

**Big Bad Wolf**  
**Children's Theatre Company**  
**Annual General Meeting – 25 October 2015**

**Minutes**

**Apologies**

Apologies received from Steven McMullan, Emma Watkins, Kathryn McGowan, Louise Harland, Evonne Johnson, Lynne Black, Claire Stirton, Clare Nisbet, Mandy Kennedy, Gill McKean

**Minutes of AGM 26 October 2014**

Nominator – Amanda Thom      Secunder – Karen Houston

**Welcome from Chairperson Grant Alexander to the 8<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Big Bad Wolf Children's Theatre Company**

On behalf of the committee, Grant welcomed everyone to the 8th Annual General Meeting of the Big Bad Wolf Children's Theatre Company. He started by introducing himself then introduced the other current Office Bearers and committee members

Vice - Chair - Iain Gillies

Treasurer – Steven McMullan

Secretary – Agnes Law

Management Committee Members: Shirley Blackwood, Laura Dawson, Gemma Devlin, Tracey Kildare, Claire Stirton, Hilary Wallace, Emma Watkins, Stuart Williamson, Fiona Young

At last years' AGM we welcomed a number of new members on to the committee. As some members stood down, others put themselves forward to serve. Grant formally and personally thanked the committee, both past and present, for their support and all the hard work they have done during the year. Their dedication to Big Bad Wolf is commendable. He particularly extended thanks to our Secretary, Agnes Law, who keeps the whole thing ticking over. Grant recorded his thanks to Linda Fraser and Lynn McConnachie who stood down during the year. Also, having served their term and not standing for re-election today are, Iain Gillies and Hilary Wallace. Grant said our thanks, and his personal thanks, go out to both Iain and Hilary not just for their input during the last year, but in both cases, for many years - giving a huge amount of their time, often unacknowledged to get and keep the company where it is today. Thankfully both have agreed to continue their involvement through set design and construction.

He was pleased to report that a number of people who have served on committee in the past, continue to support the company by being involved behind the scenes – in set design, stage management, wardrobe, workshop or in a front of house capacity.

## **Report from the Chair**

Grant gave his report for the last year. He said there would be an opportunity to ask questions as we go or they can be taken during Agenda Item 10.

The year 2014 – 2015 was another big year for Big Bad Wolf. Following the successes of previous productions, BBW's reputation has continued to grow on account of the level of quality in entertainment we provide - an amateur company with professional production values.

In addition to the main production of Peter Pan in February, the company undertook a number of smaller but very worthwhile performances throughout the year. The company had again been invited to perform at the switching on ceremonies for the Christmas lights across the district towards the end of November – at no fewer than 5 different venues. The biggest of these was at Falkirk where once again, a sizeable crowd enjoyed the children's performance

As 2014 drew to a close, the company were also invited to make a number of appearances at a few of the local supermarkets and shopping malls. These were said to be very enjoyable events. Performing in these smaller settings, our children received a very warm welcome and given the time of year, audience participation was to the fore. This was further reflected in generous cash donations to the company as well as generating some ticket sales for our main production.

2015 started where 2014 finished off with the company busily preparing for their 8th Annual production – Peter Pan. During the run up to the show, we returned to regular rehearsals on both Friday evenings and Sundays. All the offstage preparations in support of the production were also well underway with lots of endeavour in the workshop and in the costume making departments. As always the Production Team and the committee make plans for show week with the aim of having proceedings go as smoothly as possible.

The complex nature of productions means that unforeseen challenges sometimes can and invariably do crop up but Grant was glad to report that those that did were quickly dealt with. After the huge success of Seussical in 2014, the excellence bar remained high. The choice of Peter Pan as our show once again saw the company involved in a well-known large scale production. Building on the reputation gained from the successes of our previous productions, early ticket sales were very encouraging and after the opening performance, the few remaining tickets were quickly snapped up leading to a run of sell out shows. Music to the ears of our Treasurer and a true testament to the work that the performers and everyone else put in.

Grant thanked all who helped in any small part to put on these shows, be it front of house, backstage or set building. These shows cannot be put on without you.

