
MINUTES OF THE THIRD MEETING OF THE 2010/2012 COUNCIL HELD AT
GUILD HOUSE ON 5th OCTOBER 2010

Contents

- 3.1 Announcements
- 3.2 Minutes – Matters Arising
- 3.3 Live Performance
- 3.4 Recorded Media
- 3.5 TUC Congress
- 3.6 BECS Co-option
- 3.7 Staff Pension Scheme Trustee - vacancy
- 3.8 Procedure for dealing with abuse towards Staff
- 3.9 Membership
- 3.10 Motions from Branches and Committees
- 3.11 Legal Cases
- 3.12 Councillors' Motions

Present: Present: Jean Rogers (Vice-President – in the Chair), Laura Bailey, Kate Bancroft, Peter Barnes, Ian Barritt, Henrietta Branwell, Annie Bright, Christine Bucci, Jo Cameron Brown, John Carnegie, David Cockayne (Vice-President), Maggie Cronin, Nicky Diprose, Dave Eager, Bryn Evans (Honorary Treasurer), Peggy-Ann Fraser, Natasha Gerson, Graham Hamilton, Ryan Forde Iosco, Yvonne Joseph, Joseph Kloska, Mary Lane, Kate McCall, Corinna Marlowe, Brenda Marsh, Tina May, Paul Mead, Andy Medhurst, Sheila Mitchell, Pauline Moran, Fiona Mott, Peter Polycarpou, Dennis Ray, Rhubarb the Clown, Julia Carson Sims, Sally Treble, Tim Walton, John Webb and Christine Payne (General Secretary).

COUNCIL 3

3.1 ANNOUNCEMENTS

In the absence of the President on tour, Jean Rogers, Vice President, chaired the meeting.

- 3.1.1 The Vice President reported that Sheila Collings was unwell and in hospital; a gift of a potted plant had been sent to her with best wishes.
 - 3.1.2 In view of the recent death of member Norman Wisdom, Councillor Mary Lane was invited to say a few words in tribute.
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3.2 MATTERS ARISING FROM THE MINUTES OF COUNCIL 2

- 3.2.1 **Minute 2.1.3 – Announcements** - it was reported that there was still no response from the Prime Minister's office in relation to the letter sent by Council on the cuts to Arts Funding.
- 3.2.2 **Minute 2.2.1 – BBC Television Agreement** - the AGS (RM) reported that the issues raised by the Directors' Committee will be discussed with the BBC as part of these negotiations and that we will not have to wait until the annual review to resolve this issue.
- 3.2.3 **Minute 2.2.2 – BBC Pension Scheme** - the AGS (RM) reported that the BBC strike over pensions had been called off following further talks.
- 3.2.4 **Minute 2.2.5 – Organising in Equity** – The AGS (LP & O) reported that the first meeting of the National Organising Team would take place on 20th October 2010. He said that there was also a new Creative Organising Team in addition to the Variety Organising Team.
- 3.2.5 **Minute 2.2.6 – UK Film Council** - the AGS (RM) reported that meetings were taking place with the Government on this but not yet with the Unions. Council was assured that when Equity meets with the minister our concerns about Shooting People will be forcibly expressed.
- 3.2.6 **Minute 2.2.8 – BBC Audio Agreement** – following a query from two Councillors, the AGS (RM) reported that discussions were currently taking place on outstanding matters including Theatre Directors' issues within the T.V. negotiations.
- 3.2.7 **Minute 2.3 – Fire Procedures** – the AGS (LP & O) reported that all fire procedure comments had been passed on to the Health & Safety specialist who was writing up the new procedures.

COUNCIL 3

- 3.2.8 Minute 2.4.2 – Council Appointees** – the General Secretary reported that the Disciplinary Sub-Committee had now elected Tim Walton as Chair and Corinna Marlowe as Vice-Chair.
- 3.2.9 Minute 2.8.1 – 2010 Budget** – a Councillor wished to know when this matter of the undistributed funds would be going to court. *Reply – the Honorary Treasurer reported that a court date was still awaited. The General Secretary also reported that a member had written to her about the use of collective funds and that a meeting had been held with him.*
- 3.2.10 Minute 2.10 – Live Performance** - a Councillor **proposed** that the CPMA should also be represented on the West End Working Party – this was **AGREED**.
- 3.2.11 Confidential Minute 2.11.2 – Hallmark/RHI – this item was deemed Confidential.** The AGS (RM) gave a brief update.
- 3.2.12 Minute 2.13 – ARC 20-10 Motion 32: Blackpool Variety Branch** – A Councillor asked how the Working Party would be elected. *Reply – the AGS (C&MS) said this had not yet been decided and a recommendation will be brought to the November Council meeting.*

Dave Eager **proposed** and Ian Barritt **seconded** that the Minutes were a true and accurate record of the meeting. This was **AGREED**.

