

Wolverton Gilbert & Sullivan Society

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting
held 24 January 2025



Graham Mitchell welcomed everyone to the meeting

1. Apologies

Kim and Alan Bennett. David Mills. Steve Corcoran. Amanda King. Tracey Myles

2. Adopt the minutes of the last AGM held Friday 26 January 2024

All agreed.

3. Matters arising

None noted.

4. Chair's report

Opening

Welcome to this AGM. It falls to me to report on the past year and look to the future. 2024 was another action-packed year for us. It marked 50 years since the founding of our society.

We performed four times at Stantonbury theatre starting with 'The Pirates of Penzance' in May.

Our November show was 'Wolverton G&S at 50!', a celebration of our Golden Jubilee year. That was followed in short order by a concert organised by Stantonbury Theatre themselves to mark their own 50 years as a community theatre.

We wound up the year back on stage at Stantonbury singing with the magnificent Wolverton Light Orchestra for their Christmas Concert.

Website

As well as chair of the society, I manage our website and in 2024, I concentrated on building our online presence and reducing our costs. I found a hosting company prepared to offer us a low-cost deal, saving us about £300 a year.

I successfully applied for a free Microsoft 365 business account which the committee now uses for meetings and file sharing.

I got us a free Google Ads programme which did involve a major re-design of our website site to provide suitable landing pages for ads. We now run campaigns directed at Ticket sales, Donations and Recruitment. Thanks go to Laura for her help with our ads. Thanks also to David Male for our first video production. This was all about joining Wolverton G&S Society.

The society archive has also grown during the year, with new pages for Pirates and Wolverton G&S at 50 and updated pages for older productions.

I've made an online Jubilee scrapbook highlighting stories, people and shows from the past 50 years.

Our blog, GanderS is currently being revised and I'd be delighted to include your articles, poems, cartoons or recipes with a G&S flavour. Our most viewed blog post in 2024 was "Cousin Hebe in HMS Pinafore". Our recipe for Sally Lunns got quite a few hits too.

This sort of thing all helps to build our web presence and brings our society to the attention of search engines and consequently to potential ticket buyers, donors and new members.

Props

The society has a lot of props. Some of them are unique items, including many designed and made by our own master props maker, Alan Bennett.

Thanks to Jude Bennett for allowing us to temporarily store them in her garage after the store in Stantonbury was taken away from us. John has negotiated free use of the cupboards here at West End and that's where most of the props are now. The larger items are distributed among group members, so thanks to Linda, Tony and John and Dave Howard for offering storage space.

BBQ

Talking of Mr H. Thanks to him for once again hosting our summer barbeque last year and to Karen Elliott for organising it. We all had a great time and the good news is that Dave and Karen have offered to do it all again this coming July.

Pirates

Back in May last year, we performed a well-received version of The Pirates of Penzance. Thanks to the efforts of Shona and her production team, the costs for scenery and costumes were kept low enough for us to make a small profit on this very popular show, as Linda will tell you later.

Wolverton G&S at 50!

Our next big event was the start of our Golden Jubilee Year in the summer. We commissioned a special 50th anniversary logo from Charlotte Crane, the artist who designed our current logo, and Vivienne and John set about organising some merchandise to mark the occasion. Thanks to their efforts, we have sold over £300 worth of 50th anniversary mugs, pens, bags, polo shirts and, of course, the famous zoodies. All this merch is still for sale on our website and at our performances.

The first production for our Jubilee Year was Wolverton G&S at 50! which showcased our talents in excerpts from the G&S and other shows we've performed in the last 50 years. Again, we made a modest profit, although it was a pity we had to limit it to just two performances. Many thanks to Kim and Ann for making our rehearsals so much fun and for producing such an excellent show.

Stantonbury at 50

And with scarcely a pause for breath, a hardy bunch of volunteers took three numbers from Wolverton at 50! to Stantonbury at 50! That was a concert arranged by Stantonbury Theatre to celebrate their own 50th anniversary on Friday 6th December. We were allocated a 10-minute slot and we performed The Major General's Song, Soldier Lad and Never Mind the Why or Wherefore to a pretty full house and the brilliant accompaniment of our very own Ann Skelly at the keyboard.

The Wolverton Light Orchestra

We rounded off the year by recruiting and rehearsing a choir for the Wolverton Light Orchestra's Christmas Concert on Sunday 8th December. A brilliant way to end the year's run of performances and much appreciated by the orchestra and their audience. Thanks again to Kim for directing the choir so ably.