From Spring in to Summer and our session drew to a close by taking part in a special event – a first for the company when we had the honour of being invited to perform for Royalty. In July, HRH Prince Edward, the Earl of Wessex attended a rehearsal that we staged in the Dobbie Hall. The rehearsal allowed the company to showcase some of the highlights from Peter Pan as well as preview a couple of numbers from All Shook Up. In a letter sent after the event, the Prince stated how much he had enjoyed the performance. As a bonus, the event provided the company with positive media coverage.

## **Production Team**

As always the success of our Productions is largely down to the endeavours of our Production Team. In going forward each year, it is for the key Production Team members to nominate their assistants. Our 2015/16 season sees Gavin Orr return as our Company Director. Gavin has brought back Lindsay Dowell as his assistant. To choreography – we welcome the return of Sheila Mackie as our choreographer. Sheila has also brought back Romy Mackie as her assistant. Grant was pleased to say that Jonny Graham once again returns as our Musical Director and Grant was delighted to confirm that Jonny nominated his maw Sheena Graham as his Musical Associate. We are fortunate in having such a strong and talented team working with us again during the coming season.

Once again, we continue to reinforce the notion of the Big Bad Wolf family – by families, for families. This remains one of our key aims.

Grant emphasised that as a committee we are here to serve the members and are always keen to listen to feedback on how we can improve our performance and ultimately, our organisation. To this end, if there is any constructive feedback you want to provide, please speak to any of the committee members.

## **Headlines**

Grant then highlighted, in headline fashion, some of the other developments to date this year – whilst he did not intend to go in to detail due to constraints on time, he said if there was anything in particular that someone wants to know more about, he was happy to take questions:

Workshop – In conjunction with the Falkirk District Arts and Civic council, we are now well established in our workshop in the old Barrs Lemonade factory at Hopedale Camelon. This is a shared facility with other theatre companies. However we are also aware of the emerging plans to further develop the area along the canal bank in Camelon and it is likely that we will have to find alternative workshop facilities within the next couple of years. Our workshop manager, Blair Dewar is already on the case. If you do know of anywhere that you think would be suitable, Grant said Blair would be pleased to hear about this.

We continue to hold regular meetings between Committee and Production Team to assist with communication and decision making. This year, as well as moving forward with our production of All Shook Up, we are working to a two year plan and have already started to look ahead to the following year and what will be our 10th year. We first introduced the notion of a two year planning cycle in 2013 and as a result of good collaborative working with the Production Team, our project management approach has proved very successful. And as a teaser, the committee expects to be in a position to announce our 2017 production within the next couple of months.

Website – Our revamped website is now fully operational. We continue to explore how this can help us in our business and to this end, all members now have their own personal login allowing them access to a secure area of the site where information is regularly posted. This facility came in to its own during the recent auditions where audition pieces were made available for download. For the first time this year, the public will be able to purchase tickets for our show online. We continue to explore how social media can enhance our business.

We have continued to play an active part and have successfully become more integrated with the broader amateur drama movement at a local level

- we have strengthened our links with NODA and during Peter Pan, we again had our presentation of NODA awards to our members by NODA Rep Mrs Elizabeth Donald
- we work collaboratively with the Dobbie Hall Trust
- we are represented on the Falkirk District Arts and Civic Council
- we have also seen a number of our members, former members and parents supporting other societies – including Falkirk Opera, the Bohemians and LAMP
- we have supported a number of local schools in their productions during the year through the loan of our sets, props and costumes.

A number of our members and parents again participated in the Safe Drive Stay Alive campaign in January. They appeared in a DVD shown for a week at the McRobert Centre in Stirling to promote safe driving amongst young people. The DVD is shown to senior high school pupils from Falkirk, Stirling and Clackmannan.

### **Auditions**

I would now like to talk briefly about two sets of recent auditions:

In March, the company held auditions for new members. As always, by way of natural progression, members leave and this creates opportunities for new members to come in. Once again, there was no shortage of interest in auditioning – testimony to the company's reputation. So over the Summer, with older members taking decisions to head off to University and so on, we allocated places to the successful applicants and to date, the number of new members who actually joined the company was 25. This keeps our numbers below 80 – the maximum number we would take.

