



Faringdon Dramatic Society

Minutes of FDS AGM

22/5/2025 7.30pm in The Barber Rooms - All Saints Church - Faringdon

Present: Debbie Lock (Chair), Shela Field (Treasurer), Gary Field, Bex Hutchings, Vicky (Vixz) Edmonds (Sec) Alan Merrick, Jeni Summerfield, Jayne Hoyland, Carolyn Taylor, Alan Taylor, Richard Lock, Ian Lee, Joan Lee, Sarah Nutbrown, Jacob Bayliss, Duncan Sinclair, Mike Fraser, Matt Wheeler, Jane Cadoggan, Julian Turnball, Helen Barker, & Sue Ashford-Smith.

Apologies from: Julie Kent, Bob Kent, Heather Kent, Gary Bates, Lynda Bates, Amanda Linstead & Carole Tappenden.

Minutes of the last AGM were approved as a correct record and will be signed by the Chair.

Matters Arising All matters arising from the last AGM had been dealt with.

Workshops held in September and October – Very well received - Thank you to Carolyn and Bex for running these. Helen Thrower no longer wishes to direct a production this November. Ongoing struggle with licenced chaperones and DBS checked volunteers for under 18s and backstage helpers – a membership wide plea for further help in these areas for future productions particularly Pantomime.

Chairman's Report from Debbie Lock – Lots of Thank Yous. Report Attached

Treasurer's Report from Shela Field – Attached

Current balances:

Community Account balance £4,426.61

Interest Account balance £17,120.67

Special thanks to Richard Lock for all your help.

Any suggestions about how we can spend some of our profits would be welcome. If anyone has any ideas, please speak to a member of the committee.

Membership Subs

Membership fees of £20.00 per adult will continue, after a lengthy discussion regarding the fee and if we should put it down. Matt Wheeler suggested a show levy for members with a free membership? - Looked at this before difficult to decide who and how. Carolyn mentioned that making a physical effort to become a member was a good thing. Ian states that insurance is a concern for over 80's they should have a free membership. Sue Ashford Smith asked about a subsidised membership for those in financial hardship – Debbie said we do encourage those that are struggling to speak to us. We will make this fact better known. Under 18s to pay £10.00. Vote held and fee will remain £20.00 per person (£10.00 per under 18) and a vote was held and agreed for those members over 80, no membership fee. Fees are now due and requested to pay by Bank transfer, using Initial and surname as reference. Ian will send an email to all members.

Reforming of Committee - Election of Officers

Chair: Debbie Lock – Proposed by Jeni Summerfield – Seconded by Jane Cadoggan

Secretary: Vicky (Vixz) Edmonds – Proposed by Jayne Hoyland – Seconded by Alan Taylor

Treasurer: Shela Field – Proposed by Carolyn Taylor – Seconded by Richard Lock

Committee Member 1: Julie Kent - Proposed by Debbie Lock - Seconded by Helen Barker

Committee Member 2; Bex Hutchings - Proposed by Jayne Hoyland – Seconded by Jacob Bayliss

Committee Member 3: Gary Field – Proposed by Richard Lock - Seconded by Alan Taylor

Committee Member 4: *Duncan Sinclair* – Proposed by Matt Wheeler - Seconded by Alan Taylor

Committee Member 5: *Jeni Summerfield* – Proposed by Bex Hutchings - Seconded by Carolyn Taylor

Committee Member 6: *Amanda Linstead* – Proposed by Carolyn Taylor - Seconded by Helen Barker

No further nominations – Vote held, and Committee reformed for 2025/2026

Future Productions

November 2025 - Remembrance production – Directed by Heather Kent & Carolyn Taylor. A selection of sketches, poems, songs, and dance numbers from World War 1, 2 and Modern-day conflict. An ideas evening has been proposed for Monday 16th June (to be confirmed) to gather ideas for the production. All welcome. Richard has made known that Heather is currently studying performing arts . We hope directing will help with her course. Jane has asked if we have asked the British legion members for their involvement/help.

Production dates and venue to be confirmed – Likely 6th, 7th & 8th /9th November – At Elms School or Corn Exchange with an in round staging set up.

Pantomime 2026 – Beauty and The Beast

Bex Hutchings will direct and write the Panto 2026 “Beauty and the Beast”, Brief description provided by Debbie – French vibe, Using traditional storyline, Panto Horse. Duncan Sinclair will again be Musical Director. Read Through and Auditions early October. Performance dates to be confirmed 30th, 31st & 1st - Work out a rehearsal schedule that would work alongside the remembrance performance.

Spring Production 2026 – Larkrise outdoor production

Directed by Debbie Lock – proposed to take place at Coleshill farm site. Proposals submitted to National Trust – Will require a large cast and hoping to purchase/hire a covered area for audience members. Performance dates to be confirmed - Likely to be mid-June for better weather. There will be no play at Buscot Theatre, if this happens. Bex mentioned about access for disabled /mobility concerns as previous issues have been raised about Buscot’s access. Should be ok, as on one level outside.

If anyone would like further information about Coleshill speak to Gary Field (Tours available on Thursdays and Saturdays) or Gary Bates as they volunteer at this venue.

Becoming a Charity - Presentation given by Gary Field. - Research report attached.

