

Fun Théâtre Communautaire - AGM

Minutes of the meeting

Date: Thursday, October 15

Time: 7:30 p.m.

Location: Château Jasmine, Passais la Conception.

Approximately fifteen members attended the meeting, plus three invited potential new members.

The president of the association chaired the meeting and presented all of the following, with the exception of the treasurer's report.

The president opened the meeting by thanking Gary for hosting our AGM at Chateau Jasmine.

AnnA Chausserie translated into French for the president and the treasurer.

President's report on activities since last AGM (May 2019)

Following our successful pantomime in March 2019, we recognised that Fun Théâtre Communautaire (FTC) should have a longer life, and therefore the 2019 AGM was primarily used to prepare for that. We established two additional posts for officers of the association, bringing the total to 4, and Graham Follett, Richard Biddlecombe, Tina Young and Véro Reinaudo-Sorin were elected to these posts.

We also appointed Joan Peagam as non-executive Membership Secretary. We also established a steering committee to help decide on the activities of the association, and six members volunteered for this.

The association has undertaken a number of activities over the last year.

- We had a number of 'workshop' meetings, during which we used play scripts to help with understanding acting techniques.
- We performed a short play at the Chateau Jasmine summer event in August 2019. This was in English with French subtitles. Although this play had only two actors, six members were involved with the production: directing, creating sub-titles, sound and vision, and acting.
- It was decided that our next big spectacular would be a murder mystery play with dinner in March 2020. The script was written and edited during the latter part of 2019, and we rehearsed all through January and February into March 2020. Over 30 people were involved in the preparation for this.
- The preparation for the murder mystery play included the purchase of materials and the construction of some additional scenery, the preparation and printing of posters, tickets and programmes, are the purchase of sound and lighting equipment.
- The sound and lighting equipment was a major purchase, the need for which was identified during the production of our pantomime in 2019. It was a promise made to the members that would make good use of the profit made from the pantomime, supplemented by members' subscriptions. Unfortunately we never got to see the full benefit of the purchase, due to the cancellation of the murder mystery, but we did practice with it in the last two rehearsals.
- The murder mystery play had to be cancelled just one week before the opening night, after many months of work had gone into the script and rehearsals. The programmes were delivered just two days after the cancellation. These are now redundant, but I have copies for every member who would like one. Maybe it will provide a memento of what nearly was.

This summary was confirmed as correct by a show of hands of all members present

Financial report, including update on current finances

This report is in two parts.

1. The Financial situation as at the end of March 2020
2. The revised situation to date.

PART ONE

During the year, in preparation for the Murder Mystery production we had spent 3620.84 euros (of which 2830 euros was paid to the Bistrot du Coin for the provision of meals, together with 150 euros for the hire of the use of the kitchen), and had taken 3775 in ticket sales. The other source of income was from membership subscriptions which amounted to 820 euros and we had costs of 211.61 to cover insurance and bank charges. There was a surplus of income over expenditure of 762.55.

Before the end of March, and to enable the Murder Mystery production to go ahead, a decision was taken to purchase sound and lighting equipment. The equipment, and personnel, used for the pantomime was not available for the Murder Mystery, and the President agreed to purchase the equipment on behalf of the Association as we did not have sufficient funds available. This is now shown as a loan to the Association under Current Liabilities and the equipment is shown as assets on the Balance Sheet.

PART TWO

You will know from the email to Members on 22 September that, as a result of the decision to cancel the shows, we are now in the position of refunding tickets upon application by ticket holders. To date we have refunded 87 tickets, and have received donations to the equivalent value of 25 tickets and we have a balance of 77 tickets which are due to be refunded at a potential cost of 1540 euros, with just over 470 euros available in our account.

