



**ACCOUNTS FOR THE PERIOD  
FROM  
1<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022  
TO  
31<sup>st</sup> AUGUST 2023**

**TRUSTEES**

Ann Walker – Chair  
Clyde Young – Treasurer  
Pamela Edmonds – Secretary  
Jane Uren – Membership Secretary  
Anita Gunn  
Maria Hadlow  
Elizabeth Hutcheson

Registered Charity Number

1184546

**THE VILLAGE PLAYERS  
REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES  
FOR THE PERIOD 1<sup>st</sup> SEPTEMBER 2022 TO 31<sup>st</sup> AUGUST 2023**

**THE OBJECTS OF THE TRUST**

The objects of the CIO are:

- (1) to advance the education of the public in the arts through the provision of live theatre.
- (2) to advance the education of the public in the arts by providing opportunities to work with professionally trained and experienced mentors.

The Trust was registered as a charity number 1184546 with the Charity Commission in England and Wales on 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2019 in order to create a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

**FINANCIAL REPORT**

The financial report for the period 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 is stated in the income and expenditure account attached. A commentary is also made by the Treasurer later in this report.

**REVIEW OF ACTIVITIES – REPORT FROM THE CHAIR**

**1. Committee Activity**

Since becoming a CIO in July 2019, our Committee consisted of 8 Trustees and 2 Committee Members: the latter being Clive Uren and Heather Young who are prevented from becoming Trustees whilst their respective spouses are Trustees. Sadly, as reported in last year's accounts, Clive died in Sept 2021 which left Heather Young as the sole Committee Member responsible for Newsletters.

However, in this financial year, our Committee was comprised of 7 Trustees and 3 Committee Members. This is because:

- (i) Peter Williams, Trustee, gave notice of his resignation early in 2022, as he and his wife had moved to West Sussex, but it was not until August 2022 that his name was finally removed as a signatory at NatWest Bank and as a Trustee of the group. As a result, we moved into the 2022/23 year with only 7 Trustees.  
Peter joined in October 2015 and was a very capable Treasurer and we are extremely grateful to him for all the research and guidance he gave us on becoming a CIO.

- (ii) We were fortunate in being able to attract two new people to the group (Irene Osprey and Jonathan Gray) both with considerable experience in drama. However, rather than invite them to become Trustees immediately, we thought it better if they joined, initially, as Committee Members, but with the view towards becoming full Trustees at a later date if they wished to do so. By adopting this approach, it gives everyone time to see what is involved and what their duties are before committing themselves.

At the start of the year, Elizabeth Hutcheson stepped down as Secretary but remained on the Committee as a Trustee. Pamela Edmonds was appointed Secretary to replace her.

I'm pleased to report that the Committee functions very well as a unit with each person contributing well towards the tasks in hand.

## **2. Production Activities**

This last year has been a very successful one for The Village Players, both in terms of productions performed and from a financial point of view. We have staged two productions and also put on a Burn's Night celebration in January to mark the thirtieth anniversary of The Village Players.

In November 2022 we put on a play written by John Nicholson entitled 'Dracula - The Bloody Truth'. This play purports to tell the true story of Dracula and was a cross between a comedy and 'The Play that went Wrong' and necessitated many of the actors taking multiple parts. From the group's point of view, it was a real challenge as we had not attempted anything like this before. However, under the superb direction of Helen Halliday the end result was extremely successful and very well received by the audiences. The play was particularly challenging for those working behind the scenes but, as usual, the production team did an amazing job and kept things running smoothly throughout.

Although many performing rights preclude us from videoing performances and selling DVDs to the cast as we could do in the past, we are able to have one video of each show which we can keep for critical and archive purposes. This enabled us to show videos of one of the performances of 'The Sound of Music' which was performed in May last year and 'Dracula - The Bloody Truth' to members of the cast and backstage crew involved in each production, following which there was time given for discussion and critical appraisal of the performance. This was found to be an extremely beneficial learning experience and we will continue to do this in the future. It was also an opportunity for those involved in each production to get together again in a social setting, which was very enjoyable. We intend to do this for future productions.

On 28<sup>th</sup> January a Burn's Night was held to celebrate thirty years of the Village Players. This was an extremely successful event brilliantly organised by Pam Edmonds with the help of a small sub-committee. The meal was excellent, provided by Mary Dick-Cleland and, although we did not know it at the time, this was the last meal that Mary would prepare for the Village

Players as she and her husband Neil have now moved out of the area. Mary has provided meals for our Theatre Suppers for many years and the Players owe her a huge debt of gratitude for making these evenings so popular and successful.

In June we staged 'Witness for Prosecution' by Agatha Christie. This was performed under the excellent direction of Heather Young and was a tremendous success. From start to finish there was a terrific atmosphere during both rehearsals and performances and there were some excellent individual performances given. The play was put on 'in the thrust' and Graham Stoner, with the help of Jonathan Austin and Ian Charlesworth, produced an exceptional set. Graham's wife Nicky also contributed by the painting and 'ageing' of the court furniture to make it look amazingly authentic. The audience enjoyed being so close to the action and really felt that they were in the courtroom. The jury were members of the audience who had tables on the stage.