The second set of auditions was the casting of All Shook Up. Once again, I was fortunate to be able to sit in on these and was amazed at the array of talent we have available to us. What was both noticeable and pleasing was the number of youngsters who had previously been content to stay in the background who were now confident enough to put themselves forward for parts – the quality was exceptional. Although a very difficult exercise, I am happy to report that the Production Team have assembled a very strong cast who have already well into rehearsals for next years' production.

As a self-sustaining organisation, we are responsible for our own finances, hence fundraising forms a very important part of our business. I'd like to invite Fiona Young who on committee has specific responsibility for leading and co-ordinating our fundraising activities to report on events that have taken place during the past year and what is planned for the coming year

Fundraising - Fiona has bookings for the kids to sing in the Howgate on 5 December, Falkirk Wheel on 12 December, Tesco Redding on 16 and 21 December and the Claremont on 20

December to raise funds. There will also be raffle tickets given to members to sell, and a list of items required, for the Hamper draw on 13 December.

Over the year there have been many different issues that have been handled by the committee. Thankfully, they are not common but when they do arise, the committee always look to deal with things in a way that they think is best for the company as a whole. Do we always get it right - no we don't - but we do the best we can. That is why if you have any concerns or even ideas to help improve things it is important that you raise them appropriately. Grant encouraged everyone to approach any member of the committee to discuss any concerns that they may have. He also invited anyone to attend a committee meeting to air any concerns should they wish to do so.

## **Treasurer's Report**

As Steven was unable to attend the AGM Iain went over the Report and Accounts he had provided. Rebecca Anderson felt that the Memory Coins had not been marketed well enough. Karen Houston queried the costs for the Memory Coins as the cost was not covered. Grant said that we will be selling the coins in a mount this year and that it was also still possible to buy Peter Pan coins. Blair said that he had needed to buy a lot of wood last year but that it will be reused.

## **Secretary's Report**

Agnes said she felt it had been another quick year and promised her report would be quick as well as the result of a conversation with her niece Emma yesterday who, when she mentioned her secretary's report yesterday she said "but it doesn't need to be long does it" so, point taken, you can thank her later!

Agnes said she was again extremely honoured to hold the role of secretary of Big Bad Wolf Children's Theatre Company and what a fabulous year we have had-with rave reviews from our annual production of Peter Pan to our Royal visit when we welcomed His Royal Highness, The Earl of Wessex, to the Dobbie Hall. This was a difficult secret to keep but wow it was worth it, Agnes still can't believe Prince Edward came to visit us. Agnes would like to thank everyone for their co-operation before and during his visit.

Agnes said she could not hold this role without the support of the members, parents, Production Team and a dedicated, hard-working committee and passed on her grateful thanks to everyone. Agnes said that, difficult as it may be, change is inevitable within the committee and office bearers- so offered special thanks to her absolute rocks who are stepping down today- she said they will never truly know how much all their help and support really means to her, oh and please don't bother changing your phone number- she knows where you live-you can run but you can't hide, she'll still have loads of questions. Agnes also reminded everyone that the office bearers and committee are all unpaid volunteers, she has a full time job (which is not Big Bad Wolf related) so asked everyone to please bear with her if you email, phone or text, she will get back to you as soon as she can.

Agnes said that it's encouraging to see that our Mary Watkins Memorial Trophy in memory of her sister was an extremely close run competition this year with 1 point separating 1st and 2nd with Robbie Allan being the eventual winner. Points are awarded for all things which were important to Mary including attendance at rehearsal, helping to set up/clear up the hall, being helpful to new

members, taking part in light switch on and fundraising events. However points can also be lost for poor conduct at rehearsals.

