



Friends of Finchley Youth Theatre

Supporters' Meeting and Annual General Meeting

**Wednesday 16th July 2014 at 8:15pm
at Finchley Youth Centre, 142 High Road, London N2 9ED**

Minutes of Meeting

Present

Andry Moustras, Arjun Mittra, Cheryl Ferner-Reeves, Christine Marchesi, Ken Osborne (secretary), Laura Davitt, Liz Sacre, Marian Stratton (treasurer), Roger Chapman (chairman), Sarah Marchesi.

1. Welcome, Introductions and Apologies

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

Apologies for absence had been received from: Alison Moore, Andrew Harrod, Carolyn Pickles, Catherine Atkinson, Cathy Pellegrinelli, Jackie Keogh, Judy Osborne, Lene Venga, Robina Spinks, Ruth Brown, Stan Spinks, Stephen Allen.

2. Cllr. Arjun Mittra - what future for FYT and youth provision in the coming years?

Roger explained that there had been a local election in May and that Arjun was continuing as a councillor so he had been asked to chat about the council's plans which may affect Finchley Youth Centre in the future.

Arjun - thanked FoFYT for inviting him to speak. He said that as an East Finchley councillor he had a nice job in the varied environment of East Finchley. Since the current Government came to power 2010 it had made large cuts, with particularly heavy cuts to local Government which now received half of the amount it received four years ago despite having gained more responsibilities. Barnet council's Government funding had been cut by £70m so far with another £70m cut due over the next years. With the Council having budgeted for only a £50m cut there was a £20m shortfall which would affect services. Some services had been outsourced over the past four years but Arjun was not convinced that this had saved any money.

Arjun explained that since the local election Barnet Council was in complete chaos due to changes in staff, a restructuring of the management system and committees, the budget cuts and outsourcing of the IT system to Capita which had resulted in the IT system collapsing due to mismatches between the old council systems and modern servers.

Marian asked whether the Council had recovered all of the money which had been invested in the Icelandic bank. Arjun said that there was still a loss of around £1.5m partly due to the complicated repayment method in various currencies. He further explained that the Council could not borrow money as most commercial enterprises could - the Government had stopped that in the 80's due to reckless borrowing by some councils.

Turning to Barnet Council finances and how it may affect FYC, Arjun said that there was no guarantee that FYC would not be affected by cuts in the next year. There were some large budget cuts planned but the detail of what departments would be affected was not yet available - probably not until October/November 2014. He personally thought that since East Finchley is a marginal seat there would be no bad news until after the General Election on 7 May 2015. Liz said that within the Council the main cuts were in the social services area since they have taken as much from Youth services as they can so she thought that the April 2015-March 2016 period would be stable as far as finance was concerned. She said that the FYC budget is quite small so not much would be gained but cutting it.

Arjun said that there were various funding opportunities for specific projects available from Barnet's £95m reserves. He mentioned the Digital Inclusion project (encouraging older people to use IT) and public health - the latter could possibly be available to FYC if the bid were suitably worded. There was also a special £100k per annum annual fund over 4 years for community projects but applications for this were not yet open.

Arjun mentioned that anybody could attend Council meetings and put a case for a specific cause - the first half-hour of meetings is available for public questions. The committee relevant to FYC is called CELS (Children, Education, Libraries & Safeguarding Committee - see <http://barnet.moderngov.co.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=697>). Arjun suggested that the future of FYC could be proposed as an agenda item.

There was a brief discussion on the possibility or need to consider bidding to run FYC or buying the building itself if the service became under threat in the future. Arjun mentioned the Community Right to Bid for services (see <http://mycommunityrights.org.uk/community-right-to-bid/>) which could be used to this effect although he thought that buying the building itself may not be very realistic.

In conclusion it was agreed that the best approach was to try to maintain the present FYC services and to publicise what it does and enhance its profile.

3. Discussion on what the Friends can do in the future

Covered by the discussion in §2 above.

4. Chairman's annual report including finance

Roger introduced the Income & Expenditure and Balance Sheet (previously issued to Supporters by email on 16/7/14 as FOFYT Expenditure_1Apr13-31Mar14+Balance31Mar-16Jul14.pdf).

For the financial year 2013-14 there was a net balance of income over expenditure of £5.58. The income from catering at FYC shows being £86.20 and expenditure of £80.62 on FoFYC T Shirts, Web Hosting and Catering Supplies for Shows.

Since 1/4/14 to date the net balance had increased to £508.04 with income of £613.50 from Catering At FYC Shows, Donations From Shows, a donation from the East Finchley Community Trust and other donations. Expenditure so far was £105.46 for headphones purchased for FYC and the annual web hosting fee.

Roger said that with a more healthy balance sheet there was now scope to provide some funding for disadvantaged young people to attend FYC courses that they would otherwise be unable to do so. A request for sponsorship form and the procedure to be used had now been agreed between the FoFYT trustees and Liz.

Roger continued by saying that FoFYT had bid for the "Awards for All" funding but had been unsuccessful since the rules required that the bid submitter (FoFYT) was the user of the funding - and in this case the user would have been FYC. He said that other funding sources were being investigated. He mentioned that the Donations page on the website was another source of funding.

Andry suggested that the notice board outside FYC could be used to publicise FoFYT and encourage donations. Liz thought that this should be possible.

Roger concluded his report by mentioning the very successful previous Supporters' meeting when Carolyn Pickles had given a very interesting talk. He said that she had agreed to be a Patron of FoFYT and he would be discussing some of her ideas in due course.

5. Appointment of Board members for the coming year

Roger said we can have up to 12 trustees on the Board of FoFYT. The current four members were willing to continue in their roles and he asked if anyone else wished to become a trustee (Ken had previously emailed Supporters asking that any who wished to be considered to let him know).

There were no volunteers to become an additional trustee so the current four trustees were re-elected.

Liz said that additional trustees would be useful if FoFYT wanted to take on bigger opportunities, particularly if FYC funding from the Council became under threat in the future.

6. Any other Business

None raised.

7. Date of Next Meeting

Although inadvertently not mentioned at the meeting, the Trustees propose that the next Supporters' meeting takes place on 22 October 2014.

The meeting closed at 9:30pm.
