerk.

DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting of the Hanger Farm Arts Centre Consultative Committee be arranged for Tuesday 08 June 2010.

The Meeting closed at 7.35 pm.