3.3 LIVE PERFORMANCE

3.3.1 Subsidised Repertory Agreement – this item was deemed Confidential

The AGS (LP and O) referred to his written report and gave Council an update on the current position. A decision was made on how to proceed with negotiations.

3.3.2 Save Our Theatre

The AGS (LP & O) referred to his written report – he said that since the last Council meeting placards and flags had been produced for members to take to protests and demonstrations outlining Equity's opposition to arts cuts. The Young Members Committee had organised a delegation to attend the protest outside the Conservative Party Conference in Birmingham on 3 October. Postcard activity is already having results with correspondence received back from MPs being fed back to Guild House. Jeremy Hunt in his presentation to the Select Committee was at pains to highlight his intention to focus on cuts to

COUNCIL 3

the DCMS rather than front line services. Whilst it is unlikely such cuts would be sufficient to deliver Treasury expectations, it was interesting that the Secretary of State had made such remarks.

The AGS (C & MS) explained that preparations were being made for a TUC Rally in Westminster Hall on 19 October 2010. Speakers from the membership were being canvassed and 20 places in the Hall have been reserved for Equity representatives. It was decided not to send a presence to Brussels on 29 September to the European Trade Union Council (ETUC) event both on the grounds of cost and because it did not appear that the International Federation of Actors (FIA) were particularly networked into the event.

Essentially, whilst Guild House will co-ordinate certain protest events such as the TUC one, the idea is that groups of members up and down the country could utilise the modest supply of placards and flags to give a bright colourful presence at protest events they wished to attend, some prompted from the centre, some prompted locally.

Staff members will facilitate and assist members who wished to take part, including consideration of whether information can be sent to other members, encouraging them to attend by way of email, etc. Branches and Committees, in particular, are encouraged to identify and consider events in their local area.

Points made in discussion:

- David Cockayne, Vice-President, said that he was very proud to attend the protest in Birmingham with around 15 members despite getting soaked.
- It was important that the union is seen alongside other trade unions.

The report was **NOTED**.

3.4. RECORDED MEDIA

3.4.1 Radio Commercials Working Party – New Media

The AGS (RM) referred to the written report from Matt Clarke, the Organiser responsible for the Radio Commercials Working Party, which set out the problems and actions currently being taken in the world of radio commercials. Council was asked to note the work of the Working Party and the actions taken thus far.

Points made in discussion:

COUNCIL 3

- Could the report be simplified given its complexity? *Reply – the AGS (RM) said that an online calculator was being designed to do just that.*

3.4.2 ITV – National Insurance – this item was deemed Confidential

The AGS (RM) gave a verbal update on the current position.

3.4.3 BBC – Video On Demand

The AGS (RM) referred to his written report on this. He said that the extension to the BBC VOD agreement had come to an end on 30th September 2010 but there was still no agreement on its continuation.

The **Recommendation** was to endorse a six-month extension of the current VOD agreement but to give six months' notice that if there were not a new television agreement in place by then, the agreement would be terminated.

This was **proposed** by Dave Eager and **seconded** by Graham Hamilton and **CARRIED** unanimously.

3.4.4. The Hobbit

The AGS (RM) spoke to his written report on this. This concerned the boycott of the production being shot in New Zealand due to the use of non-Union buy out contracts. Councillors were given the advice to members which had also been distributed worldwide by the English-speaking entertainment unions.

The advice was **NOTED**.

3.5 TUC CONGRESS

The General Secretary spoke to her report on this. She said that the delegation had consisted of Malcolm Sinclair, David Cockayne, Natasha Gerson, Corinna Marlowe, Jean Rogers and herself along with Deborah Charnley from the Young Members Committee who was also appointed as a scrutineer. The AGS (C&MS) and Louise McMullan, Policy Development Officer, also attended to assist the delegation.