As we have been unable to recover any of the monies paid to the Bistrot du Coin, the President has confirmed that he is prepared to stand guarantor to the Association and fund a shortfall in the form of a loan to the Association. However, we are preparing to submit an application to the Department of the Orne for funding which the Department is making available to Associations that have encountered difficulties in their operation as a result of the pandemic. We hope that we shall be able, by making this application, to mitigate against any further need to call on the generosity of the President.

This summary was confirmed as correct by a show of hands of all members present

Proposal for modification to the membership fees

The current membership scheme was introduced in April 2019. The cost is 20 € per member (children free) - for a period of two years.

We propose to change this to 20 € for one year. This will apply to new members immediately, and to existing members from April 2021.

This change was approved by a show of hands of all members present

Election / re-election of officers

Our statutes require a minimum of two officers, with an allowed maximum of 6. At our AGM in 2019 the existing establishment of 2 officers was increased to 4. These roles are:

President: Graham Follett
Vice President: Tina Young
Treasurer: Richard Biddlecombe
Secretary: Véronique Reinaudo-Sorin

I wrote to all members asking for nominations for new officers. None have been received. I therefore asked those present, by show of hands, to re-elect these officers.

All officers were re-elected by a show of hands for each in turn

Non-executive and committee roles

We also believe that it will be beneficial to have a number of members who will volunteer to participate in activities such as selection of plays or scripts for acting workshops or future performances. We propose that a register of volunteers be established, and these members may be asked to participate in specific activities as they become necessary.

I asked for volunteers by show of hand, but I will also write to those members not here tonight to invite them to volunteer.

*Five people volunteered to be part of committees as required. These were:
Martyn Crowe, Martine Thibaud, Jane Caddick, Ellis Metselaar, Didier Roll*

The President and Officers invite any members not present to volunteer to be part of this group.

In order to be able to function, the committee will need access to contact details of other committee members, and possibly other members of the association. Joan Peagam has volunteered to produce the necessary permissions form in accordance with personal data protection requirements.

Our non-executive membership secretary is Joan Peagam, and I would like to ask her to confirm her willingness to continue in this role.

Joan confirmed her willingness to continue as membership secretary

The President would also like to thank AnnA Chausserie for her continuing support as translator during all of our major meetings.

The future

It is important that we look to the future for the association. We believe that it has become an important part of the local community, both in entertaining audiences, and providing a social and cultural outlet for our members.

*It was suggested, and agreed, that the existence of FTC helps
forge links between communities*

However, Covid 19 is still with us, its impact on our community, people across France and across the world is substantial and disruptive, and we cannot guess what the future will bring. This must inevitably influence the degree to which we can plan our future activities.

The officers have discussed this at length, and we believe that it would be a mistake to assume that we can produce a major spectacular next year.

Despite all the work that has gone into it, we believe that 'Passais Villages a un incroyable Talent' must be put aside - at least for the next two years. We believe we will have insufficient people who are willing or able to commit to it for next March, and there is insufficient time to write, translate, edit and print a new script for rehearsal in January.

Also, any major show will be difficult for 2021. We need 6 or seven months to produce a new bi-lingual show from scratch, and that is a very long period, during which the Covid situation can change many times.

But there is still much that we can and will do.

We propose to plan at least two small stage plays for 2021. These plays will involve less people, will require no writing, will require no scenery, and will take less time to prepare. Therefore, we can plan for these small shows with less fear about possible cancellation. The proposal is to fix dates for these shows, and to work towards those dates, but with the knowledge that they can be cancelled or postponed at short notice and with little to no cost.

At the moment we have two specific proposals for 2021

The Sunshine Boys

This is a play with just five actors. It will be presented as a 'radio' play, so that it requires no set, and the rehearsal process is shorter and simpler.

Prior to Covid, this play was to be performed in three small venues later in November 2020. However, these venues are too small for social distancing, and the Covid situation is still very difficult for audiences. We have therefore cancelled these shows.

I had a very good meeting with Catherine and Béatrice at the theatre this week, and we have been offered dates for shows next year.