Rehearsals are, of course already under way for Patience

Last year we ran a survey of members to help us choose the May show and, after much deliberation, Patience was chosen and rehearsals are, of course well under way. It's a particular delight to have Dave and Laura Anstice-Pimm leading our creative team together and we're all looking forward to a splendid production under the stewardship of Linda Davy, our show producer.

We were very fortunate indeed to receive an anonymous donation of £3,000 towards the nearly £14,000 cost of this production. This will allow us, among other things, to have authentic uniforms and costumes and to put on a real spectacle at Stantonbury this May.

I must now turn to the matter of finances.

Last year we had to introduce a big increase in subs. That was due in large part to our contributions not being changed for ten years, despite the increasing costs of running the society.

Your committee is anxious that we should not be put in that position again, so we are proposing a modest increase in subs each year to try to keep pace with ever rising costs. Even with the large increase for 2024/25, we will still lose money this financial year. All last year's increase did was slow the rate of loss. However, your committee is painfully aware of the tight finances experienced by many members and do not want to ask for another large increase in subs. We will instead aim to reduce the number of additional Wednesday rehearsals and continue our efforts to attract more paying members and more generous donations from our Friends and Patrons.

At our last committee meeting, we agreed to use the Consumer Price Index as a guide for proposing increased subs each year.

At the end of our last financial year on 31st July 2024, the CPI stood at 4.1%. If we apply that percentage, it adds 67p to our monthly subscriptions, bringing the annual figure to £188 and the half year to £94.

I therefore propose, on behalf of the committee, that from 1st of August 2025, the annual subscription for a full year shall be £188 and all other levels of subscription to rise pro-rata. Do we have a seconder?

Proposed: Graham Mitchell Seconded: John Bailes All in favour

President

Angela Bowen's current term as president finishes this year, and I'm very glad to say she has accepted the committee's nomination to serve again, albeit for one year only this time.

On behalf of the committee, I propose Angela Bowen to serve as president of the society until our next AGM in January 2026.

Honorary Life Membership

It is the custom of the society to honour those who have given great service, over and above their participation in productions, with Honorary Life Membership. This prestigious honour entitles the recipient to free membership of Wolverton G&S and all the associated privileges of membership for life. It is an honour not given lightly.

This year, John has asked the committee to propose this honour to someone who, although not appearing on stage with us since 2002, has nonetheless turned up for every performance since then.

He first came to light in 1994 with HMS Pinafore and appeared on stage after that as variously a marine, a burglar and an executioner.

He is a good friend of the society and has helped so many of us put our best face forward. He's used his skill to promote our shows with superb images and to record our stage appearances for posterity.

I refer, of course to our photographer, Robert Skears. He gives freely of his time and great photographic skills to help us with publicity shoots, images for the programme and, of course the over 10,000 dress rehearsal images in our archive. He has never failed us in over 30 years and we feel he is very deserving of this singular honour.

Proposed: John Bailes

Seconded: Paula Fraser

All in favour

[Committee vacancies](#)

We have vacancies on the committee for vice chair, social secretary and librarian. The last two roles, social secretary and librarian, although vital, do not have to be committee members. If you feel willing and able to give back to the society by offering to take on any of those jobs, please let me or secretary, Karen J, know.

[Thanks to committee](#)

I'd like to finish by expressing my thanks to the retiring committee: Karen, Dave, Ann, Karen, John, Linda, Vivienne, Sophie, Jenny and Amanda and to John's publicity group of Ruth, Louise and Ann. They all work tirelessly on your behalf to keep the society up and running.

Sadly Vivienne is leaving the committee, at least for this year. She has been an excellent committee member and worked hard for you during her term of office. I thank you, Vivienne, on behalf of the committee and the membership.

[Tea Ladies](#)

Now, any outsider visiting us at half time might conclude that this Society runs on tea and biscuits. They wouldn't be far wrong. I'm sure you will all join with me in offering our heartfelt thanks to Jean, Katie and Alison who, aided by the two Karens, have kept us well supplied with the necessities. Thank you ladies.

And now I will hand over to our treasurer, Linda for her report on last year's finances.

Take it away, Linda!

5. Treasurer's Report & Financial Statements

As you can see from the receipts and payment account sheet which was sent out with the agenda, we finished the 2023/2024 financial year with £2,100 in the Treasurer's account and £5,800 in the Business account, a total of £7,900. This doesn't compare very well with the previous financial year which ended with the two accounts holding £8,600 and £7,100 respectively, a total of £15,700.

We unfortunately made a loss of around £2,000 on Jack the Ripper but did make a very small profit of approximately £300 on Pirates.

The figures for our 50th anniversary show are not complete because most of the income and expenditure for this show happened after the end of the financial year. I will of course be reporting on this at our next AGM, but it does appear at the moment that we made a profit on this one. I also understand that we sold more tickets for Pirates that we have done for most shows in the last few years so fingers crossed this is the beginning of an upward trend.