In terms of motions, the delegation spoke as follows:

- Natasha Gerson proposed the motion on Public Interest Disclosure Act, which was seconded by the GMB.
- Jean Rogers seconded a Composite motion on Trade Union Outreach, which incorporated Equity's amendment.

COUNCIL 3

- Deborah Charnley seconded the motion from the TUC Young Members Conference – Young People and the Recession.
- David Cockayne spoke in support of the Musicians' Union motion on the remit of the BBC.
- The President seconded a motion from the Musicians' Union on Arts Funding.
- Corinna Marlowe proposed Equity's motion on Reform of the General Council, which was seconded by BECTU.

TUC General Council: - the General Secretary was not re-elected to the General Council. Jeremy Dear (NUJ) and John Smith (MU) were re-elected to the General Council and Jeremy to the Executive Committee. Those elected are indicated in bold.

Name	Union	Votes
Jonathan Baume	FDA	422,000
Bob Crow	RMT	341,000
Jeremy Dear	NUJ	440,000
Mark Dickinson	Nautilus International	481,000
Gerry Doherty	TSSA	534,000
Steve Gillan	POA	385,000
Michael Leahy	Community	432,000
Jonathan Ledger	Napo	318,000
Joe Marino	BFAWU	327,000
Robert F Monks	URTU	202,000
Ged Nichols	Accord	449,000
Christine Payne	Equity	329,000
Tim Poil	NGSU	468,000
John Smith	MU	492,000
Simon Weller	ASLEF	130,000
Matt Wrack	FBU	403,000

NEW TUC PRESIDENT - Michael Leahy, General Secretary of Community.

SPEAKERS - included Harriet Harman MP, Interim Leader of the Labour Party; Gideon Shoko, Deputy General Secretary, Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions; Mervyn King, Governor, Bank of England and John Monks, General Secretary, European Trade Union Confederation.

COUNCIL 3

FRINGE – the President spoke at the fringe event – Forced Labour in Burma: A Crime against Humanity, along with Brendan Barber and Equity's 'Zarganar' film was shown.

FEU RECEPTION – this was held on Wednesday 15 September at The Rain Bar. The event featured comedian and Equity member Susan Murray and the Manchester-based band, Dr Butler's Hatstand Medicine Band. As in previous years, it was extremely well attended.

GENERAL COUNCIL DINNER – the President and General Secretary attended and Alan Johnson was the guest speaker.

The General Secretary also added that further to two letters from Michael Leahy sent in advance of the Congress and in discussion with the Officers she had responded and suggested that the content of his letters could be in breach of the TUC Standing Orders and interpreted as canvassing for votes. Following congress he had clarified that his letters were intended to canvass for views and not votes. It was agreed that no further action should be taken on the matter and that we should concentrate on taking forward the aims of our motion to reform the General Council

Points made in discussion:

- Music was played throughout the two minute silence which was very inappropriate.
- The Delegation did not receive a copy of the Congress Report this year. *Reply – the General Secretary will check as the procedures may have changed.*
- Corinna Marlowe said that in moving our motion of Reform of the General Council she was able to express our 'disgust' at the way other unions had behaved in the election process.
- In response to a question from a Councillor the General Secretary confirmed that should any delegate require assistance in preparing and delivering their speech this would be given.

3.6 BECS CO-OPTION

The General Secretary spoke to her written report which included a letter from the AGS (RM) in his capacity as CEO of BECS confirming the unanimous decision of the BECS Board to ask the Council to formally co-opt Jo Cameron Brown to the Board. Jo Cameron Brown had been the first runner-up in the election of Council appointees to the Board.

COUNCIL 3

Recommendation: to endorse the co-option of Jo Cameron Brown to the BECS Board for the term of this Council. The recommendation was **ENDORSED** unanimously.

Council adjourned for lunch and resumed at 2.30 p.m.

3.7 STAFF PENSION SCHEME VACANCY

The AGS (RM) spoke to his written report on this. He said that, following the Council's decision in July to leave all current Employer Trustees of the Staff Pension Scheme in place, one of the said Trustees, Robin Browne, had tendered his resignation with immediate effect.

