

Friends of Shanklin Theatre AGM 2025 Minutes

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES

Paul Harris, Friends Chairman, welcomed everyone. There were 71 members in attendance and 5 members sent their apologies.

2. MINUTES OF 2024 AGM

The minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting were agreed as a true copy and duly signed.

3. ANNUAL FRIENDS REPORT

This is my first AGM report since becoming Chairman – and what a year it's been!

Firstly, I'd like to express my gratitude to the Committee members who have provided me with such excellent advice and support throughout the year. They all work incredibly hard, all wearing several hats, and contribute massively to the running of the Theatre, both visibly and behind the scenes. So, thank you.

A couple of them are on stage with me now - Jacqui Robertson and Liz Hinkes. Tony Needham and Mike Beston are in the audience too. Unfortunately, Peter Frankling is not able to be here today but has submitted his report as Treasurer, which I'll be covering later.

During the year, Christine McCarthy and Suzie Thurgood relinquished their roles on the Committee as Membership Secretary and Volunteer Liaison Officer respectively and I'll be explaining more about what's happening with these and other roles shortly. Mike Beston is also standing down from the Committee after the AGM.

Upon becoming Chairman, I made a point of meeting up with as many members of our hardworking and dedicated teams as possible, including Front of House, Bar, Prize Draw, Events and Catering. I even managed to track down the Maintenance Team in their man-cave – of which I'm extremely jealous.

I was also pleased to attend the Friends' Summer event at Luccombe Hall Hotel which was a sell out and a real success. We had great entertainment and excellent food. This year's event will be at the same location, and tickets are selling very quickly, so don't delay!

Our monthly Coffee, Cake and Chat mornings, organised by Jacqui, continue to be a success with a large variety of activities including craft and plant sales, a photographic exhibition, an entertaining appearance by Maurice Kachuk (who will be performing at our Summer event) and a most informative talk by Kevin Wilson, who has taken over from Mike Beston as editor of our StageWrite magazine.

Of course, one of the Friends' primary aims is to raise funds for the benefit of the Theatre, and I'll be giving details of the "ins and outs" of our finances later. I would like to highlight some key items of expenditure, however, which include funding a major re-cabling project around the Theatre; a contribution towards the new ticketing system; new IT equipment for the Technical Manager; funding new blinds for the box office and new curtains for the auditorium and balcony; a new vacuum cleaner for the Housekeeping team and a new gazebo for the Friends

Events team. The total cost was in the region of £22,000. As you'll see from the accounts, we still have plenty of funds available, which is in no small part due to the amazing efforts of our Prize Draw team. I can assure you that we're doing our best to spend the money as quickly and sensibly, as possible.

Finally, I'd like to say a massive thank you to all of you, as Friends of the Theatre, for the tremendous support you have given and continue to give to our amazing Theatre.

Well, you'll have seen that we have a very full agenda, so I'll stop now, so we can move on to the next item.

4. TREASURERS REPORT 2024- 2025

The Bank balance stands at a very healthy **£34,958.46**

It is prudent to put aside money to enable us to cover expected items and a contingency to cover unexpected expenditure, to assist the Theatre in the replacement of important equipment and infrastructure.

For example, for technical items we have currently "ring fenced" £2,215. Even after this we still have some £32,750 available for new projects that are always arriving. This is to be expected in a building this old.

We also need to keep up to date with advances in technology. This is a fast-moving area of our industry.

Receipts: Total £43,234.95 . This is similar to last year

Membership subscriptions:	£13,452	up by £1,549
Prize draw income	£23,691	up by £1,000
Donations	£829 that includes various walks	
Merchandise	£583	
E-Bay Sales	£1,107	
Theatre tours	£1,250	
Miscellaneous Income	£2,318	
This includes money raised from coffee, cake and chat, also the garden party, general catering and various raffles		

Expenditure: overall expenditure £38,885. This is similar to last year.

Expenditure can be broken down into two major areas:

Theatre expenditure:

Technical requirements £13,893

A major item was the updating of the Theatre ticketing system which amounted to £3,940

Also, a contribution towards the cost of installing new safety railings at the front of the Theatre, £3648.

IT re-cabling cost £7,785

Total cost of major Theatre items **£26,187**

Friends expenditure:

Printing, StageWrite & Theatre history (including prize draw ticket printing) £1,898

Postage £666

Insurance £715

Prize draw winners £5,025
Fairs and carnivals & entry fees £147
Catering £23
Training £1310
Peninsular human resources £623
Gardening £401
Members voucher draw £360
Miscellaneous expenditure £1,505
(includes garden party & raffle, merchandise for re-sale)
Total of major Friends items **£12,673**

Auditing of the accounts

Shanklin Theatre and Community Trust assume responsibility for inspecting and scrutinising the Friends accounts. These are now included with their accounts for auditing by Accountants Bright Brown.

5. SHANKLIN THEATRE – THE WAY FORWARD

Overview

Since the Theatre was taken over from the Isle of Wight Council, its structure has evolved significantly. Initially, the main focus was to save the Theatre, and the Friends of Shanklin Theatre (the Friends) played a vital role in making that happen.

Now, as Shanklin Theatre has become an established and successful business, it is time to review its structure and determine the best fit for the Friends moving forward. This review has assessed the various roles and responsibilities required to ensure continued success. As we progress, keeping you informed is a priority.

A working party was put together that included representatives from all the major functions and teams within the Theatre. We would stress that a collaborative approach was adopted to ensure agreement across all areas. Many ideas were discussed, some were shelved and some taken forward for approval by the Friends Committee, Shanklin Theatre Ltd Board and Shanklin Theatre Community Trust.