If you have been on parent rota already this year you will know we are fighting a losing battle every week trying to keep members quiet when the Production Team are working on different scenes. We know that rehearsals can be long but the Production Team continually try to work out the weekly rehearsal call to try to make sure members are not called until they are required. We would really appreciate if you could re-iterate to members that there is a required standard of behaviour at rehearsals, the need for members to sign in on arrival and if you are on parent rota could you make sure members sit quietly. We are required to keep a register of every child in our care which we can't do if we don't know they are there. Similarly if members are unable to attend rehearsals or need to arrive late or leave early please let Agnes know as soon as possible and the reason why they cannot attend. If I do not have a reason they will be marked as an unauthorised absence which can affect their membership. It is understandable that members have party invites, holidays and other activities but Agnes asked that you are honest with her about the reason for absence because it does not go down well when we are told a member is sick or just unable to attend then we hear or see on facebook they are at a party. Please also make sure you contact Agnes to let her know. Agnes apologised for change of rehearsal calls which are occasionally required. She does not set the rehearsal call they are set by the Production Team so she has to wait until they send it to her before she can send it out. It is also subject to change at short notice so Agnes apologised for any inconvenience and asked that parents don't shoot the messenger.

Agnes was pleased to report the sales of envelopes must be on the increase as she's receiving more and more payments etc. in envelopes. She knows she goes on about it but it really does make her role so much easier. She thanked parents for their co-operation.

Hoody/t-shirt orders take approximately 2-3 weeks and must be paid at time of ordering. We like every member to have a BBW t-shirt for photos etc. If they do not have a BBW hoody for outside events could they please wear a plain red or black hoody or jacket.

Agnes asked everyone to put their name down to help out during show week. It's a fabulous opportunity to get to know everyone and the show cannot go on if we don't have enough volunteers. Anyone helping out front of house will be given a BBW t-shirt to wear on the night and Agnes asked if they could you please hand it back in before you leave that night. Lists are displayed in the Dobbie Hall foyer for anyone who has not volunteered yet, please make sure you add your name, we are asking for 2 nights volunteering from each family.

Members are issued with a script and/or song sheets at rehearsal. Agnes spends a lot of time printing song sheets and it is very frustrating to find them lying in the hall or even in the bin after rehearsals! This costs time and money to replace, we would therefore appreciate if you could make sure members have a folder to keep their words in and make sure they bring it and take it home each week along with anything else they bring, jackets, water bottles etc. We would ask that members are not dropped off any earlier than 10 minutes before rehearsal is due to start the hall will not always be open and there may not be any adults there until then. Subsequently anyone collecting members from rehearsals please remain in the foyer until rehearsals have ended.

Agnes said that if parents have any concerns or need any information they should not hesitate to contact her. She will always try to get back to you as soon as possible.

Finally, Agnes expressed her thanks to everyone for bearing with her and for their kindness and support, and said it's very much appreciated.

## **Constitution Changes**

Any proposed changes to the constitution require to be raised with the committee and considered and voted on at a general meeting. There were no changes proposed this year.

## **Plans for 2014/15**

Grant said that we have another busy and exciting year ahead.

He said, as already reported, last Christmas we undertook carol singing in a number of local supermarkets. In light of the success, this Christmas, we want to repeat the number of such performances in supermarkets throughout the area, continuing to widen our audience base. Clearly, we are mindful of the time demands this can put on members and their families at what is already a busy time of year. The supermarket spots provide a real opportunity to reach into local communities and give something back to the communities that support us. Also, by including a couple of songs from All Shook Up, we can hopefully realise a dividend of some additional ticket sales. Whilst exact dates are still to be confirmed, rehearsals for these spots will be kept to the end of Sunday rehearsals. Grant was also pleased to report that we have again been invited to perform at the Christmas Light switch on events throughout the district beginning in November.

Our main production, All Shook Up will run for six performances from 2 February to 6 February 2015 in Falkirk Town Hall. We will stage a matinee on Saturday 6th. Rehearsals for the show will be on Sundays with Fridays being used to work with the Principals, although as we get closer to the show these will become full company rehearsals.

In terms of pricing, we have taken the decision to freeze our ticket prices this year. Tickets will again be priced at £10 each with concessions being offered at £8. Group Discounts at the rate of £7 per ticket will be available on group bookings made by recognised groups. The steeple is not handling requests for Group Discounts. These will be made through the BBW mailbox and will be approved by committee.

In comparison with local companies, our pricing structure remains very competitive when compared with most of the other amateur productions staged locally.