On a positive note – although I am reporting on the 2023/2024 financial year you might like to know that at the time of writing this report – 4th January – we have a total of £12,800 in our accounts. This does of course include the anonymous donation of £3,000 towards the cost of Patience, and it was helped by the increase in subscriptions agreed on at last year's AGM from £100 to £180.

Graham has spoken to you already about increasing our membership subscription once again and I hope you will all understand the need for this. Could I also please urge you all to make sure your subscriptions are paid on time and in full. Those of you who only want to do one show per year, perhaps you would consider paying for a full annual membership or making a donation in addition to your half-year subscription, in order to help the society's funds.

Finally, I would like to record my thanks to Clive Keech for once again auditing our accounts.

Proposed: Linda Davy **Seconded:** Karen Jones

6. Election of officers, committee members and appointments

Graham asked those present for consideration for Angela Bowen continuing as Society President for another year. This was passed unanimously.

Angela stated that she was very proud of the Society and was delighted to continue as President. She asked to Society to re-elect Graham as Chair of the Society and thanked him for his tireless work on behalf of the Committee and the website.

Proposed: Angela Bowen **Seconded:** Karen Elliott All in favour

Graham stated that most of the present committee were happy to continue in their current roles.

Chair	Graham Mitchell	General Members	Karen Elliott
Vice Chair	Vacant		Dave Howard
Treasurer	Linda Davy		Ann Skelly
Secretary	Karen Jones		Sophie Elliott
Publicity Manager	Vacant		Jenny Tygrys
			Amanda King
Business Manager	John Bailes	Social Secretary	Vacant
Friends Secretary	Karen Jones	Society Librarian	Vacant
Honorary Auditor	Clive Keech	Membership Secretary	Linda Davy

Proposed: **Graham Mitchell** **Seconded:** **Karen Jones** All in favour

No Society Librarian/Archivist nomination was received at the meeting but we would be pleased to receive one post meeting.

Ruth Martin pointed out that there were also vacancies in the Publicity and Marketing Group and if anyone wanted to join the group, please talk to her, Graham, John or Ann.

7. Any other business transactional at an AGM

Barbara Eastaff asked if subs could be paid monthly. Linda confirmed that this option is already available. Members can pay by monthly standing order from their bank.

Dave Chawner said that the Stantonbury Theatre hearing loop for the audience was not working for our last show. Agreed we would ask the Theatre to enable it for future performances. Post meeting, David Howard reported that Stantonbury Theatre do not have a hearing loop but have an infrared system and six headsets that provide individual access for hearing aid users. These are available from the Box Office. Graham will add this information to the Box Office page.

The meeting closed at 7.56 pm.

Attendance:

Barbara Eastaff	Dave Anstice Pim	Jenny Tygrys	John Bailes
Sophie Elliott	Karen Jones	Vivienne Harman	Graham Mitchell
Paula Fraser	Karen Elliott	Angela Bowen	Ruth Martin
Paul Harman	Linda Davy	Emma White	Ann Skelly
Margot Male	David Male	Dave Howard	Mike Gray
Jean Bates	Kim Phillips	Cat Lee	Katie Thomas
Alison Statham	Simon Thomas	Matty Davies	Dave Chawner
Rowena Gibbons			

Wolverton Gilbert & Sullivan Society

INDIVIDUAL ACCOUNT SUMMARIES

(Society) Management & Admin Account			
Receipts		Payments	
Subscriptions	£ 2,644.87	Computing & Software	£ 17.99
Grants	£ -	Equipment	£ -
Patrons	£ 1,131.49	Gratuities	£ 114.43
Donations	£ 682.41	Honoraria	£ -
Music & Libretto Income	£ -	Hospitality	£ -
Audio Visual Income	£ -	Insurance	£ 352.97
Miscellaneous	£ 1,571.21	Music (including hire)	£ -
Commissioned Concerts	£ -	Other Costs (misc expenses)	£ 1,526.55
Interest on Business Account	£ 84.91	Postage	£ -
	£ 6,114.89	Printing	£ 64.19
		Professional services	£ 5,929.63
Less Excess Rec/Pay	£ 5,650.29	Publicity	£ -
		Rights Licenses	£ -
	£ 11,765.18	Room Hire	£ 3,759.42
		Stationery	£ -
		Telephone	£ -
		Travel & Transportation	£ -
		Photography	£ -
		CD	£ -
		Video	£ -
			£ 11,765.18