Council was asked to consider calling for nominations in order to fill this important vacancy of an Employer representative on the Staff Pension Scheme Board of Trustees.

The **recommendation** was that nominations were called for and, if necessary, an election would be held subsequently to fill this vacancy.

It was **proposed** by Henrietta Branwell and **seconded** by Natasha Gerson that Michael Branwell should be the Trustee.

It was **proposed** by Dave Eager and **seconded** by Brenda Marsh that Sheila Mitchell should be the Trustee.

It was **proposed** by Ian Barritt and **seconded** by John Webb that the recommendation be endorsed but that Councillors could nominate non-Councillors.

It was **proposed** by Graham Hamilton, as an amendment to Ian Barritt's motion, that a statement outlining the role be attached to the nomination. This was seconded by David Cockayne. Ian Barritt accepted this amendment.

Points made in discussion:

- Some of the newer Councillors pointed out that they might have difficulty deciding who to vote for as they did not yet know clearly the personalities and abilities of their fellow Councillors. *Reply - The AGS (RM) said that biographical details and details of the role would be sent out with the nominations together with an explanation of what the role and responsibilities of a pension fund trustee were.*
- Being a Pension Fund Trustee was not any kind of sinecure; Trustees have a lot of paperwork to master and have to keep themselves properly trained by going on courses, etc.

COUNCIL 3

In the light of the various proposals put forward, it was decided to vote first on the proposal by Ian Barritt, as amended. This was **CARRIED** with one against.

3.8 PROCEDURE FOR DEALING WITH ABUSE TOWARDS STAFF

The AGS (RM) spoke to his written report referring to the agreement which had been reached with the two Staff Unions, Unite and GMB, on a procedure for dealing with abuse and harassment directed towards Equity Staff.

The **Recommendation** was that Council note this agreement with the Staff Unions and advertise this procedure through its relevant communication processes.

This was **proposed** by Dennis Ray and **seconded** by Mary Lane and **CARRIED**.

3.9 MEMBERSHIP

3.9.1 New procedure for dealing with New Members

The AGS (C&MS) spoke to his written report on this.

At the Council meeting in September 2010, two Councillors raised concerns about the difficulty of properly scrutinising the new members' list during the course of a Council meeting while at the same time taking a full part in Council discussions. The Officers and SMT undertook to look at the procedures and, if possible, come up with suggestions for improvements.

Background

A list of new members has been circulated at Council meetings for as long as any of the current Officers and SMT can remember and, towards the end of each meeting, the Council has voted to accept the named performers into membership.

Following a change of rules in 1997, when provisional membership was abolished, the procedure for taking members into the Union was altered. Until that time, a prospective member applying to join the Union would receive nothing from Equity confirming that their application had been successful until after the Council had scrutinised the list of new members and voted to accept them. Someone applying just after a Council meeting had taken place would wait a month before having their membership application approved by the Council and then a further period of time while their Equity card was produced and despatched to them. This entire process could take as long as six weeks.

COUNCIL 3

In order to reduce significantly the amount of time between application and receiving a membership card, the Council agreed to delegate to staff the authority to take applicants into membership as long as those applicants met criteria that were agreed by the Council from time to time. Unlike Councillors, Equity staff have access to the full membership database and are therefore able to indicate to applicants whether an Equity name is already in use. The full list of new members continued to be put before the Council as the rules of the Union require that applicants be “elected” into membership by the Council (Rule 4.6).

Current practice

The practice of putting a full list of new members before the Council has continued in order to meet the requirement under the Rules that the Council “elects” new members, but with the changes in procedure it has become less clear what function this process happening during a meeting of the Council actually serves. Councillors spend time during a meeting going through the list and have the opportunity to ask questions but, in the five years that the AGS (C&MS) had been an Assistant General Secretary, there was only one occasion when a question from a Councillor had resulted in any action being required. Even then, the query from the Councillor was not questioning the applicant’s eligibility.

Proposal for the future

It is clearly asking a lot of Council members to both read through a list of 50 plus new members while at the same time taking a full part in the Council meeting.

