

Minutes of Committee Meeting 7 January 2024 (Amended)

Present: Hannah Bradley Croall

Martin Foreman

Claire Morand

James Scott

Alastair Smith (**Item 6 only**)

Kate Stephenson

Claire Wood

Robert Wylie

Non-Committee Minute Taker: Alma Forsyth

Observer: Darran Cosgrove

1. Apologies: Siobhan McGovern
2. Approval of Minutes of last meeting (3 December): After the following agreed amendments, the Minutes were approved by Robert and seconded by Claire M.  
Amendments: Item 8 – ‘... acquired a skeleton constitution ...’ instead of ‘... prepared ...’;  
Item 9a) Honorarium: ‘At the next meeting of the Constitution Sub-Committee Robert and Martin will bring the matter up for further discussion, particularly with regard to the wording of such a possibility.’ Instead of ‘Robert and Martin will bring the matter up for further review ...’.
3. **Taiwan:** update - Because of conflict of interest, Kate left the meeting for this item. Director Claire M, reported that rehearsals would begin on Tuesday 9 January; author, Martin, had submitted the script to the Scott Salver competition; set design was a little behind schedule but Richard Spiers was still on board to build what would be a simple set, given the circumstances of the competition. To date all cast are members. However, as two of them and the director are due to renew in January, Claire M and Martin will verify at the end of the month that they have done so. The SCDA had informed Claire M that the performance date is Saturday 24 February.
4. **The Fastest Clock:** update – Kate rejoined the meeting. Hannah announced that the table read would take place on Wednesday 24 January, with auditions following on Wednesday 7 and Sunday 11 February, all at Buccleuch Place. Claire W had been appointed Production Manager. Hannah listed the points to which Claire W should pay particular attention: obtain from the venue (Roxy Assembly) a written commitment to provide comprehensive marketing and not to allow the Central Hall to be used for noisy events during the run of *The Fastest Clock*. Tickets should go on sale at the end of March/beginning of April and a discount code will be required. Claire W noted that EGTG does not need to recruit members for FoH as this is done by Roxy staff. Only if director, Abby Eva, decides to prepare a programme will volunteers be required to sell it. Hannah confirmed that the show budget is £120, not including venue cost, performing rights or van hire. This is smaller than in the past when van hire had to be paid from the show budget. Hannah will ensure that the keys to BP will be handed over to Abby, probably via Claire W. With reference to show budgets, following a request by Robert, Claire W offered to help him prepare one for his Fringe production.
5. **Performing Rights:** scripts – Martin reported that it is not obligatory to buy scripts for *The Fastest Clock* or *The Ruffian on the Stair* as copyright is not held by Concord. On the other hand, the rights for *Dangerous Corner* resting with Concord, scripts will have to be purchased. As some scripts ordered through the SCDA qualify for a member’s discount, Martin will pursue this possibility.
6. **AGM:** Alastair being unwell, this item was in fact discussed at the beginning of the meeting to allow him to withdraw thereafter.

a) **Date:** Thirty days' notice must be given before the proposed date. Hannah reported that the financial accounts from the previous year need to be ratified but the final bank statement for the year had not yet been received. She will approach independent auditor Rob McKean to verify and sign off the accounts. Alastair also required time to prepare the paper on amending the Constitution. With the aim of holding the AGM towards the latter part of March, Hannah will send a Doodle poll covering the period from 11 March onwards to ascertain the availability of Committee members.

b) **Office Bearers 2024:** Current Committee members put themselves forward in the following roles for Membership approval:

- i) President – Hannah;
- ii) Vice-President – Claire W;
- iii) Treasurer – Pending further discussion, observer Darran Cosgrove; Claire M is willing to stand as a last resort;
- iv) Secretary – Martin;
- v) Membership Secretary – Kate;
- vi) Publicity – Hannah;
- vii) General committee – James, Alastair, Robert.

Hannah will approach Siobhan regarding her position. (Alma is willing to remain as non-Committee minute taker.) Other candidates may, of course, be proposed.