Although tickets are now on sale, putting on a show is not just about having artistes on the stage but also ensuring that all the support roles front of house, back stage costumes, make up, hair, lights, action, sound are all covered. So if everyone does something then it lightens the load for everyone.

With almost 30% of the company comprising new members then this represents a sizeable pool of new talent both on and off the stage. Sheets are posted at rehearsals where family members can sign up for involvement during show week. Please believe me when I say that it really is enjoyable.

This is your company so we need you to be involved. Everyone has a gift – don't be surprised if over the next few weeks you are approached by Shirley or by Fiona or by Blair inviting you to use yours.

As stated earlier, we are in the unique position of being able to work to a two year plan. This means that whilst our focus at the moment is rightly on All Shook Up, both committee and the Production Team are already looking ahead to the next production. These are exciting times.

Also challenging times – the well reported changes to the local theatre provision – in particular the closure of Falkirk Town Hall will present all local arts groups – including ourselves with challenges to how we stage our shows in going forward – we need to position ourselves to meet these challenges.

So after the first nine years will come the tenth. An annual turnaround in members of 25 – 30% ensures that the company remains healthy and vibrant but to capture this dividend we must both embrace the new members and also encourage their parents to become involved – It really is a BBW family.

The scope for parental involvement is unlimited. Grant challenged everyone to become involved and encourage others to become involved.

## **Election of New Management Committee Members**

Grant passed on to Iain Gillies to take us through the election of new members.

All Management committee members (including Office Bearers) serve for a period of 2 years. Our constitution states:

“The maximum number of members of the management committee shall be 15 with a variance of 2 at the discretion of the management committee.”

At the moment we have 13 members - 6 of whom have reached the end of their two year term. This leaves 7 sitting members. This means that there are up to a maximum of 8 places to be filled to return the complement to the maximum of 15. Of the 6 members who have reached the end of their term, 4 have intimated their intention to stand for re-election. In addition, following the call for nominees, a further 5 have put themselves forward for election.

So in terms of the committee for 2015/2016:

The 7 existing Members who have 1 year remaining on their term of service are:

Laura Dawson

Gemma Devlin

Tracey Kildare

Agnes Law

Steven McMullan

Claire Stirton

Stuart Williamson

As previously intimated, two existing Members have served their term of office and are not seeking re-election - Iain Gillies and Hilary Wallace.

Our 4 nominees to be re-elected/standing for re-election are:

Grant Alexander

Shirley Blackwood

Emma Watkins

Fiona Young

Our 5 New Nominations to Committee are



Michelle Campbell

Gordon Gallacher

Louise Harland

Karen Houston

Evonne Johnston

So these are the 9 nominees to be considered for the 8 places.

If I can remind you that the constitution states:

"The maximum number of members of the management committee shall be 15 with a variance of 2 at the discretion of the management committee."

As was said earlier on, where people have put themselves forward to make a contribution, they should be actively welcomed and supported to do so. With this in mind - as we have 9 nominees and 8 places, then the existing committee has the discretion to approve the election of all 9 nominees without the need for a vote. Iain proposed that this discretion is applied and that all 9 nominees are considered for election.

However we still need to formally elect these nominees on to committee

Nominator – Stuart Williamson

Secunder – Agnes Law

Iain thanked everyone and stated that we now have a committee comprised of 16 members. This concludes the election of the new committee.

### **Any Other Business**

Blair (Workshop and Stage Manager) is looking for donations of wood, screws, paint (matt emulsion) etc. He is also looking for volunteers to help at the workshops. No need to be skilled. Not necessarily required every week, a couple of ours whenever suits. Please give telephone number to Blair or Agnes. Workshop usually runs Monday and Thursday, with an occasional Tuesday, 7 – 9pm. Blair also requires people to help during show week and would prefer if helpers could commit to most of the week. Help also required Saturday before the show starts to help build set then Sunday and Monday for rehearsals.

Grant thanked Lynn, Rebecca and Hilary for hosting stalls at the AGM and thanked all members for donations for cake and candy stall.

Meeting closed 3.25pm

