



**Friends of Finchley Youth Theatre**

## **AGM & Supporters' Meeting**

**Thursday 1st October 2015 at 8:00pm  
at Finchley Youth Centre, 142 High Road, London N2 9ED**

### **Present**

Adelson Cadette, Arjun Mitra, Catherine Nolan (treasurer), Emilia Georgiou (trustee), Julia Ross, Ken Osborne (secretary), Liz Sacre (FYC Manager), Marie Clarke (trustee), Max Herd, Megan Fellow, Roger Chapman (chairman), Stephen Allen

### **1. Welcome and Introduction**

Roger Chapman welcomed everyone to the meeting. There was then a round the table introduction of attendees.

Apologies for absence had been received from: Cllr Alison Moore, Carolyn Pickles, Cathy Pellegrinelli, Christine Marchesi, Deborah Dudgeon, Jackie Keogh, Judy Osborne, Katy Hoodfar, Laura Davitt, Lene Venga, Marley Seville (trustee), Marian Stratton (trustee and previous treasurer), Robina Spinks, Shelley Gibbons, Sophie Thompson, Stan Spinks.

### **2. Annual Reports – A look back over the past year's activities of the Friends**

#### **2a Chairman's report**

Roger said that this had been a good year for FoFYT. He said that FoFYT's purpose was to fund raise and support the work of Finchley Youth Theatre. Funds has been increased from donations and ticket sales made at various shows put on by FYT, from the East Finchley Summer Festival and from private donations. Other organisations willing to support FoFYT (by donations or facilities) included East Finchley Open and The Archer newspaper.

Income had been spent on sponsored places to allow disadvantaged young people to do courses at Finchley Youth Centre and to purchase equipment for the theatre.

Roger said that after FoFYT had been in abeyance for several years until its resurrection in 2012 he was pleased with the progress which had been made this year. He added that there had been various discussions with Barnet Council about the future of FYC and the trustees were also investigating other potentially useful links such as the Phoenix Cinema.

He continued by saying that FoFYT had recently started a History Project to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of FoFYT. Catherine would be speaking about that project later (see **§5** below).

#### **2b Secretary's Report**

Ken Osborne said that there were now 76 supporters and mentioned the website [www.fofyt.co.uk](http://www.fofyt.co.uk) which was managed by the webmaster Tony Batchelor who lives in Denmark (but who used to live in West Finchley with strong ties to the theatre). Ken said that he liaised with Tony to get changes and additions made to the website and gave thanks to Tony for his invaluable work.

Ken continued by saying that his main role was writing the minutes of the meetings - the Supporters' meeting and the FoFYT Board meetings (which were attended by the Trustees & Liz every couple of months). He said

that the Board meeting minutes are not published on the website but can be sent to any supporter who wishes to see them. After a brief discussion it was agreed that the Board meeting minutes should also be published on the website.

**New Action 1/151001 - Ken Osborne to arrange for FoFYT Board meeting minutes to be available on the [fofyt.co.uk](http://fofyt.co.uk) website**

Ken added that there was also a Friends of Finchley Youth Theatre Facebook page which Roger looks after, and encouraged people to look at it and contribute.

## **2c Treasurer's Report**

In the absence of the previous treasurer Marian Stratton, and since Catherine Nolan had only just taken over, Roger presented the Income and Expenditure report and Balance Sheet covering financial year 2014/15 and the current FY to 16 July 2015.

Hard copies of the report (which can be seen at **Annex 1** to these minutes) had been handed out to attendees.

There was no significant discussion.

## **3. Appointment of trustees**

The FoFYT Constitution requires that all trustees are elected/re-elected at the AGM. The existing trustees were all willing to continue, with the exception of Sarah Marchesi who had resigned recently (and had been thanked by the Board at her last meeting).

### **3a Chairman**

Roger Chapman (existing chairman) was re-elected as Chairman.

### **3b Secretary**

Ken Osborne (existing secretary) was re-elected as Secretary.

### **3c Treasurer**

Marian Stratton had now been replaced by Catherine Nolan who was re-elected as Treasurer.

### **3d Other Trustees**

All other existing trustees (Marian Stratton (previous treasurer), Emilia Georgiou, Marie Clark and Marley Seville) were re-elected.

Roger said if anyone else wished to become a trustee they should inform the meeting or contact him or the secretary in the future. There were no volunteers from the meeting.

## **4. Agreement to new bank account signatories**

Changes to the signatories to the FoFYT bank account (currently the Co-operative Bank) would be dealt with by the Board.

