

ABOUT THE CLUB, & HOW IT WORKS – A BRIEF OVERVIEW

The club is a private company, limited by guarantee, and its full title is “*Bournemouth Little Theatre Club Limited*”. Its premises are at 11 Jameson Road, Bournemouth, BH9 2QD, which is also its registered address. The telephone number is 01202 513361. The club has a web site at www.BournemouthLittleTheatre.co.uk
The Club is registered with Companies House under number 2699332, & with the Charities Commission under number 1019571

The Club’s legal statutes are its Memorandum and Articles of Association. These are held by the Secretary and may be inspected by arrangement.

The Club is regulated under the 2003 licensing act, this is monitored and inspected by Bournemouth Borough Council and amongst other things makes it

- a. illegal to smoke on the premises except where it is necessary to the plot of the production and then only during performance not during rehearsal.
- b. To serve alcohol to any person believed to be below the age of eighteen or any person who has had an excess of alcohol

The Club is run by a Council, (or Management committee), whose members are elected at the Annual General Meeting (AGM), which is normally held in Autumn. The date is published at least three weeks in advance in the Club’s regular newsletter. The total number of Council members is decided at the AGM, subject to there being a minimum of three. Each year, one third of the members must retire, by rotation, according to length of service. Retiring members may stand for re-election. The Council meets approximately once a month and appoints the various officers of the Club (Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer etc). The Council may co-opt additional members, but such persons must resign at the next AGM, although they are then eligible to stand for formal election.

Membership of the Club is open to all, regardless of theatrical experience, on payment of an annual fee. Sponsorship from an existing member may be requested and acceptance is at the discretion of the Council. The Club is not equipped to accept juvenile membership except where parents are themselves members and here they take full responsibility for chaperoning their children.

Paid up membership carries the following entitlements:-

- a. Participation in all Club productions – subject to audition or invitation.
- b. Reduced ticket price for Club productions
- c. Participation in all Club social occasions and special events
- d. Voting rights at the AGM

Annual subscription rates are usually fixed at the AGM. New members joining later in the season will normally have their subscriptions adjusted accordingly.

Life Membership is a rare privilege, granted at the discretion of the Council, to individuals who, in the unanimous opinion of the Council, have made an exceptionally significant contribution to the Club over a considerable period of time.

Productions are chosen by a sub-committee and all members may make proposals. The aim is to present a balanced programme with as wide a range as possible – from classic dramas, thrillers and comedies through to farce. Original works are also welcome, when judged to be of the right standard. Each season starts in early Autumn and runs to the onset of the following Summer. The full programme is published before each season begins and can feature as many as eight productions, including One Act and Studio type presentations, as well as full length plays. One Act productions may be entered in local and national Drama Festivals.

All plays are cast after **open auditions**, which are announced in the Club Newsletter. It is a fixed rule that parts must **not** be pre-cast, but where an aspiring performer is unable to attend an open audition, the Director may make arrangements to audition the individual privately. Choice of cast is left to the Director, who may consult with the Council if required.

Rehearsals normally last for six weeks, and although their frequency is a matter for the Director, three evenings a week tends to be the norm, with perhaps a couple of extra ones added in the final week

Eligibility to participate in Club events is normally restricted to paid-up members. Occasional exceptions may be approved by the Council, but Directors wishing to invite any non-member to participate in a production are required to obtain the Council's agreement *before any such offer is made*.

Guidelines for aspiring directors may be summarised as follows:-

- a. You may submit a title (& script), to the selection committee whenever you like **Or** you may be approached by the selection committee to direct a play of their choice. Whichever the case, be prepared to discuss your outline staging concepts, set, audition dates etc.
- b. Talk to the **Club Secretary** about obtaining scripts, royalties and obtaining a temporary key to the theatre; to the **Treasurer** about your budget requirements; and to the **Stage Director** if you require any information or advice regarding scenery.
- c. Assemble your production team as early as you can. Designer, set builder, lighting and sound engineers, costume designer, props, stage manager, assistant stage managers, prompt, etc. The Council is there to help and advise.
- d. Do be aware of the constraints imposed by the nature of the theatre, e.g. no wings, no curtain etc.

Publicity is achieved through regular newsletters to members and playgoers and our web site (www.BournemouthLittleTheatre.co.uk), which also contain details of the ticket office facilities for each production. Posters are produced for display in the theatre.

Additional duties, in support of each production, are carried out by volunteers, for whom details of their specific duties are provided separately. These tasks include:-

House Manager
Bar Manager
Coffeeshop

In the event of **fire or other emergency** at all public performances the overall responsibility for the safe evacuation of the building and meeting the emergency services rests with the duty House Manager, who is provided with detailed instruction and training. However, all members should make themselves aware of the siting of fire exits and fire fighting equipment.

Any member discovering a fire should immediately bring it to the attention of others by setting off the fire alarm and calling the emergency services on 999.

Once clear of the building everyone should assemble in the street opposite the building until instructed that they may either re-enter the building or disperse to their homes.

And finally... will see from what has gone before that The Bournemouth Little Theatre Club is not constrained by lists of rigid rules and regulations and that there are very few hard and fast rules. We try to operate in a flexible, democratic manner and rely on our membership to uphold and observe the guidelines set out above. Your Council is always willing to listen to new ideas and proposals and any one of them can be approached at any time, on any topic.

To become an active member we do not require you to be experienced; what we do like to see is keenness and commitment. Above all, we welcome new blood. If you enjoy the theatre, spread the word and bring in your friends.