



## MINUTES

### Brookside Theatre Volunteers Meeting

Tuesday 10 November 2015

*Present: Jai Sepple, Harri Sepple, Chrissie Rawlings, Rosie Coletti, Deborah Ridgwell, Dave Watts, Katrina Watts, Becca Cutbush, Enid Hart, Jeannine Monk*

#### **1. Introductions/Purpose of meetings.**

Jai welcomed everyone to the first of what is intended to be a regular quarterly get together of all the theatre's volunteers. As well as an opportunity for us all to get to know one another better, the meetings will allow recent and forthcoming developments and events to be discussed and provide an opportunity for any issues, concerns or new ideas to be raised. Jai is keen that volunteers are involved as much as possible in the running of the theatre and that their views are heard.

Occasional social events are also envisaged and Katrina will try to arrange the first of these early in the New Year.

#### **2. New Volunteers / Volunteers pack and contact information**

We have a number of new Front of House (FOH) volunteers who have agreed dates before Xmas to attend their first events. Hopefully some of them will become regulars, but we are still on the lookout for reliable new volunteers.

Dave has recently been helping Jai with various admin tasks in the office one day a week, and in addition to Simon Power (who has been helping out part time in the office for some months), Jai has also recently been joined by two part time admin volunteers, Elizabeth Pringle and Alison Leech, both of whom are currently working on marketing. A volunteer cleaner started with us today.

Jai reminded all to review and comment on the volunteers pack which he has posted on the volunteers area on the website. This is aimed primarily at prospective and new volunteers but should be read by all. It includes background information about the theatre as well as details of volunteer roles and responsibilities. Jai also asked that all existing volunteers complete the

information form at the back of the pack and return to him so that he has up to date contact and emergency details.

### **3. Implementing changes**

Building work is ongoing at the front of the theatre in Eastern Road as various office blocks are converted into flats and at the back of the theatre adjacent to Slaney Road as land is being cleared prior to construction of the new ice rink and leisure centre. This work will no doubt provide some challenges and disruption.

Improved signage at the Eastern Road entrance, emphasising the theatre rather than the War Memorial, is envisaged.

The volunteers' FOH role will in future be split into two distinct tasks. We will still aim to have a minimum of three volunteers on duty for each performance, but in future two will run the kiosk and one will be responsible for the foyer and auditorium. A number of experienced regular volunteers have been designated as 'senior volunteers' and we will aim to have at least one of these on duty at each performance. They will allocate roles for the event between volunteers on duty and will be available to assist and advise less experienced colleagues.

In the kiosk, we have a new glass fronted refrigerated unit in the front section to hold soft drinks, and a new 'slush puppy' style machine. We are to experiment with an alcohol-free range of beer, cider and wine, with plastic cups (no glass will be allowed into the auditorium). The range of soft drinks and snacks is to be reduced slightly to rationalise the range and eliminate poor sellers. The trolley is to be mothballed for the present.

In the foyer, we are about to trial a new system whereby a volunteer uses a hand held scanner to validate customers' tickets at the entrance to the auditorium. This will allow customers to use the foyer/kiosk facilities before the rest of their group arrives and will reduce congestion at the Box Office. Any customers whose tickets fail to scan correctly, and any 'on the night' or advance ticket sales, will be directed to Harri (or whoever else is on duty) at the Box Office.

We are hoping to introduce numbered seating (with customers able to book specific seats online or by phone) for the second half of 2016.

### **4. 2016 leaflets / shows**

The January - June 2016 brochure is now available and all events are on sale via phone, the website and our Facebook page. We have a great range and diversity of shows in the new season, including an impressive number of celebrity performers. Our recent 'Most welcoming theatre - East region' award has helped to raise the theatre's profile and our reputation is growing all the time.

Jai said that he needed everyone to help publicise the programme of events, both via word of mouth and any personal Facebook and Twitter accounts, but also to help deliver brochures (and/or leaflets

for specific shows) to residential and business properties in Romford and the surrounding areas. Jai is in the office most days so material can be collected at your convenience (best to message him before arrival to ensure that he is not out at a meeting) or when you are on FOH duty. As Volunteer Coordinator, Chrissie will be able to advise which areas need to be covered.

FOH volunteers are asked to put their names down for whatever specific events (pre and post Xmas) they can cover on the new online calendar.

## **5. Next meetings**

It is envisaged that subsequent meetings will take place on the last Tuesday of every third month with effect from January. So the next meeting date will be Tuesday 26 January and the subsequent meeting dates for 2016 are expected to be Tuesday 26 April, Tuesday 26 July and Tuesday 25 October.