## **5. History Project on the Finchley Youth Theatre - All contributions welcome**

Catherine Nolan gave a verbal presentation and passed around a folder of information on the history of Finchley Youth Theatre.

She gave a "brief" synopsis of what we have regarding the history of the building. She said that there are lots of gaps so if anyone has anything to add then please let us know. Point 6 of the purpose of FoFYT is "Researching and Recording the history of Finchley Youth Centre and its impact on the local community". As next year marks 20 years of the charity the Board felt that this was a good opportunity to focus on this aim. The building at 142 High Road has been known by at least 5 various names. These are; The Primitive Methodist Chapel, Trinity Methodist Church, Finchley Youth Hall, Finchley Youth Theatre and Finchley Youth Centre.

The complete text of Catherine's presentation is given at **Annex 2** to these minutes.

At the end of her presentation Catherine explained the sort of things that we needed from people to complete the history - recollections from their time here, photographs from shows or backstage, show programmes or anything of a similar nature that they wouldn't mind giving us or making a copy for us.

Catherine added that we would also like as many people as possible to know about the project. So if any Supporters know someone who might also have information then please let them know.

Julia asked what we are doing with this information. Catherine said that we hoped to set up a display next year and maybe an open evening.

Ken wondered whether the information should be put on the FoFYT website. However it was recognised that some of the photos may have copyright issues.

Arjun mentioned Hugh Petrie, the archivist. Catherine said that she had already got some information from him.

Julia mentioned [www.historypin.org](http://www.historypin.org) which is a place for people to share photos and stories, telling the histories of their local communities.

Liz suggested that interviews with people who have some past knowledge of FYC could usefully be added and Julia suggested that past alumni of FYT could meet together and share memories.

Megan mentioned the People's Palace ([www.peoplespalaceprojects.org.uk](http://www.peoplespalaceprojects.org.uk)) which may also be a source of information or promotion.

## **6. A new future for the Theatre? Discussion on putting together proposals for the future running of the Theatre to put to Barnet Council**

Roger said that he had put this on the agenda since one of the main reasons for restarting FoFYT was due to financial threats to FYC. That had not happened so far but it was likely that there would be cuts in the future - it was difficult to see how those could be avoided (he said that the results of the library cuts consultation due to be released on Friday may be relevant). So Roger thinks that within 18 months we will face challenges.

Roger continued by saying that we now need to study the various options for the future running of FYC in case the Council funding threatened to curtail the current facilities and usage. Options included a Social Enterprise or a Mutual, for example. He said that the options should be documented and for that we may need to build up the skills of FoFYT by attracting new active members to the Board. He thought that the History Project was a good way of bringing past members into the forum to get their help.

Roger asked for the view of supporters on this issue.

Liz said that she believed that March 2017 will be the "crunch time" for the Council budget. Liz mentioned the "Youth Zone" - a national group of philanthropists who generate funds for universal youth services, eg. new buildings with rooms for youth to use. The Youth Zone in London has been given to Barnet. The Council will make a £6m contribution towards initial capital costs but not to current account costs. Liz did not think that this was a direct threat to FYC since the Youth Zone is universal and not targeted. Liz had spoken to her manager Karen Ali who was considering alternative ways of securing the future of the service, including considering various models (Social Enterprise/Mutual) Of the two buildings belonging to the Youth Service (Canada Villa and FYC), the fact that FYC generates income might make its future more secure.

Roger suggested that he meet with Karen to discuss matters further.

Liz continued by saying that another option was under the Localism Bill. Under this bill an organisation could ask the Council to fund the current running costs (£48k excluding Liz's salary).

Stephen asked Liz to explain what was meant by a Social Enterprise. Liz explained that a Social Enterprise is a not-for-profit organisation (so no shareholders or people taking money out of it) and can be funded by trusts and grants and all the money is ploughed back in. She said that we needed to be clear about our vision - to be concerned with arts facilities for children and young people. She said that all of the lettings were related to that vision (apart from the letting for the church).

Ken asked whether there was still some times available for more lettings. Liz said that there were currently some periods available but she needed letting officers available, and some gaps were needed for lettings for targeted groups requested by the Council.

Arjun said that there had been significant cuts over the past five years but there would be more over the next two years. He had a rough idea of the future Council budget but not on what it would be spent on. He agreed that FoFYT should study the options and seek funding from businesses.

Ken asked what would happen if the Council wished to sell the building since FoFYT could not possibly bid for that but Arjun thought it very unlikely that the building would be put up for sale.