Having lost the services of Mary we had to find someone who could take over the catering for this theatre supper. We were fortunate that Clyde found a caterer called Janet Smith who, after discussion, was keen to provide the meal for the play. This was very well received, and she has been booked for our next theatre supper in May next year.

Andrew Nairne, who has been responsible for lighting our productions for many years, has given notice that he would like to retire, and we are extremely grateful to Suzanne Bratby who has agreed to move from stage management to take over the lighting for us. Andrew kindly agreed to act as mentor to Suzanne during the takeover period. This of course leaves a gap in our stage management team but we were very pleased when Suzanne suggested that some friends of hers might be interested and so we welcomed Chris and Annie to the group who very efficiently ran the backstage for Witness for the Prosecution and are already involved in our next production.

The week of the play was extremely hot and this made it quite uncomfortable for both the cast and the audience. It was agreed that in future we would try to have our spring production before the end of May, which hopefully will be a little more comfortable for all concerned.

On the Friday night of the play, we held a charity night which was in aid of The Hospice in the Weald in memory of the wonderful John Gunn who was a mainstay of The Village Players for so many years and who is still greatly missed. John and Anita's daughter Suzie gave a very moving speech before the play began and there were collection buckets and also a raffle for the audience. The Village Players donated £5 to the Charity from every ticket sold for that performance. On the evening, an amazing £832.16 was raised.

However, following Suzie's speech she was contacted by a member of the audience on behalf of the Mrs A. Lacy-Tate trust who said she was so impressed by Suzie's speech that the trust would like to make a donation if Suzie contacted her. This Suzie did and a further donation of £2,000 was made to the Hospice in the Weald making a total donation of £2,832.16, a wonderful result.

Looking ahead, rehearsals are already underway for our next production which is to be the pantomime 'Aladdin' written by Alex Jackson. This is being directed by Maria with musical direction by Richard Eldridge and we are very pleased to have some new people involved with this show, including four children who are helping to reduce the average age of the group significantly!

Next May we will be putting on a comedy, yet to be decided, and this will be a theatre supper so there is much to look forward to.

### **3. Summary**

We feel that our Charitable Objects have been achieved in that we:

- (i) have successfully provided the community with live theatre via two very different styles of productions- "Dracula", a fast-moving farce with multiple roles played by the actors and "Witness", a court-room drama.
- (ii) provided the opportunity to the cast & crew of "Dracula" to work with a professional director, Helen Halliday.
- (iii) gave an opportunity to a member, Heather Young, to direct, with the support of everyone on the Committee, the Agatha Christie court-room drama "Witness for the Prosecution" which, being set "in the thrust", was exceptionally challenging to cast & crew but which was a huge success.
- (iv) approved that our next production – the pantomime, Aladdin – would be directed by another member, Maria Hadlow, and that this production will give many children and adults of various ages the opportunity to act, sing and dance within a safe and vibrant environment and to work with a professional Musical Director, Richard Eldridge.

Finally, as you will all be aware, this group could not run without the enormous amount of work that is done behind the scenes. I would like to thank all the members of the committee and particularly Clyde who works so hard to make sure that the group is run correctly and whose knowledge of all things financial is invaluable. Thank you also to Pam who has taken over the unenviable of task of secretary, it is always good to know that she is there to remind me of anything that might have slipped my mind! I should also mention that Jane Uren has stepped down from being membership secretary for a number of years. We are very grateful to Jane for her work on the membership and I am pleased to say that she will continue on the committee for the time being.

As I said at the beginning, this has been a very successful year for the Village Players, and I look forward to the 2023 - 24 year with great optimism.

## TREASURER'S REPORT

The attached Income & Expenditure Statement covers the 12-month period from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> August 2023 which is our normal financial year. From this, our total income was £23,189.04 whilst our total expenditure was £19,736.34 thereby providing a healthy profit of £3,452.70. This is the second year running where our profit has been in the region of £3,400 resulting in a return to having a very healthy balance following two years of losses during the Covid pandemic of 2020 & 2021.

The main Income & Expenditure items are detailed below:

**Income:** As mentioned earlier, total income for the financial year amounted to £23,189.04 which arose as follows:

- (i) Subscriptions totalling £474 were lower than last year's figure of £574 which was boosted by having a large cast in the musical The Sound of Music.
- (ii) £11,173.35 receipts (i.e. ticket & bar sales etc) from the play, Dracula- The Bloody Truth.
- (iii) £9,663.11 receipts (i.e. ticket & bar sales etc) from the court-room drama, Witness for the Prosecution.
- (iv) £1,763.88 receipts (i.e. ticket & bar sales etc) from the fund-raising 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary & Burn's Night event.
- (v) £84.70 Interest (an improvement of £1.96 for the year before!).
- (vi) £30 late ticket receipt for Sound of Music.