Need to update our society's constitution and put together an application and submit. Our accounts would need to be verified by an accountant.

Vote held as to whether we become a charity – vote of yes – Agreed. Committee to proceed - time frame before next AGM.

John Taylor Award

Debbie Lock explained what the award was. Over 30 Members voted online and counted by chair.

The nominees are:

Vixz Edmonds – For becoming society's sec, directing her first play and generally helping with any production.

Richard Lock - Continued work behind scenes, supporting the society, and for booking and liaising with Stagecoach and the church for the rehearsal space and Elms school.

Verity Roberts – For organising the charity musicals event and always being a big supporter of our pantomimes.

Shela Field, for long service as an excellent front of house manager and becoming the society's treasurer.

The winner of the John Taylor Award is Shela Field.

Long Service Awards: Gary Bates awarded 25-year badge.

Any Other Business.

The Annual Barbecue will be held early September (7th - Weather permitting) To be hosted by Debbie and Richard Lock. All members invited.

Next committee meeting to be held on Tuesday 24th June 2025 - 19:45 at Leamington Drive

There being no further business the meeting closed at 20.30

Chairmans report

In my second year as chairman of FDS, I am pleased to report that in addition to producing three successful shows, we also helped to raise money for Helen and Douglas House.

Before I talk about the shows we have put on this year I would like to say some thankyou's.

Firstly I want to thank the committee who have really supported me this year through some tricky times. I especially want to thank Vixz who took over as secretary and Shela as treasurer – both of which are time consuming roles.

We are sad that Alan Merrick has decided to step down from the committee and will no longer be involved in set building. I want to thank him for all his hard work over many years.

Next, I would like to thank Ian Lee who has continued to update our website and successfully trialed a new ticket system for Entertaining Angels. The slight price increase reflects the added booking fee which we wanted to include in the overall price. We are exploring seat numbering options but are uncertain about how implementation would work at Buscot or the Junior School. This will be something the committee will be looking at this year.

There have been very few reports of individuals trying to sell tickets on social media. Hopefully the procedure for notifying Ian about spare or exchange tickets is now being followed as requested.

Bex has continued with our online publicity and this has really helped with our excellent ticket sales. The musicals evening and Entertaining Angels sold out completely and the pantomime only had a few tickets remaining- the matinee tickets having pretty much sold out before christmas.

For Follyfest 24 Duncan organized a workshop with members of the cast performing numbers from the pantomime and then teaching participants the dance moves. This was good fun and lots of children joined in. We spoke to people about panto and joining the society. Thank you to Duncan for organizing and running this.

Following the summer break we had our annual barbecue on a lovely sunny day in September. Thank you to Gary and Shela for hosting this,

We then held two workshops for members which were very well supported- one on Shakespeare and the other on Panto. Thank you to Bex and Carolyn for running these. If anyone would like to organize a workshop or play reading we would be happy to book a room and advertise it. Please speak to anyone on the committee about this. I have a huge number of scripts if anyone would like to borrow any or you can ask Gary F about hiring sets of scripts from the library.

At the beginning of September Verity got together members of the society and special guests, who were interested in taking part in a one-off charity gala concert of songs from the musicals. Once a song list was agreed the group then met on the day of the concert and rehearsed before the evening show. Proceeds from ticket sales and a raffle were donated to the Helen and Douglas House Children's Hospice, a charity that supports terminally ill children. The concert quickly sold out and raised over £1000. Thank you to Verity for organizing this event.

As soon as Richard and I returned from our September travels the read through and auditions for Cinderella took place- Despite my jet lag it all went smoothly and Duncan and I were very happy with the excellent cast we had.

Rehearsals began and by Christmas we were well on the way to a great show. I especially want to mention the young people who came to the fore this year and showed so much maturity with their acting, singing and general behavior. A special thank you to Heather who also agreed to take on some choreography.

At this point I must mention the costume team who came to the rescue over Christmas and the new year and created some brilliant costumes. In particular Cinderella's transformation costume which was a triumph.

For our Spring play, the committee had read and agreed that 'Entertaining Angels' would make an excellent play for Buscot but we had no one to direct it. Thankfully Vixz agreed that she would try directing for the first time. I think we can all agree she did a brilliant job and everyone enjoyed this sell out show. I hope that she direct again in the future.

As we start our next year of productions which you will hear about very soon I just want to highlight a couple of things

Chaperoning

The chaperoning worked really well this year thanks to Julie who organized it all. She is unable to be here tonight but has asked for more licensed chaperones for this year's pantomime. The more chaperones we have the less arduous a task it is for those involved. If you think you could help with this please speak to Julie or myself and find out how to apply.

Back stage

We are still short of people to help backstage especially for panto. If you know anyone who may like to get involved with this please introduce them to us.

It has been another very successful year for FDS and I am pleased to say we have an exciting year of productions ready to move forward which you will be hearing more about this evening.

Finally I have an award to present

Ian reminded me that we missed giving out a long service badge so I would like to do that now.

Sometimes I worry that we don't keep members, and they go off to other societies for one reason or another but then you present one of these awards and realise quite a lot of us have one already so perhaps that isn't such a problem after all

So for being an active member of this society for over 25 years I would like to present this award to Gary Bates