Jack The Ripper Show			
Receipts		Payments	
Ticket Sales	£ 6,570.64	Theatre/Venue Hire	£ 4,361.30
Advertising	£ -	Printing	£ 353.48

Raffle	£ 305.50
Miscellaneous	£ -
Programmes	£ 281.95
Rehearsal Fee	£ -
Insurance Claim	£ -
Audio Visual Sales	£ -
	<u>£ 7,158.09</u>
Excess Rec/Pay	£ 1,997.51
	<u>£ 9,155.60</u>

Publicity	£ 133.75
Postage	£ -
Room Hire	£ -
Production costs	
Scenery	£ 98.20
Costumes & Wardrobe	£ 256.84
Lighting	£ 520.00
Properties	£ 14.99
Make-up	£ -
Orchestra	£ 1,600.00
Professional services	£ -
Music (including hire)	£ -
Rights Licenses	£ 637.20
Equipment	£ -
Honoraria	£ 1,000.00
Gratuities	£ 179.84
Hospitality	£ -
Travel & Transportation	£ -
Photography	£ -
CD	£ -
Video	£ -
Other Costs (misc)	£ -
	<u>£ 9,155.60</u>

Pirates Show

Receipts		Payments	
Ticket Sales	£ 9,474.72	Calamity Jane Ticket Refunds	£ 4,324.80
Advertising	£ -	Theatre/Venue Hire	£ 290.00
Raffle	£ 390.00	Printing	£ 148.80
Miscellaneous	£ 1,405.00	Publicity	£ -
Programmes	£ -	Postage	£ -

Rehearsal Fee	£ 513.00
Insurance Claim	£ -
Audio Visual Sales	£ -
	£ -
Excess Rec/Pay	£ 11,432.99
	£ 11,432.99

Room Hire	£ -
Production costs	£ 1,107.71
Scenery	£ 237.92
Costumes & Wardrobe	£ -
Lighting	£ 50.00
Properties	£ -
Make-up	£ 2,520.00
Orchestra	£ -
Professional services	£ 150.00
Music (including hire)	£ -
Rights Licenses	£ -
Equipment	£ 1,200.00
Honoraria	£ -
Gratuities	£ 25.27
Hospitality	£ -
Travel & Transportation	£ -
Photography	£ -
CD	£ -
Video	£ 1,378.49
Other Costs (misc)	£ -
	£ 11,432.99

50th anniversary show

Receipts	
Ticket Sales	£ -
Advertising	£ 100.00
Raffle	£ -
Miscellaneous	£ -
Programmes	£ -
Rehearsal Fee	£ -
Insurance Claim	£ -
Audio Visual Sales	£ -

Payments	
Theatre/Venue Hire	£ 240.00
Printing	£ 120.00
Publicity	£ 196.98
Postage	£ -
Room Hire	£ -
Production costs	
Scenery	£ -
Costumes & Wardrobe	£ -

Excess Rec/Pay

£	100.00
£	504.98
£	604.98

Lighting	£	-
Properties	£	-
Make-up	£	-
Orchestra	£	-
Professional services	£	-
Music (including hire)	£	-
Rights Licenses	£	48.00
Equipment	£	-
Honoraria	£	-
Gratuities	£	-
Hospitality	£	-
Travel & Transportation	£	-
Photography	£	-
CD	£	-
Video	£	-
Other Costs (misc)	£	-
	£	604.98

Wolverton Gilbert & Sullivan Society
Accounts for the year ended 31/07/2024

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENT ACCOUNT

Receipts

Management & Admin	£	6,114.89
JTR Show	£	7,158.09
Pirates Show	£	11,782.72
50th anniversary show	£	100.00
	£	<u>25,155.70</u>
Less excess Pay/Rec	£	7,803.05
	£	<u>32,958.75</u>

Payments

Management & Admin	£	11,765.18
JTR Show	£	9,155.60
Pirates Show	£	11,432.99
50th anniversary show	£	604.98
	£	<u>32,958.75</u>

BALANCE SHEET

Assets 31/07/2024

Cash	£	104.41
PayPal	£	-
Treasurer's Account	£	2,102.25
Business Account	£	5,832.56
	£	<u>8,039.22</u>

Represented by:

Funds brought forward:

Cash	£	104.41
PayPal	£	-
Treasurer's Account	£	8,630.21
Business Account	£	7,107.65
	£	<u>15,842.27</u>

Excess Pay/Rec for year	£	7,803.05
	£	<u>8,039.22</u>

Prepared by:

Linda Davy

Linda Davy, Hon Treasurer

30/9/2024

Date

I have examined the books and records and can confirm that the accounts show a true representation of the underlying record.

C. J. Keech

Clive Keech, Hon Independent examiner

25th September 2024

Date