The proposal is that instead of putting a folder of new members to Council members on the day of the Council meeting, a list of new members is circulated to Councillors in their pack of documents in advance of the meeting. Council members who have questions about any of the new members should submit them to the Assistant General Secretary Communications and Membership Support by 10 am on the morning of the Council meeting. The Council agenda will continue to have an item for the Council to elect those new members into membership of the Union. Answers to any questions will be supplied to individual Councillors by the lunch break if possible but, in any event, before the item on the agenda to elect new members is taken.

This procedure will fulfil all obligations under the Rules, will relieve Councillors of the duty of going through membership lists during Council meetings and will not introduce any additional time between an applicant submitting an application and a membership card being issued. It also mirrors current practice in other trade unions and membership organisations, including BECS.

The Officers and SMT **Recommend** that this procedure is adopted from the next meeting of the Council.

COUNCIL 3

The recommendation was **proposed** by Nicky Diprose and **seconded** by Corinna Marlowe.

It was **proposed** by John Webb and **seconded** by Graham Hamilton that the procedure recommended by the Officers and SMT be amended to 'send the list of new Members by email to those Councillors on email'.

Points made in discussion:

- The staff were thanked for responding to the concerns of Councillors but it was thought that the current procedure was acceptable but not as clear as it could be.
- The new procedure proposed would use paper unnecessarily.
- It was suggested that perhaps some Councillors could receive the information electronically and some by paper. *Reply – the General Secretary emphasised that it was her responsibility to ensure that all Councillors received all documents and the current method of providing them was by paper. Therefore she was reluctant to mix the procedures but was looking at how Council documents might be provided electronically in addition to paper.*
- It was suggested that perhaps the Rules could be changed so that new members are not endorsed by the Council given that the staff follow the procedures agreed by Council in judging each application.
- It was asked what information would be included on the list to be sent in Councillors' packs. *Reply - the proposal was to include information such as name, joining category and branch.*
- A Councillor enquired as to whether all of the current members of Council had an email address. *Reply – the General Secretary undertook to report back on this at the next Council meeting.*

Following these discussions, it was suggested by the General Secretary that the system be maintained as it is and reviewed after six months. This was then **proposed** by Peter Polycarpou and **seconded** by Dave Eager in the following terms: 'that the system stays as it is and Councillors make time to look at the lists before Council starts'. This was **CARRIED**.

3.9.2 New Members

It was **proposed** by Nicky Diprose and **seconded** by Dennis Ray that new members be approved. This was **AGREED**.

3.9.3 Current Membership Position

COUNCIL 3

The report of the AGS (C&MS) on this was **NOTED**.

3.10 MOTIONS FROM BRANCHES AND COMMITTEES

3.10.1 Young Members Committee

The Young Members' Committee asks the Equity Council to create a working party formed of councillors, representatives of specialist committees and members with relevant experience to push forward the union's agenda on low pay/no pay issues and make recommendations to Council.

OFFICERS/SMT RECOMMENDATION: Defer until the Government has produced the Guidance. This is a very important issue and concern for members. However as the General Secretary reported to the ARC the priority is to work with the Government to produce the Guidance which will clarify the intention of the current legislation. And the Coalition Government has confirmed that it wishes to implement the decision of the former Government and issue Guidance. Once the Guidance is in place then members must be involved in reviewing the union's policy both in Live Performance (in particular fringe) and Recorded Media (in particular films). It may be that one working party would not ensure that the widest debate needed is achieved and therefore Council should defer a decision on how the union reviews its policy until the Guidance has been published. However Council should confirm that members of the Young Members Committee will definitely be involved in the review of the union's policy.

The OSMT recommendation was **ENDORSED**.

3.10.2 Theatre Directors Committee

As the result of a previous recommendation from the Theatre Directors' Committee arising out of the successful Ensemble Theatre Conference, the Council agreed to make an annual sum of £1,000 available to sponsor an Equity Ensemble Theatre prize. After investigation, it was decided to collaborate with the Peter Brook Empty Space Awards to institute this prize. Unfortunately, over the three years that the prize has been running, only a minority of the nominated organisations could be remotely described as Ensemble. Given that it is evident that it will be impossible to persuade the organiser of the awards to make changes to improve the situation, the Theatre Directors' Committee – with great regret – recommends to Council that the current sponsorship of the Peter Brook Empty Space Awards should be terminated and the money used to instigate an Ensemble Theatre prize by alternative means. In agreeing to make this contribution for as long as the Award exists the Council recognised that 'any shortcoming we will simply have to deal with as and when'. However, it was implicitly understood that this did not mean withdrawal from the Awards and therefore it is suggested that as

COUNCIL 3

the Committee has expressed concerns on the Award that the Theatre Directors' Councillor or Chair of the Committee meets with Blanche Marvin to discuss the Committee's concerns.