As we have already done much of the preparation work for The Sunshine Boys (we have the actors, and we had a 'ZOOM' rehearsals during lockdown), we will plan to produce this play at the theatre in March 2021. It will be for 2 or 3 nights, on 26, 27 and 28 March. We will advertise this soon, but will not sell tickets until much nearer the time.

The president also mentioned the degree to which these arrangements will address social distancing requirements

A French play

The Sunshine Boys is in English, and will be an all English production. In our statutes we have a clear commitment to working in both languages. We feel it is important therefore to keep a balance, and therefore we will be looking for a French play that will be suitable for presentation - also as a 'radio' play.

At the moment we are considering 'Le dieu du carnage' by Yasmina Reza. This also has a small cast (4 people), so can be readily prepared while observing Covid constraints.

Also, although this is a play written in French by a French playwright, it is also available in an officially translated version in English: 'The god of carnage'. There is therefore the possibility of presenting this in both languages (on different nights).

This will therefore be a very good play for us to work on together in workshops. Although it requires only four actors, there is the option of having different actors each night, and therefore involving more of you.

We have three groups of provisional dates offered to us by the theatre. These are all in November 2021, and each group is for 4 nights: Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.

Our proposal is to initially work with our volunteer committee members to decide how and when to set up workshops for these plays, and to choose dates.

Chateau Jasmine

We have another potential venue that could be available for us. Chateau Jasmine. We did consider this for The Sunshine Boys, possibly this autumn, but we now feel that this has to be next year - and in the theatre.

However, with plenty of outdoor space, and the option to move into the bar area if the weather gets bad, this could be an excellent summer venue. We have already performed one short play here as part of Gary's summer event in 2019. So maybe there is an opportunity if he has a show next year, or maybe something of our own.

Shakespeare in the garden, for example A Midsummer Night's Dream, could be perfect for her. Something else for our committee to consider.

For both of the two above items, it was noted that we have a particular shortage of male, French-speaking actors. It was agreed that we should try and address this - possibly with an article in the Publicateur

2022

This is far ahead, but it will be good for us to consider possibilities. We believe that this might be an appropriate time to produce another major spectacular; perhaps another pantomime in March 2022.

Again, we will use the volunteer committee to help progress this, and we will consult all of you regarding your wish to participate. If we are going to do this in March 2022, we will need to start preparing a script in August or September 2021.

The president added that he felt that planning for these and other activities was important to the life of the association. There was general agreement to this.

Any other business

I invited everyone to ask questions or to comment or make suggestions.

Joan Peagam thanked the president for his continuing work for the association, in particular for handling the very difficult situations arising from the enforced postponement, and then cancellation, of the murder mystery. Also, the support of other officers of the association, which has been so valuable during this difficult period. The president reiterated the importance of the support he has received from the officers of the association during this period, and that he has valued this support.

(I would also like, now, to mention the work that Richard is currently doing, with invaluable help from Véro and AnnA, in making an application for financial help from the department of Orne. This application is being made in respect of the losses incurred due to the impacts of Covid 19: specifically the irrecoverable costs of printing and advance payments for catering for the event).

Additional note from the president to all members of the association

As I mentioned at the AGM, I feel that looking forward and planning for possible opportunities to work together and produce theatre performances for local audiences is very important for the continuation of FTC. There was general agreement to this from this at the AGM. Nevertheless, we must continue to be cognisant of the presence of Covid 19; not only of the prevailing regulations and official constraints to our activities, but also the health and well being of each other and those around us.

Hence, why it is our proposal during 2021 to plan only those activities and shows that can be undertaken safely and may be readily changed or cancelled without significant impacts to our association or others.

However, the choice to participate or not must be that of each individual. I would be very pleased if each and every one of you continues to be a member of FTC and continues to support the association and its members. But there must be no pressure on anyone to undertake anything that he or she is not comfortable with, and your choices will always be respected.