

EQUITY LONDON SOUTH

Minutes of Equity London South Branch Meeting

22nd March 2025

1-3 p.m. • Brixton House

londonsouthbranch@equity.org.uk

<https://www.equity.org.uk/get-involved/find-your-branch/london-south-branch?tab=documents>

Attendance: Alan Turkington, Alasdair Hankinson, Amanda Grace, Annie Fitzmaurice, Belle Fin, Cranks, Emily Carpenter, Fiona Whitelaw, Maria Tyminski, Paul Valentine, Ruby Ablett, Salome Wagaine, Simon Furness, Su Gilroy

Zoom Attendance: Cathy Sweet, Ian Crosson

Guest Speakers: Samantha Béart, Shannon Sailing (via Zoom)

Apologies: Alexandra Afryea, Dickon Thompson, James Somerset, Madeleine MacMahon, Sally McKenna, Timothy Block

Treasurer's Report (James Somerset, Treasurer—in absentia delivered by Fiona Whitelaw)

- We have paid for a new adapter to ensure our hybrid elements will work on the laptops of the volunteers currently available, and refunded our food and beverage costs for last month.
- James is awaiting confirmation from Brixton House on how to use credit from a cancelled meeting.
- Expense claims for previous meetings have gone to Guild House to be processed.
- **Current Balance: £1,679.92**

Council Report (Fiona Whitelaw, Chair)

- We're currently awaiting the delivery of our swank new Branch banner!
- Renters' Union affiliation is on the table.

Variety Report (Belle Fin, Variety Officer)

- Updates from the Variety Officers' Meeting & Comedians' Network Meeting
 - Fair Play Cabaret is now seeking contacts amongst activists; the FPC began in Loughborough, and endeavours to pay all performers in their cabaret nights regardless of role
 - contact markkelly24@hotmail.com
 - Goal: to deliver a functioning Variety Network in every region in the UK

Campaigns Report (Maria Tyminski, Campaigns Officer)

- **Reinstate National Theatre Primary School Touring**
 - The NT has cut 100% of funding for Primary School Touring across the UK, claiming increased costs and Arts Council cuts make the programme unviable. However, the Class Network notes that the NT's total income has risen from £89 million to £121.4 million, and are campaigning for this critical educational programme to be resintated.
 - [Sign the petition here.](#)

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- **Justice for Heklina**
 - Organised by Peaches Christ, Crystal and Cheddar Gorgeous, a march **this Monday, March 31st from 10 a.m. until 12 p.m.** is demanding accountability from the Metropolitan Police after drag artist Heklina was found dead at digs while visiting London for work. It's been two years with neither a meaningful investigation nor a death certificate.
 - [Register to join Equity in the solidarity march at Big Ben on Monday.](#)

Updates from London Regional Meeting (Amanda Grace, Secretary)

- London South's motion (proposed by Jay Lafayette Valentine) on strengthening collective bargaining & union rights whilst fast-tracking the new Employment Rights Bill is going to Conference alongside a motion on arts funding in education from London North!
- Lynda Rooke and Paul Fleming reflected on the past year:
 - 17781 London-based Equity Members
 - 12th largest union in the country, where a member is more likely to be 26 than any other age, and more subscription grants have gone out than ever before
 - insurance accident payout has gone from £150/week to £300/week; PLI coverage is at £10 million
 - 11,500+ people responded to the Labour government's consultation on AI, the most responses of any consultation of this government ever (who Paul noted have been more hesitant to budge on AI than the previous Tory government)
- Union goals for next year:
 - Spotlight Class Action Suit in July
 - Mobilizing theatre members to get pay restoration to 2017 levels—getting strike-ready if necessary
 - Contesting low deals in TV/film to the same degree as theatre
- Important Figures
 - Performance industry channels £5 into the local economy for every £1 spent
 - West End pay has tripled since 1981 after 'closed shop'
 - £728/week is the national average wage
 - The head of BBC told Paul Fleming that cutting *Doctors* was alright because the money lost from that show will be channeled into *Masterchef*
- Member Concerns Raised
 - With the push for employment rights for freelancers to receive 'employee' benefits, will we move away from Self-Employment to PAYE?
 - PSC Affiliation
 - Paul noted this was done in response to the unilateral censorship of pro-Palestine artists across the UK, which was proven within a Freedom of Information request, but clarified that Equity's stance with the PSC follows precedence set by Equity's action responding to conflicts in Colombia and South Africa—Equity is formally for a two-state solution and against BDS

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Guest Speakers

- Paul Valentine interviewed Sam Béart and Shannon Sailing on the state of the industry concerning performance for video games. Topics discussed included:
 - the fact that most video game performance now goes beyond standard voice-over work into motion capture, and can require intimacy coordination
 - how to network in an industry where CDs are largely absent
 - the Association of Voiceover Agents

Conference Rep Vote

- Following short statements from candidates present, London South Branch voted to send the following representatives for Conference:
 - Maria Tyminski
 - Jay Lafayette Valentine
 - Amanda Grace
 - Belle Fin
 - Annie Fitzmaurice
 - Paul Valentine
 - Benjamin Finch
- Those not voted to represent London South have been offered back-up slots in the event one of our Representatives drops before Conference.

Any Other Business

- **Script Reading Report**
- **Global Talent Meet-Up**
- **Ian Crosson** shared an [article on the budget disparities between ITV & the BBC and Netflix.](#)

Members' Updates

- **Cranks** has a [one-woman show at 8 p.m. on Easter Sunday at the Divine](#), who have been divine to work with!
- **Al Hankinson** is fundraising for a sci-fi short film set in the tunnels under London. The goal is £10,000; [you can donate here!](#)
- **Emily Carpenter** is hosting a table read of a new play and looking for actors with genuine (or convincing) North American dialects.
- **Simon Furness** has a play at the Omnibus Engine Room festival called *Entwined*; [tickets are here!](#)
- **Su Gilroy** has signed a new five-show agreement in Lyme Regis following a successful panto run! Yay Su!

Next Meeting: Monday, April 14th, 7-9 p.m. at Brixton House.