6. VOLUNTEERS CHANGES

Volunteers and Friends Membership Changes

Previously, Volunteers had to be members of the Friends, paying a £15 yearly fee. However, some found this a barrier to joining.

- New Policy: Volunteers are no longer required to be Friends members
- Insurance Coverage: All Volunteers remain fully insured, whether working at the Theatre or external events
- Non-Member Volunteers: Those who choose not to join the Friends will however no longer qualify for Friends benefits

All relevant documentation and website sections have been updated to reflect these changes.

Volunteers Management Updates

A review of the Theatre's management structure has led to significant changes in Volunteer coordination:

- In recognition of the key role they play for the Theatre, all Volunteers will now be considered as Voluntary Employees, with their management coming under the direct control of the Theatre
- The Volunteer Team Leaders group has evolved into the Volunteer Liaison Team (VLT).
- The VLT is led by a Volunteer Liaison Manager (VLM), supported by:
 - A Volunteer Data Administrator (VDA) (new role)
 - The existing Volunteer Training Officer (VTO)
- The VLM now attends all STL Board meetings, improving communication and involvement in Theatre operations
- As a result, the VLM, VDA, and VTO will no longer be part of the Friends Committee

Volunteers' New Benefits

- Volunteers now receive free tea and coffee while on duty
- A 20% discount on drinks at the Theatre Bar has been introduced

7. FRIENDS UPDATES

Previous Key Focus Areas

The Friends have primarily focused on:

- Promoting the Friends and the Theatre through events, social media and the website
- Recruiting, Inducting, Training and Managing Volunteers
- Raising funds to benefit the Theatre mainly with the Prize Draw and Membership subscriptions
- Managing Friends Membership records

Improvements:

With the introduction of a new ticketing system, Ticketsolve, and the new Theatre website, we have reviewed and streamlined some operations. This has led to:

- Simplified Membership Management: Previously complex membership records have moved to Ticketsolve for automated renewals and reminders. As a result, the role of the Membership Secretary, always a difficult role to recruit, is no longer required
- Website Integration: The Friends website content has been transferred to the Theatre's new website, eliminating hosting costs and allowing real-time updates.

New Benefits

1. Rewards Scheme

- When a member purchases a ticket for a qualifying show, £1 per ticket is credited to their Theatre account
- This credit can be used for future ticket purchases

- Qualifying shows will be marked with 'Friends Rewards' on the Theatre's website

2. Bar Discount

- Friends members can now enjoy a 10% discount on drinks at the Theatre Bar
- A Friends Discount Card is available at the Box Office and must be shown when ordering

Future Key Focus Areas

- Promoting the Friends and the Theatre through events, social media and the website
- Raising funds to benefit the Theatre mainly with the Prize Draw and Membership subscriptions
- Managing Friends Membership records

Friends Committee – Structure Update

With the changes to volunteer management, the Friends Committee will now consist of:

- Friends Chair
- Friends Promotion Officer
- Friends Treasurer
- Friends Secretary

The role of Membership Secretary is no longer required, and Volunteer-related officers will now report directly to the Theatre's management.

8. RATIFICATION OF FRIENDS COMMITTEE 2025-2026

Chairman – Paul Harris

Treasurer – Peter Frankling

Promotions – Jacqui Robertson

Secretary – Liz Hinkes

9. PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO FRIENDS CONSTITUTION

To reflect the restructuring, we are proposing updates to the Friends Constitution, including:

- Removing the requirement for Volunteers to be Friends members
- Adjusting references from 'providing' Volunteers to 'assisting' Theatre Volunteers
- Reducing minimum Committee members to 4-5 and quorum requirement to three
- Changing membership applications to be processed via the Theatre website
- Enabling Constitution changes to be made at an EGM instead of waiting for the AGM
- If the Friends were to be dissolved, remaining funds would go to Shanklin Theatre Ltd
- Updating references from 'FOST' to 'the Friends' to emphasise focus on providing financial support for the Theatre

10. THEATRE OPERATIONS – FUTURE PLANS

The review aims to enhance Theatre operations. Planned additions to the management structure include:

- A Sales & Marketing Team

- A Finance Team
- New roles such as a Sales & Marketing Director and Property Services Manager

More details will be shared as plans develop.

SHANKLIN THEATRE – MOVING FORWARD TOGETHER David Kast 2025 – A Year of Transition and Growth

Our progress since the last AGM

- Introduced the Ticketsolve system for ticketing and marketing
- Developed and introduced our new Theatre website and logo
- Strengthened our employee team, including Tony Needham as Front of House Manager and appointed Duty Managers to support.

Volunteers – A Stronger Connection

Key improvements:

- Full integration under Theatre Management
- Clearer communication and improved support
- Enhanced perks and direct engagement with the Theatre

Friends Membership

Strengthening our community – The Friends are a tremendous asset to the Theatre through their support

- Membership renewals now managed through Ticketsolve
- Expanded benefits like the Friends Rewards Scheme and Bar Discount
- Restructured Friends committee for better promotion and fundraising

Looking Ahead – What's Next?

Key initiatives for the future:

- Strengthening branding with the Theatre logo
- Focus on the Theatre Cyber Security
- Introducing a Theatre uniform with costs covered by the Theatre
- Growing the Friends membership and enhancing benefits
- Expanding targeted marketing with appointing a Sales and Marketing Director
- Preserving our Historic Building

Our Journey Ahead:

- We reflect on the past 15 years of hard work and commitment saving our Theatre
- Together, as Volunteers and Theatre Supporters, we now shape the future of Shanklin Theatre for the next 15 years and, hopefully, beyond.