



Friends of Finchley Youth Theatre

Supporters' Meeting

**Wednesday 22nd October 2014 at 8:15pm
at Finchley Youth Centre, 142 High Road, London N2 9ED**

Minutes of Meeting

Present

Adam Cohen, Alison Moore, Carolyn Pickles (patron), Catherine Atkinson, Christine Marchesi, Emilia Georgiou, Flo Armstrong, Josh Baldwin, Ken Osborne (secretary), Laura Davitt, Liz Sacre, Marley Seville, Robert Aronsohn, Roger Chapman (chairman), Sarah Marchesi (trustee), Stephen Allen, Zoe Kennedy.

1. 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: Agneta Harrison, Ajun Mitra, Alon Or-Bach, Andrew Harrod, Cheryl Ferner-Reeves, Judy Osborne, Jackie Keogh, Katy Hoodfar, Lene Venga, Marian Stratton (treasurer), Robina Spinks, Sam White, Sophie Thompson, Stan Spinks.

The agenda had been issued by Ken on 19/10/14. Roger said that he wanted to rearrange the order, taking Flo's item first since she was unable to stay for the whole meeting.

2. Flo Armstrong – Head of Youth and Community Services, London Borough of Barnet. Flo will run through the latest position with Barnet services and how they might impact on the Youth theatre

Flo said that there were no proposed cuts for the Youth budget in 2015/16. There would be some changes to the family service but none affecting the youth service itself. She explained that there would be some restructuring of the service with effect from 1/4/15 including her own role which would include libraries but lose responsibility for the youth team. However, she said that she would still maintain an interest in Finchley Youth Centre and like to come to the meetings occasionally.

Catherine said that she had heard that some libraries would be closing. Flo said that no final decisions had been made but any concerns should be expressed through the public consultation process.

Roger said that although there would be no cuts in 2015/16 we should still ensure that we were in the best condition in case of cuts after then. Flo said that the best way would be to maximise the use of the building for the benefit of young people and continuously look at ways of generating income - from past discussions she knew that many parents would prefer to pay more rather than lose facilities. She also recognised that, as the young people with learning difficulties were getting older, there was a concern that they would no longer be able to attend some activities. Stephen said that it is really important that the older disabled young people still had some activities available at FYC since they were excluded from many other venues as they got older - although he would not want to squeeze out other younger vulnerable youngsters. Flo agreed with this sentiment. She also added that the use of FYC was increasing, for example, the new small room above the office which was now available for counselling.

Catherine made the point that there should continue to be facilities for young people whose families were suffering financial hardship.

Roger wondered if the promotion of activities could be improved? Flo said that the system was rather bureaucratic and she would like to simplify it if possible. Alison said that she'd hoped that the communications

service would be improved and Flo said that part of that service was within her remit so she would do what she could.

Catherine mentioned that use of The Archer to publicise activities and events would be useful. Roger said that this had been done to an extent, such as publicising the current and past FoFYT Supporters' meetings. He added that now that Ken had repaired and renovated the notice boards, the notices and posters could now be seen clearly which would help (previously the perspex was yellowing making it difficult to see through).

Alison mentioned the Phoenix Cinema Trust (www.phoenixcinema.co.uk/about-us/trust/), of which she is a trustee, and would investigate to see if a link between that Trust and FoFYT could be formed which would be beneficial.

3. Questions and Answers with Flo

Covered by §2 above.

4. What's happening with the Theatre and what work has the Friends' Board been taking?

Roger mentioned some of the things that the FoFYT Board of Trustees has been doing since the last Supporters' meeting. He had already mentioned the notice boards repair and renovation done by Ken for which the materials had been funded by FOFYT (Ken added that the notice board lights should also be working soon).

Liz said that there was now a system in place for funding free places though FoFYT for financially disadvantaged young people - although the Youth Service currently took care of funding for such youngsters on the Council-run courses, funding was needed for such youngsters attending the courses run by other organisations at FYC. There were currently two parents who had applied for funding for their children.

5. Presentation or talk about Young People's activities at FYT from Youth Workers Laura and Emilia

Laura (one of the Youth and Community youth workers) talked about some of the activities and sessions that she had been involved in (some for FYC and some through [Fixation Theatre](#) delivered at FYC) and showed some short videos which had been produced by the film makers group. She said that such films were created to explore some of the issues that young people faced.

Laura said that much of her work at FYC was with the disabled youngsters - her Young Adults/Drama group had recently been discussing heritage where the young people had brought in examples (photographs and objects) to illustrate their families' history; they were now looking at Barnet and London's heritage - buildings, etc.

Emilia (another of the Youth and Community youth workers) talked about her dance classes which she gave at FYC. She delivers various classes courses including contemporary dance and street dance for targeted (disabled) youngsters, and recently an inclusive dance class had started (for mainstream and disabled young people together).

Emilia said that they were currently working to support the Spring Production of Peter Pan - she said that the inclusive group was currently practising choreography for the production, the targeted group was dancing as pirates and the 11-14 group would be doing the Lost Boys going to Neverland which involved a lot of lift work which was useful in engendering trust in each other.

Liz explained that contemporary dance, which expresses an emotional journey, was useful in supporting young people who cannot always talk about emotional states, by expressing emotions and story-telling through movement.

Emilia explained the concept of Emotion Memory – which entails asking young people to think of an emotion, eg. sad, angry, etc. and express that through movement - everyone takes a different and personal journey. Marley said that with Emotion Memory there are no real restrictions on what they do compared to other dance genres such as street and hip hop.

6. Fundraising for the future

Emilia and Marley (as part of the Soto Dance Company) have discussed a "boys project" - getting boys involved in dance at schools. Liz said that it could be a partnership project between Soto, FoFYT and FYC. When Emilia and Marley have firmer ideas they will come to FoFYT to discuss a route for funding. Roger said that as a

charity FoFYT may have access to funds not available otherwise. He said that it was another way of ensuring occupancy of the building during the daytime.

In terms of general fund raising Roger said that FoFYT were continuing to try to get funding and invited people to contact him with any ideas for fund raising.

Ken mentioned that Sophie Thompson has volunteered to donate £5 per month to FoFYT. He reminded Supporters that the Donations page on the website www.FoFYT.co.uk made donating very easy.

Emila asked if videos can be put on Facebook to increase publicity. Liz said there was no problem as long as consent was obtained from the people involved.

Laura suggested a one-off night to host a night of local drama, etc. which could raise funds. She also mentioned getting local schools involved. Liz mentioned that in the 50's schools used to perform their productions at FYT and Roger said there used to be an Eisteddfod in FYT.

Liz said that as part of his current project Josh is looking at alternative ways to raise support and funding..

7. Launch of the FoFYT Facebook page

Roger said that there is now an FoFYT Facebook page - only launched this afternoon and got 14 likes so far. Emilia said that there is already an FYT Facebook page so there should be links between the two pages.

8. Any other Business

None raised.

9. Next meeting

Roger suggested the next meeting should take place in the New Year. Laura wondered whether anything should be done or presented during the East Finchley Christmas festival. Roger said that this would be considered by the FoFYT Board.

The Meeting closed at 9:35pm.
