



Friends of Finchley Youth Theatre

Supporters' Meeting

**Thursday 28th February 2013 7.30pm
at Finchley Youth Theatre, 142 High Road, London N2 9ED**

Minutes of Meeting

Present

Andrew Harrod, Cecilia Holmes, Cheryl Ferner-Reeves, Flo Armstrong, Jackie Keogh, Ken Osborne (minutes), Karen Ali, Lene Venga, Marian Stratton, Michaelle St.Vincent, Roger Chapman (chairman), Sarah Marchesi.

Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Arjun Mittra, Carolyn Pickles, Catherine Atkinson, Cathy O'Sullivan, Christine Marchesi, Katy Hoodfar, Robina Spinks, Shelley Gibbons, Stan Spinks, Sue Wall, Tark Butler.

1. Introduction and Welcome

Roger Chapman welcomed attendees to the meeting, in particular to Flo Armstrong (Barnet Council, Head of Youth & Community, Children's Service) and Karen Ali (Barnet Council, Operations Manager responsible for FYT) from Barnet Council.

There was then a round the table introduction of attendees.

2. Minutes of the Meeting held on 27th November 2012 and Matters Arising

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 27 November 2012 which had been issued as FoFYT Members Meeting 121127 minutes-rev1.doc on 7/12/12 were approved with no changes.

Matters arising:

Actions from the previous meeting had all been completed as follows:

Action 1/121127 - FoFYT Board to arrange meeting with Barnet Council to inform them of the re-activation of FoFYT and discuss issues

- Status: Roger, Ken and Sarah had met Flo Armstrong and Cllr Andrew Harper (Cabinet Member for Education, Children and Families) on 28/1/13. Barnet Council were supportive of the FoFYT and it was agreed that Flo should attend a future meeting (done at this meeting).
- Action closed

Action 2/121127 - Marian Stratton to draft leaflet for handing out at East Finchley festival on 8th December and send to the FoFYT Board members for approval

- Status: Completed and copies produced.
- Action closed

Action 3/121127 - Catherine Atkinson, Cecilia Holmes, Christine Marchesi, Marian Stratton & Sarah Marchesi to liaise and agree times of attendance to hand out leaflets on 8th December

- Status: Completed and many copies handed out during festival.
- Action closed

There were no other matters arising not otherwise covered by the agenda.

3. Discussion with Flo Armstrong, Head of Youth & Community, Children's Service

Roger introduced Flo Armstrong, Barnet Council's Head of Youth & Community, Children's Service. Flo thanked FoFYT for inviting her. She said that she would also be responsible for Barnet's libraries as from tomorrow.

Flo said that some good news was that there would be no cuts to funding in the next financial year (2013/14). It was intended to increase the utilisation of FYT which was in a perfect location with good transport links. The FYT foyer was now being used as a drop-in centre on Friday afternoons (with Canada Villa and Woodhouse Road also used for drop-ins on other days) - to give young people access to advice on community facilities.

Flo explained that the name of FYT was being changed to Finchley Youth Centre (FYC). The reason was to change people's perception that it was just a theatre, even though that was a very important function. The Council were keen to maintain all of its present and future functions (including the drop-ins and related workshops). Karen said that she expected that the signage outside the building would be changed in the next month or two to reflect the new name.

Flo said that she was delighted to have the Friends who could act as a strong voice in the event of any future budget cuts or developments which may affect the Centre.

In answer to a question Karen said that Liz Sacre would be continue to be based at FYC but she would also be responsible for some related activities elsewhere to further develop drama and arts. Karen explained that the Council would be investigating partnerships with other organisations, such as Chicken Shed, to help with the delivery of activities at FYC.

Flo said that at the moment there are some FYC lettings which are not arts related and although these would continue she was keen to encourage, and give priority to youth & arts related usage.

Andrew asked whether the opening hours would be extended to which Flo replied that they hoped to extend them a bit but would need to work with others to cover adequate staffing. She stressed the need to have the building fully utilised and also mentioned that a survey of parents had shown that payment for activities was preferred to losing those activities.

Flo said that now that she would also be responsible for the libraries she intended to investigate the scope for using those buildings also. Karen mentioned the need to ensure access to young people at other locations such as the Arts Depot.

Lene raised the fact that currently the age limit for young people with learning difficulties was 25 years old and wondered if there would be any provision for those people when they reached 26 (as would be the case with several current active members in the next couple of years). Jackie, Lene and Ken stressed the importance of doing something since at the moment they were a very closely knit group who attended activities at least twice a week and almost treated it as their second home. It was also important to retain the inclusive nature which allowed them to mix with the mainstream young people and to attend activities in familiar surroundings. Flo said that recently Kate Kennally, in the senior management team, had been discussing bringing adult and children's service together so Flo would check whether there would be any scope for funding to extend the use of FYC for over 25s. Cheryl said that she was personally very interested in doing something at FYC for the 25-35 age group on a weekly basis. Roger thought that as a charity, FoFYT may be able to access funds, eg. John Lyons Trust, which were unavailable to the Council, to help with funding a over-25 group.