Liz said that what we need is a ground swell of interest and re-engagement of the building and services - the stronger the community voice the better it will be to cope with future threats.

Stephen recalled that when the use of the building changed from a church to a youth centre there was a covenant stating for what purpose the building could be used. Liz said that she didn't know the full details but thought that Catherine Atkinson knew so she would contact her to try to find the exact wording.

**New Action 2/151001 - Liz Sacre to contact Catherine Atkinson to find out the exact wording of the covenant which is believed to apply to the use of the building**

## **7. Any other Business**

Roger said that during the East Finchley Christmas Festival on 5 December it was hoped that the building would be open between around 1pm and 3pm for local people to visit and possibly see some of the activities.

## **8. Date of Next Meeting**

No date was set. The Secretary will inform Supporters by email when a date has been agreed by the Board.

The meeting closed at 9:15pm.

### **Annexes:**

- **Annex 1** - Income and Expenditure and Balance Sheet
  - **Annex 2** - History Project presentation
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## Annex 1

## Income and Expenditure and Balance Sheet

Income and Expenditure Account 1 April 2014 - 31 March 2015		£	£
<b>Opening Balance</b>			<b>191.58</b>
<b>Income</b>			
Proceeds From Performance (C. Nolan)		237.49	
Contribution From East Finch. Commun. Trust (Christmas Festival)		500.00	
Proceeds From Charity Performances (Spectra )		565.94	
Proceeds from Performance (Jon Liv Seagull)		583.50	
Contribution For Repair of External Notice Board		98.10	
Donations via website		25.00	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>			<b>2,010.03</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Sponsored Places FYC (Airborne Circus)		152.00	
Web Hosting		22.50	
Equipment for Youth Theatre (headphones)		82.96	
Repair of External Notice Boards		£98.10	
Props/Set (Peter Pan Performance) (loan)		600.00	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>			<b>955.56</b>

Balance Sheet at 31 March 2015		£
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Bank and Cash Accounts		1221.05
Donations in PayPal		25.00
<b>TOTAL CURRENT ASSETS</b>		<b>1246.05</b>
<b>Current Liabilities</b>		
<b>TOTAL CURRENT LIABILITIES</b>		<b>nil</b>
<b>Bank Balance at 31 March 2014 (excludes PayPal)</b>		<b>1221.05</b>

Income and Expenditure Account 1 April 2015 - 16 July 2015		£	£
<b>Income</b>			
Peter Pan Return of Set Funds & Ticket Sales		600.00	
Donations via website		20.00	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>			<b>620.00</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>			
Web Hosting Fee		24.00	
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>			<b>24.00</b>

## Annex 2

### History Project presentation (by Catherine Nolan)

#### History of Finchley Youth Theatre

This is a brief synopsis of what we have regarding the history of the building. There are lots of gaps so if anyone has anything to add then please let us know. So, point 6 of our purpose is "Researching and Recording the history of Finchley Youth Centre and its impact on the local community". As next year marks 20 years of the charity the board felt that this was a good opportunity to focus on this aim. The building at 142 High Road has been known by at least 5 various names. These are; The Primitive Methodist Chapel, Trinity Methodist Church, Finchley Youth Hall, Finchley Youth Theatre and Finchley Youth Centre.

**The first section will focus on the building as Primitive Methodist Chapel/Trinity Methodist Chapel.** The Primitive Methodists moved onto the site at 142 High Road, East Finchley in 1905. This was the same year that trams first arrived in the area. The chapel was 'roughcast in a Gothic style', which is similar to its appearance today. We currently have very little on the time that the Primitive Methodists were here. However, we know why they left.

On 2 October 1940 (75 years tomorrow) at approximately 5.30am a High Explosive bomb was dropped between Leicester Road and Huntington Road in the rear of the shops on the high road. The bomb caused no fire, no damage to roads, no damage to mains or casualties. The police were sent out to investigate and one house was damaged. At 7.18am further investigation to Trinity (Primitive) Methodist Church and surrounding properties was undertaken, showing damage but no immediate attention required. Shortly after a building was found to be in a dangerous condition, evacuated, roped off and an engineer called. This resulted in the building being gutted by a bomb and the church joining with, we think, the King Street Methodists.