OFFICERS/SMT RECOMMENDATION: Oppose. At its meeting in October 2007 and in response to a motion from the Theatre Directors Committee to set up an Ensemble Theatre Prize the Council agreed "That Equity contribute £1000 to an Empty Space 'Peter Brook Empty Space Equity Ensemble Theatre Award' on a yearly basis for as long as the Award exists". This decision was communicated to Blanche Marvin the organiser of the Awards. Therefore the union has entered into an arrangement with the Peter Brook Empty Space Award that we will contribute £1000 towards the award for as long as the Awards exists. The motion therefore asks Council to renege on this agreement. The concerns are that if Council seeks to do this then at worst Council could be accused of breaching the arrangement/contract or at least of bad faith.

The OSMT recommendation was **ENDORSED**.

3.10.3 Theatre Directors Committee

For two years, the Theatre Directors' Committee had been operating a very useful internet forum which enabled members of the committee to communicate with each other and make decisions between its meetings. Unfortunately the decision making aspect had to be halted recently because it was discovered that it had not been properly authorised by the Council. Since then (given that negotiating deadlines have to be met between meetings) the committee has found it impossible to process all its business properly. Accordingly, the committee asks Council to authorise a decision making facility on its internet forum for use between meetings.

OFFICERS/SMT RECOMMENDATION: Defer to the November council meeting when a report will be given on the implications of this proposal.

The OSMT recommendation was **ENDORSED**.

3.10.4 Isle of Man General Branch

Like many other branches, the Isle of Man General Branch benefits from the receipt of 5% of the subscriptions paid by credit card and direct debit by branch members, which is subsequently used to support branch activities. However this currently requires branch members to authorise the branch to claim this payment, by written request each year. The Isle of Man branch would like the Council to consider enabling branches to continue to receive 5% of the subscriptions of branch members who pay by credit card and direct debit, for as long as the member continues to pay their subs and remains a member of the branch.

COUNCIL 3

OFFICERS/SMT RECOMMENDATION: Oppose. The purpose of the 5% branch commission on members' subscriptions is not to finance official branch activities such as meetings or communications, all of which are paid for by Equity, it is to give branches an incentive both to recruit members and to keep them in membership. The additional money flowing into branches from the commission allows them to offer members additional activities such as Summer or Christmas socials or play-readings. While the request from a very small branch such as the Isle of Man is understandable, the Offices and SMT are convinced that seeking members' permission each year for 5% of their subscription to be given to their branch is the right approach. Allowing a member to opt to give 5% of their subscription to their local branch on joining and then never asking them again could have the effect of that commission continuing to go to the branch for as long as the member remains on the branch register even though that member never attends branch meetings and does not chose to benefit from any of the additional activities that the commission funds. It also removes all financial incentives to branches to recruit and retain active members.

The OSMT recommendation was **ENDORSED**.

3.10.5 The Audio Committee

The Audio Committee is concerned that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, which finances the BBC World Service has given notice to executives of the World Service to anticipate cuts in the region of 25% from April 2011.

Reports are circulating that one of the casualties of these proposed cuts will be the BBC World Service Burmese section.

At a time when Equity is leading a high profile campaign to free the Burmese comedian and writer Zarganar and aware that the BBC World Service is a credible voice in parts of the world where democracy is non-existent the Audio Committee would regard the closure of the Burma service as a gift to the ruling junta and an insult to political prisoners locked in Burma's jails for no crime.

The Audio Committee requests that the General Secretary write to the Foreign Secretary expressing our concerns about the reports to close the Burma section of the BBC World Service, to draw his attention to our campaign to secure the release of Zarganar, and seek assurances that this vital radio service remains intact.

OFFICERS/SMT RECOMMENDATION: Support

The OSMT recommendation was **ENDORSED**.