**Expenditure:** Total expenditure in the financial year amounted to £19,736.34 the bulk of which was spent on the following items:

- (i) £756.69: General administration costs (£117.28 - including IT cost of £100 in opening a new Gmail account), plus, Scripts to read (£25.97); Front of House items (£48.45); Hall hire for meetings (£36); renewal Insurance Premium (£298.06); Misc – A/Trew Awards plus a Lock for shed (£64.59); Provisions (£33.98); Publicity (£44); Gifts – Wine for Auditor & Flowers to a member for support (£88.36).
- (ii) £999.90: Specific expenditure items – Committee & Guests Dinner (£339.90); Charity Donation (£600); Lighting (£60).
- (iii) £16,735.79: Production costs:
  - “Sound of Music”: £89.37 (Screening);
  - “Dracula”: £9,152.50: Total costs incurred in producing this Café Theatre play including Catering costs (£2,695); Hall hire (£760); Set Construction (£655); Director's Fee (£600); Costumes (£758); Front of House (£144); Props (£31); Publicity (£212); Royalties (£510); Sound (£100).
  - “Witness for the Prosecution”: £7,048.83: Total costs incurred in producing this Café Theatre court-room drama including Catering costs (£2,100); Hall hire (£736); Set Construction (£206); Costumes (£670); Front of House (£334); Props (£96); Publicity (£275); Royalties (£510); Sound (£100).

- “Aladdin”: £445.09 - Initial costs in setting up our next production in November 2023.
- (iv) £1,243.96: Running costs incurred in the fund-raising “30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary & Burn’s Night” event including Catering (£529); Bar (£379); Front of House (£290 which includes the hire of the piper).

At this point, I would like to highlight the following aspects:

1. The production of WFTP was set in the “thrust” which reduced the normal seating capacity in the hall. However, it was very well received as it gave the audience the sense of being in the court and, thanks to an amazing set construction team who used lots of existing materials to reduce the cost, the production produced a very healthy profit.
2. It was decided to resurrect our normal “Committee & Guests Annual Dinner” which had been cancelled during 2020 and 2021 due to Covid. This is an important event in which we are able to thank certain individuals for the generous amount of time & energy that they had freely given to the group during that year. The cost of the guest’s dinner was borne by the society whereas the Committee’s meals were subsidised by 50%. Both the Chair and the Treasurer believe that the cost of this annual event is fully justified when weighing up the social benefits and the goodwill it creates.
3. A donation of £600 was made to Hospice in the Weald in memory of John Gunn who, for over 30 years, was a vital member of the group both on and off stage and who sadly died in November 2021. As the Chair mentions in her report, it was particularly gratifying to find that other personal donations brought the total donation to £2,832!

### Summary

- £ 8,449.06: Balance carried over from 2021/22
- £23,189.04: Income
- -£19,736.34: Expenditure
- £11,901.76: Balance carried forward.

The closing balance in the accounts as shown above reconciles with monies held in the three accounts as shown below:

- £ 714.20: Current Account
- £10,576.68: Reserve 1 Account
- £11,290.88: Sub-total
- £ 610.88: Reserve 2 Account
- £11,901.76: Grand Total

### Notes

- (i) The sub-total figure shown above is, in effect, the group’s operational monies.

- (ii) The Reserve 2 Account shown above was originally opened in 2009 following a donation of £1,000 made by Lady Pile (in memory of her late daughter, Angie Trew - the founder of The Village Players) with the request that two book tokens be awarded each year (currently to the value of £25 each) to deserving members under the title of The Angie Trew Awards. The above figure is the current balance (including interest), and this money is kept separate from the group's operational monies.

The group's bankers are NatWest Bank plc. The accounts were examined by Mr. James Cook, Chartered Accountant and I would ask that we give a vote of thanks to Jim for taking the time to audit the books for us.

A question that is often asked is why don't we place some of our money in a higher interest-bearing account? Now that interest rates have increased in recent months it is a matter that we are considering at the moment. However, two things:

1. the normal deposit rates that are quoted (eg 5%pa or even 6% for NS&I) are for personal, individual, accounts. Deposit accounts for small businesses or charities, like us, give a far lower interest rate. The interest rate on our instant-access Reserve Account with NatWest is 1.45%pa but we should balance this with the fact that our current account with NatWest is a Community Account which has no bank charges – a significant advantage.  
However, now that we have a far higher balance in our Reserve Account, we are currently applying for a Notice Period account with NatWest with the idea of parking some of our funds there to obtain a higher interest rate.
2. We are not eligible to open any product offered by National Savings & Investments.

In closing, The Village Players has ended the reporting period with funds of £3,453 higher than in the corresponding period last year thanks to its ability to stage two very successful productions with healthy audience numbers and a successful fund-raising event.

Overall, therefore, the end-of-year balance has returned to pre-Covid levels thanks to lessons learned from the challenging year of 2020-21 and the continuation of serious budgeting of productions. As a result, the group remains in a very healthy financial position.

Clyde M Young  
Treasurer & Trustee  
The Village Players