c) **Constitution:** Alastair, on behalf of the Sub-Committee, was preparing a draft document covering the transition of EGTG from non-incorporated to incorporated entity. This new status (SCIO instead of OSCR) would be more advantageous and, in essence, means that EGTG would have a separate legal existence from its members and its current assets would be transferred to the new body. The changes would require the approval of the Scottish Charities Regulator and also of the EGTG Membership. Alastair will circulate the draft Constitution amendment for the perusal of members before the AGM. Replying to a question from Hannah regarding cost, Alastair was not sure if a fee would be charged to transition but was optimistic that external legal advice would not be required, thus saving money on that count. There would, however, be a substantial cost involved in arranging for the ownership of Home Street to be transferred to the new entity, estimated between £1,000 and £3,000. This process would be rendered more complicated given that most of the trustees in place when Home Street was acquired (1988) are no longer active in EGTG. Claire W, having been a member for many years, might know their whereabouts if she can be given their names. Martin wondered what would happen if these trustees were dead or incapable of signing a legal document. At the moment Gordon Hughes is the only former trustee for whom the Committee has contact details. With the creation of the new body, it would be necessary to open a new bank account. On behalf of the Sub-Committee, Robert thanked Alastair for his invaluable work. Hannah, on behalf of the Committee, echoed Robert's appreciation.

7. **Platinum Events:** Kate floated ideas which, with the Committee's approval, she will follow up and cost. These included: making the AGM a special event (cf 2023); a dinner in the autumn; a social gathering in the summer; depending on our insurance cover, opening Home Street to visitors on Open Doors Day. Martin proposed a 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary dinner to which former members could also be invited. Claire W recalled that Edinburgh University had hosted a reception to celebrate EGTG's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary but a repeat for the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary seemed unlikely, given the University's current apparent lack of interest in EGTG. She wondered, however, if EGTG's Christmas show could be performed in Adam House, its former venue. Her enquiry had received an ambiguous reply from the University Events Team, the removal

of a screen which usually covers the stage cited as the main obstacle. Hannah pointed out that as the screen is moved to allow Fringe performances, it ought to be possible on other occasions. Claire W, accompanied by Kate, will endeavour to meet with the appropriate University contact. Hannah suggested that the Pleasance might also be a suitable venue for the Christmas show. Kate informed the Committee that, independent of her connection to EGTG, she had received an email from the University concerning a scheme which offers free spaces to community groups. She will follow this up on behalf of EGTG. Robert expressed his satisfaction that we have contact with the University other than via our own group. Hannah was happy for Kate to go ahead and explore all possibilities. Before leaving the discussion on events, Claire W, supported by the Committee, congratulated Kate for organising the successful December Quiz Night and Martin for compiling questions which tested the theatrical knowledge of the enthusiastic participants.

8. **Child Protection Policy:** Before finalising the document Kate asked the Committee for further comments on her draft. A sound policy will be especially important for the Christmas show.
9. **Edinburgh University Theatre Company:** Claire W had received a positive response to her enquiry on reciprocal information sharing. Initially calls for auditions would be shared and Claire had also asked for backstage volunteers.
10. **Membership:** Martin reported a total of 48 members.
11. **Home Street:** valuation – Following the discovery of papers relating to a deposit account and an income bond from the 1980s, Martin, Claire M and Siobhan were looking into where the money might have gone. Although an email linked former office bearer, David Grimes, to the bond, he has no recollection of it. Kate will contact the bond issuer for information. Robert asked for clarification as he was under the impression that ‘valuation’ referred to the value of the property. Ten years ago Home Street was valued at £30,000. Hannah agreed that it would be useful to know current valuation but a higher sum would affect business rates and insurance costs. Martin insisted that a new valuation is necessary to cover EGTG should the building suffer a disaster. Hannah confirmed that a revaluation would be carried out when EGTG becomes an incorporated charity.
12. **AOB:** **a)** Kate announced that it had been arranged for a rat-infested sofa to be removed from Home Street. The presence of rats is a constant problem and so soft furnishings would be moved to a higher level in the hope of deterring the rodents from further nest-making. **b)** With a view to observer Darran’s taking on the role of Treasurer, the Committee asked him about his professional experience and his interest in theatre. His background in financial management and administration would be useful but he would welcome an induction period such as ‘shadowing’ or mentoring by Committee members who already have practical experience of the role. Darran would also like to balance his professional work with involvement in the creative sector. The Committee will discuss his possible secondment in his absence, the next step then being to add him to the proposed list of office bearers for 2024 which will go before the AGM. To help Darran learn more about putting on a production, Claire M invited him to observe rehearsals for *Taiwan* and to participate in its set building. **c)** Robert wanted to know the deadline for sending out to members the pared-down version of the Constitution amendment as it was important for Committee members to study it well before the AGM in order to be able to reply to questions from the floor. Hannah replied that the membership should receive it at the same time as notification of the AGM - 30 days before the chosen date. **d)** The next Home Street clear-out will be held on Sunday 4 February from 11h00 to 12h30.

The next meeting will take place via zoom on Sunday 11 February at 19h00.