COUNCIL 3

3.11 LEGAL CASES

MISCELLANEOUS

Melody French v Ex-Service Mens Memorial Institute

Nic Molloy v Navigation Inn – Kings Norton

Wayne Taylor v Castle and Falcon PH/Derby

Dennis Collings v Connaught Hotel

John Altman v Standing Ovations Ltd and others

Stacy Wright v Sundown Events

Honey Jackson v Post Office Club

Mick Monroe v Kings Street Social Club – N.Shields

DJ Moylan v Event Horizons (Events) Ltd

Joanne Marriott v Blaze Fire Walking Ltd

Kevin Curtin v C Kitchen – The Lounge

Aaron C Lee v Hesford/The Caldermoor

Marc Cass v Mad Cow Productions

Julie Cowley v The Lowry Theatre

Sophie Garner v Monk & Tipster - Towcester

Anne Guthrie v Tweedale Arms Hotel

The miscellaneous cases were **NOTED**.

3.12 COUNCILLORS' MOTIONS

3.12.1 Motion in the name of John Carnegie

'There are two basic reasons why the Forum on the current version of the website is not 'fit for purpose':

- 1) Postings on the Forum do not go into its members' inboxes and are therefore read only by a tiny minority who have the time and inclination to delve into the Forum to seek them out;

COUNCIL 3

- 2) In order to seek out a posting, it is necessary to go down through three levels in order to be able to read anything.

The result is what has eloquently and accurately been described by a fellow Councillor as 'a discussion in which the shouting of a very few participants is driving everybody else out of the room'

Therefore, when the Forum is reconstituted on the new Website, it should have the following features which are standard in all good forums instituted for a similar purpose:

- 1) All postings made on the Forum automatically go as emails into the inboxes of all members of the Forum unless an individual member has opted out of this facility altogether or has chosen to receive a daily digest of postings;
- 2) The Forum should be structured in such a way that its members do not have to go down more than level to find a posting.

This motion was **proposed** by John Carnegie and **seconded** by Dave Eager. Seconding the motion, Dave Eager said that he was wholly in agreement with the approach proposed.

It was **proposed** by David Cockayne and **seconded** by Graham Hamilton that the text of the motion be accepted but that 'the matter should be referred to the web designer and developer for further consideration and advice'.

John Carnegie refused to accept this amendment.

Points made in discussion:

- The Council should not make this decision and needed to consult with the website designer for his advice on the possibilities.
- The current Forum does not work as it was intended and needs to be replaced.

David Cockayne's amendment was **CARRIED** with 20 for, 10 against and 1 abstention.

The motion as amended was **CARRIED** nem con with 1 abstention.

The motion as amended now therefore read as follows:

'There are two basic reasons why the Forum on the current version of the website is not 'fit for purpose':

- 1) Postings on the Forum do not go into its members' inboxes and are therefore read only by a tiny minority who have the time and

COUNCIL 3

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- 2) The Forum should be structured in such a way that its members do not have to go down more than level to find a posting.

The matter should be referred to the Web Designer and Developer for further consideration and advice.'

3.12.2. Motion in the name of Sheila Mitchell

'As an alternative to tabling a motion aiming at an instant decision by Council, Council agrees that from time to time it will have an exploratory debate on a subject to be suggested in advance by Councillors or staff and decided by the Officers which could possibly lead to an in-depth study and subsequently a change of policy'.

This motion was **proposed** by Sheila Mitchell and **seconded** by Julia Carson Sims.

Points made in discussion:

- If space can be found on a Council agenda to have a general discussion this was a good idea.
- It would not prevent Councillors putting a motion.
- The staff as well as the Officers should be involved in the decision on subjects to be debated.
- This is something which the elected officers only, including the General Secretary, should decide.

COUNCIL 3

- If during a Council meeting it was felt that there was no time to debate the subject then it would be deferred.
- A subject for discussion would not have to be on the agenda for every Council meeting – only when the Officers thought there was space.
- The business of the meeting must come first and this is an add on.

It was **proposed** by David Cockayne and **seconded** by Henrietta Branwell that the words 'at a later meeting of the Council' be added to the end of the motion. This amendment was accepted by the proposer and seconder.

The motion as amended was **CARRIED** with 4 against and 1 abstention.

The meeting ended at 4.30 p.m.