

MINUTES

20th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday 28 January 2021

7.30pm

Online meeting via Zoom

1 Welcome from the Chair

Hilary Garnham, Interim Chair, introduced herself and welcomed everybody to the AGM meeting. Hilary commented that it had been an extraordinary year for the company, and wanted to express her thanks to members, staff and funders who had supported the company during the year. Hilary asked all current Trustees and co-opted Trustees, in turn, to introduce themselves to members.

Tom Rack took members through how this first online AGM would work practically:

- Voting – this year, the company was waiving the need to pay the annual £5 membership fee, but donations would always be welcome.
- Anybody attending tonight's meeting would be eligible to vote
- Polls – voting would take place through online polls
- Questions – please ask questions in the chat, rather than 'hands up'
- Recording – this meeting would be recorded, but would only be used for checking the written minutes. If anybody objected to this, please could you indicate now

2 Present

Abdul Shayek
Adrian Peters
Alice Burnett
Alison Woods
Angela Tillcock (Minute Taker)
Anna Searle
Bethan Touhig Gamble
Bunmi Odumosu
Ed Richmond
Edward Priest
Emma Cameron
Eric McGill
Francis Maxey
Hilary Garnham (Chair)
Jo Richmond
Katie Parry
Laura Westacott
Lee Tinnion

Lis McLean
Lizzy Ferguson
Louise Evans (Treasurer)
Luke Hallgarten
Matthew Davies
Olga Kaleta
Peter Duncan
Peter Gamble
Rachel Walsh
Rebecca Davies
Rhian Halford
Sam Goodburn
Samuel Ellis
Sarah Morton
Stephen Fowler
Theresa Burrows
Toby Philpott
Tom Rack

Thomasine Tomkins
Wout Deneyer

Zoe Munn

3 Apologies

Apologies had been received from Lee Fisher.

4 Minutes of the Last AGM (15 December 2019)

Hilary took members through the Minutes of the last AGM, held on 15 December 2019. The Minutes were approved as an accurate record of the meeting.

Proposed by Louise Evans
Seconded by Adrian Peters
Agreed by All members

5 Presentation of Annual Report and Audited Accounts 2019/2020

Members had been sent a link to the Company's Audited Accounts for 2019/20. Louise reminded members that the Covid-19 Pandemic had been declared on 11 March 2020, just before the end of the 19/20 trading year.

At the point of signing off the Accounts, both Louise and the Auditors were happy that the company was a 'going concern' and that it would remain operating for the next 12 months. This was a testament to the hard work of the company's staff and its excellent governance.

Members were asked to approve the Audited Accounts 2019/20.

Proposed by Alison Woods
Seconded by Alice Burnett
Agreed by All members

6 Appointment of Auditors for 2020/21

Louise Evans recommended to members that Watts Gregory be re-appointed as the Company's Auditors for 2020/21.

Proposed by Hilary Garnham
Seconded by Adrian Peters
Agreed by All members

7 Presentation of Company Activity 2019/20

Staff made presentations to the meeting, showing film and video footage, highlighting the key achievements of the company during 2019/20.

Kate Parry – Community Programme

Kate presented the highlights of the company's community programme for the year:

Four Elms Classes Programme

The programme at Four Elms had involved 300 people each week learning acrobatics, aerial, and balance skills. Through the bursary programme, eleven children from low-income families had been supported.

Outreach and project work

2019/20 saw the last of a two-year programme of circus activity delivered in areas of Cardiff with high levels of social deprivation. This was funded through BBC Children in Need and the work reached a diverse range of 1,000 participants.

Youth Circus

The company had run a project called Diverse Circus – strand of youth circus for neurodiverse members. This was a need that had been identified across the year. The work was set to go in March 2020, and eventually ran in September 2020 with some really positive feedback.

In April 2019, the Youth Circus performed two shows at RawFest at Wales Millennium Centre.