Marian suggested that an article in the Archer local newspaper about the imminent theatre performance would be beneficial which could also mention the Friends. Flo said she was quite happy with that suggestion.

There was no further discussion with Flo and Karen who left the meeting at this point.

3. Role and purpose of the FoFYT

Roger introduced the draft paper "FoFYT Role and purpose-draft130215.doc" which had been issued to supporters. He expanded on the six areas which are repeated below:

1. **Building a Friends supporters organisation which will support the work and activities of the Finchley Youth Theatre and could include a volunteers group.**
2. **Working in partnership with the local authority and other partners e.g. developing close links with the London Borough of Barnet; local businesses, schools especially Oak Lodge, voluntary organisations and the wider community to explain the work of FYT and attract participation from across the community including parts that we have not yet reached.**
3. **Fundraising in support of FYT activities through, for example:**

- *attracting grant funding that is not available directly to the Council;*
 - *sponsorship of places for families facing financial hardship;*
 - *the direct raising of funds by appeals for equipment.*
4. **Promotion** of the activities of the Finchley Youth Theatre by publicising them to the local community via a FoFYT website, social media, exhibitions, posters, leaflets etc. Holding open days to allow the local community to visit and explore the building, its facilities and activities.
 5. **Having Fun** through socialising, holding events, exhibitions, talks and discussions about the Finchley Youth Theatre.
 6. **Researching and recording the history** of Finchley Youth Theatre and its impact in and on the local community.

Roger explained that the term "supporters" was now being used instead of "members" since there were no formal membership requirements (other than an email address) - more about keeping people who were interested in FYC to be kept informed and use their skills and time to help FYC as necessary.

Michaëlle said that she would repaint the footprints leading to the side door (which had now worn away).

Marian asked for people to help with serving and providing refreshments (cakes) and helping out front of house during the forthcoming FYT performance of *Something Wicked This Way Comes* Thursday 21st to Saturday 23rd March. This would also be a first small-scale attempt at fundraising. Ken would email the supporters' list to ask for volunteers.

Action 1/130228 - Ken Osborne to email supporters asking for volunteers to contact Marian Stratton to help with serving refreshments and providing cakes for sale and helping out front of house during the forthcoming FYT performance of "Something Wicked This Way Comes" Thursday 21st to Saturday 23rd March

Roger referred to the ability of charities to access funds which were not available to the Council. Michaëlle suggested that a "100 Lottery" club could be used to raise a small amount.

Marian suggested that the Archer could be used to publicise meetings of the FoFYT to ensure regular support and attendance.

Roger suggested that an open day would be a good idea, recalling that several people during the Christmas festival had expressed a wish to see inside the building (but not possible at the time due to the activities). It was felt that such an open day would have to take place in the school holidays or a half term when many of the FYT classes normally stopped - so possibly during the summer half-term. Marian wondered if there was anything particularly interesting which had happened at FYT which may attract people to visit. Roger recalled that before East Finchley became developed it was quite a notorious area for highwaymen (with a gibbet outside what is now the Barracuda cafe!). Expanding on that theme Michaëlle suggested a murder mystery evening.

The website was discussed briefly, noting that material is needed (meeting information, activities, historical information, etc.) and the menu needs to be rationalised - to be discussed further by the Trustees at the next Board meeting on 19 March. It was suggested that an alumni section could be added to list famous people who have participated in FYT activities in the past.

Marian recalled that there used to be a tuck shop open on Thursday evenings and wondered whether there was any scope for doing something similar, maybe on Saturday morning now that the Juice Bar has finished.

In concluding this agenda item it was agreed that the "Role and purpose" paper should be revised only to change FYT and Finchley Youth Theatre to FYC and Finchley Youth Centre. Roger would do that for issue to supporters.

Action 2/130228 - Roger Chapman to revise the "Role and purpose" paper to change FYT and Finchley Youth Theatre to FYC and Finchley Youth Centre

4. Any other business

Having agreed that the name of FYT would be changed, Roger would check with the Charity Commission and the Bank whether it was possible to easily change the name of FoFYT to Friends of Finchley Youth Centre.

Action 3/130228 - Roger Chapman to check with Charity Commission and Bank whether it was possible to easily change the name of FoFYT to Friends of Finchley Youth Centre

Further to previous discussion on allowing young people with learning difficulties to continue at FYC after they were 25 years old, Cheryl would draft a couple of "Vision" paragraphs to help build a funding case. Supporting statements from parents could be added.

Action 4/130228 - Cheryl Ferner-Reeves to send Roger Chapman a couple of "Vision" paragraphs to help build a funding case to allowing young people with learning difficulties to continue at FYC after they were 25 years old

There was a brief discussion on the possible need for increased caretaking facilities if FYC became more fully utilised.

Date of next meeting

No date set but agreed that 7:30pm was a reasonable time and that the meetings should take place approximately every three months. The Trustees would build up a calendar of dates for the whole of 2013 at their next Board meeting and advise supporters.

Action 5/130228 - Trustees to suggest meeting dates for 2013 and advise supporters