**The next section of the building's history was as a Youth Hall.** In 1946 Mr. W. H. Perry wrote to the Finchley Local Youth Committee regarding the possible purchase of the site that was Trinity Church, which had been inspected and thought suitable for the development of youth work. The committee decided that full consideration should be given to this as there was no site currently for youth work in the borough. They were then to contact Middlesex County Council regarding the purchase at the estimated cost of £3,750 and then a further £1,000 for repairs and decorations. There was some difficulty in meeting this, but by September 1947 the Chairman notes that the purchase had been completed and the purchase was saved by Mr Perry. 1948 Finchley Borough Council recommended that a proposal should go ahead that a youth centre be established in the former Trinity Methodist Church, East Finchley. On Saturday 28 February the rear half of the Youth Hall was opened. Councillor Bryson gave a brief history of the efforts to open a Youth Hall and said "the hall was for youth, and they should run it as they wanted it run". Willow Youth Club, All Saints' Youth Club, Finchley Theatre Club and the Under 20 Club performed to over 100 attendees. In the following period of 1948-9 it was used for a range of activities including; drama course, swimming course, pantomime, girls' keep fit class, girls' beauty demonstration, joint socials, dances and Christmas parties.

On the 13 May 1950 the front portion of the hall was opened by Mayor J. G. Bryson. The youth hall was then booked by Church End Youth Club (2 evenings per week), Under-Twenty Club (2 evenings per week), Finchley Theatre Club (Tuesdays) and Old Fincluans Table-Tennis Club (Tuesdays). This left the hall free for other events on Saturday evenings. There were also occasions where the hall was opened on Sundays, such as for the East Finchley Corps of the Salvation Army.

The new stage was opened on Saturday 31 October 1953. At this point there was changes to the lettings agreement and there was also an increase in the cost of letting. This cost was now £1 for both halls (for a performance) and 10/-d for just the front hall (for rehearsals). The youth hall also had works done on its sanitary accommodation in 1958.

In the years after the youth hall was opened, the Finchley Local Youth Committee approved purchases of a variety of additional items to allow the youth hall to function better. These included; 150 nesting chairs, an electric floor polish, a notice board, electrical supply to the stage, fire extinguishers, a 500 watt spotlight, a gymnasium (fibre) mat, a pair of steps, a springboard, proscenium curtains, stage switchboard and accessories. The youth hall was also gifted things it needed including; a billiard table and accessories from Councillor J. E. H. Duckworth and curtains (which were made into the side and back curtains for the stage) from Borough Council Chambers.

In 1953 the first local drama festival was held at Finchley Youth Hall. Soon the hall was hosting other events including; a regional drama day (11 May 1957), the Youth Project 1954 exhibition (3-6 November) and an international party (21 February 1957, 20 February 1958). It is clear to see that after the stage was opened the role of the youth hall was starting to shift. Not only were they hosting the local drama festival instead of St. Lukes, but they were also hosting special one-off drama courses (9, 16 and 23 of March), a course in producing and educating young people in aspects of technical theatre.

Like now the building also faced difficulties. Initially the Minister of Works refused to grant a licence for the stage erection. Then on the meeting on the 24 of June 1954 the minutes indicate that the council had been approached by someone wanting to buy the youth hall, but as no alternative site was found this did not happen. From the perspective of the Finchley Local Youth Committee they were in favour of selling the site because an alternative could allow for a wider range of activities.

Table tennis was a very popular aspect of the Youth Hall and rose to be one of the two best clubs in the North Middlesex League (alongside Elenborough Table Tennis Club). Past members included national junior champion, Laurie Landry and one half of the winning 1976 European Youth Boys doubles, Andy Barden.

**After a fire in 1991 the building changed its name again, this time to Finchley Youth Theatre.** After the fire the Archer reports that the building was rescued by Barnet Youth Services.

In 1996 (20 years ago) The Friends of Finchley Youth Theatre was registered as a charity.

In 1998 Finchley Youth Theatre performed at Chaville in France for May day.

We have a list of most of the shows from 2005 until 2015, including for the period from 2009 this also includes photos and newspaper articles.

In 2008 the new dance floor was installed.

On 6 November 2012 the Friends of FYT was re-launched as the future of the youth theatre was in question. As can be seen in the Archer, March 2011, there was little support for the cuts threatening the theatre.

**In 2013 London Borough of Barnet changed the name to Finchley Youth Centre.** This reflects some of the changes to the building, including the new mezzanine floor in the office area.

**What we need from supporters.** Simply- anything. The archives clearly have some major gaps. So if anyone has recollections from their time here, photographs from shows or backstage, show programmes or anything of a similar nature that they wouldn't mind giving us or making a copy of we would appreciate that. The other thing that we want, is to let as many people know about the drive as possible. So if you know someone who might also have information then please let them know.