Partnership with Hijinx Theatre

The company ran circus skills workshops for Hijinx in April 2019 and this led to a creative project in music and circus that started in January 2020 but was interrupted by the Pandemic.

Adamsdown Primary School

Through ACW Creative Collaborations a Circus to the School Yard project celebrating diversity ran at the school. This was interrupted by the Pandemic but reformulated in October 2020, where it focused on young people's mental health and well-being.

April 2020 and Beyond – working through the Pandemic

Four Elms closed to the public on 18 March 2020 and we rebuilt activity with safety at the core. The company ran a digital programme of classes and in June 2020 funding from the Arts Council Wales stabilisation grant supported a pilot of new ways of working using Covid safe protocols.

Building on previous good relationships, a programme of digital circus skills was delivered for Adamsdown Primary School. A 6-week digital programme was also delivered in Welsh across rural locations in Wales.

What's next?

The Pandemic had helped the company to refocus on its community programme and it had provided time to examine its approach to outreach and engagement. The company was applying for funding from The Paul Hamlyn Foundation to support a new approach to its community work. This would see a return to more grass roots work, working with communities in a co-production approach.

Tom Rack – Performances and Touring

Tom presented the highlights of the company's performances and touring programme for the year:

Lexicon had successfully toured to Marseilles, Narbeth, Lyon, Antwerp and London with a total of 89 performances to 57,840 people. The 2020 Roundhouse London residency had been really successful.

Block had been performed at 12 festivals across 6 countries, with a total of 61 performances reaching 62,556 people.

In February and March 2020 time was spent preparing both shows for new tours, but these did not happen because of Covid. It is doubtful whether Block will ever tour again.

What's next?

A final tour for Lexicon is being planned for 2021, starting in Cardiff and touring to France and Prague. This would be dependent on the Pandemic and the impact of Brexit on international touring.

New Big Top Show

Plans had started for a new big top show that would tour within the UK taking circus to new regional audiences.

Welsh Circus Village

A Residential Circus Village was planned for summer 2021. Funding had already been secured for this from Arts Council Wales. The Village would be free for participants. It would support emerging artists and circus companies with their professional skills development. A further funding application would be made to Arts Council England to expand the support to more artists from across the UK.

7.5 External Forces

Alison reported that it was clear that the Pandemic had highlighted inequalities in our society, with a greater impact having been felt in poorer communities across the world. Through discussions with Trustees and staff, the company had been reflecting on what its cultural and moral responsibility should be and how it could respond to issues such as Climate Change, and the inequalities highlighted by the Black Lives Matter Movement.

Alison thanked Board Members for their support during the past year, and also thanked the core staff team and wider company. The positive culture from all parts of the company had enabled NFSC to get through a very difficult year, and to be able to develop future positive plans.

8 Election of Trustees and Officers

Adrian Peters chaired this item at this point in the meeting.

Adrian reported that Trustees serve for three years, and for a total of nine years.

Yvette Vaughan Jones had resigned from the Board in January 2020 and would not be standing again for re-election.

Hilary and Louise had served three years, and were willing to stand again as Trustees.

Election of Officers

Election of Interim Chair

Hilary Garnham put herself forward for the role of Interim Chair.

Proposed by Alison Woods

Seconded by Rachel H Walsh

Agreed by All members

Election of Treasurer

Louise Evans put herself forward for the role of Treasurer.

Proposed by Alison Woods

Seconded by Rachel H Walsh

Agreed by All members

Election of Trustees

Two co-opted Trustees who had been attending Board meetings during the past year were put forward for election to the board.

Abdul Shayek

Proposed by Zoe Munn

Seconded by Bethan Touhig Gamble

Lis McLean

Proposed by Alison Woods

Seconded by Alice Burnett

Hilary formally welcomed Abdul and Lis to the board as Trustees.

9 Any Other Business

Nothing was raised under any other business.

10 Date of next AGM

The next AGM would be held in 12 months' time. A November/December 2021 AGM would be in line with the company's reporting schedule.