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## Minutes of the Equity Devon & Cornwall General Branch meeting held on Zoom on Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2021 2pm

**Present:** David Richey, Sarah McCourt, Wanda Blair, Tank Sherman, Tara Casey, Morna Burdon, Mary Lane, Jill Lamede, David Whitfield, Michael Terry, David Cockayne, Mimi Cassidy, Stefan Antoniuk, Nigel Howells, Anthony Blakesley, Vivien Jones, Barrie West, Margaret Grimoldby, Nick Diprose, Mandy Fenton, Enna Michaels, Joan Beveridge, Lynda Rooke, Katie Bottoms, Jean Rogers

**Apologies:** Simon Curtis, Steve Walsh, Tim Cartwright, Deb Cordon.

**Minutes of the last Branch Meeting –** No corrections.

**Matters Arising and Updates on Actions:**

**ACTION:** LR to liaise with David John about organising a larger South West meeting about Class Network. LR is currently talking to David John about organising meeting.

**ACTION:** Branch to continue discussion around Women's safety at the April meeting with the aim of finding suitable wording for the motion. Taking place in this meeting.

DR welcomed everyone and read the safe spaces statement.

**Chair's Report (Dave Richey):**

Working With Actors Event for South West filmmakers taking place on 28th April at 6pm. Simon Curtis has organized guest speakers Hannah Marie Williams and Alix Taylor. This is in follow up to the branch concerns about educating emerging filmmakers and course leaders about pay and conditions when working with actors.

**Secretary's Report (Sarah McCourt):**

National Campigners Network update: SMc has received training in social media and Equity now has a subscription to canva to make it possible to create visual campaign and events material. Notes from the training have been shared with the Committee.

Torbay Trades Council: As a branch we are entitled to have two representatives. Stefan Antoniuk proposed Mike Terry as the second representative. Barrie West seconded. Passed unanimously.

**ACTION:** SMc to send off paperwork and payment.

**Treasurers Report (Mike Terry):**

£158.00 in account. £25 to come back from Equity for the Torbay Trade Council. £50 has been paid in for Shakespeare workshop so far.

## **South West Councillor's Report (Lynda Rooke):**

Benevolent Funds latest figures. Total allocated in 2020. £1,249,503.72. Subs. Grants in 2021 £28,859.90. Nos. helped in 2021 616. TOTAL since 01.01.2020 £1,278,363.62. This week £735.50 allocated in subs. Grants

Council Meetings: reorganised to allow an hour now where they can have an open discussion around a topic. At the last meeting Nick Keagan raised the topic of the precariousness of our industry and how to deal with it.

Recorded media: Looking at audition practice in relation to self tapes, zoom and reasonable adjustments for the D/deaf and disabled. Issues raised in the last D&C Branch meeting around this has informed discussions about what is appropriate.

Live performance – very little at the moment due to COVID 19.

Variety and commercial theatre –almost at a standstill. Still uncertainty around whether May, June, July openings will actually progress – some people are not feeling comfortable to make bookings yet.

#Show Can't Go On rally took place on 16<sup>th</sup> March. The online rally was well attended.

Elections of local councils. This is the time to talk to them about arts and call them to account. Please keep a record of what they promise.

Independent Commission for Race Equality Report has gone to council and they are now putting recommendations in place.

Consultations Exercise on the Rulebook Working Party is starting. First questions are: What is the purpose of your union? The working party would like to hear from the branch and also individual members.

Pennines will split the North into two areas at the next election – 2 northern councillors will be put in place for NW and Yorkshire, and the NE.

V&A theatre exhibition: currently under threat. Equity sent a letter of concern. In response to concerns V&A is now proposing it is moved to another area but talks are still ongoing.

Self-employed income support scheme case about maternity leave was lost. Now going to appeal.

Acting your age group. Opportunity to get involved.

Special Representative Conference will take place on 26th September 2021.

Report on the online branch from Jason Broderick: some of the recommendations that are affordable will be progressed into developing the online branch.

Meeting about Film Studios in Plymouth: Hannah Harris Plymouth Culture and Nina Salarca at Plymouth Council have said yes to a meeting and have asked Equity to convene it. Will take place on April 21st at 10am. Those invited include: Nina, Hannah, Dave Finkelstein and Chris Bennewith from Plymouth University, Sophie Arnold and Stephanie Clarke from Creative England, and Jules Crossey Producer (to provide industry expertise on what is needed). LR is also approaching Richard Burrell (TV Producer). LR will be chairing. Looking at ideas for finance, location and how to progress.

**Training: Embodying Shakespeare** with Victoria Gartner taking place on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> April. A couple of places still available.

NH raised the **ending of FEU funding** and loss of live workshops.

## **Equality and Diversity/Health and Safety:**

Concern about social distancing and covid safety on small scale productions – LR requested concerns were reported to Charlotte Bence. Concerns are being tackled on a one to one basis as members raise it. Request that Equity make a strong statement about this.

**Walk On:**

Nothing to report

**Speaker and Discussion: Women's Safety**

**Morna Burdon** talked about the link between mental health and the impact that violence and various types of abuse have on mental health.

**Resources that MB mentioned:**

London Women's Charter about safety at night: <https://www.london.gov.uk/what-we-do/arts-and-culture/24-hour-london/womens-night-safety-charter#>

Encourage and support each other.

Getting Free Ginny NiCarthy

Diane Russell Rape in Marriage

Wide ranging discussion followed women's safety including power, unconscious bias, stereotyping, age, childcare, ways in which sexual violence is portrayed. Work that Charlotte Bence is doing at the moment was raised and the recent Equity Zoom on Workers' Safety in The Night Time Economy that took place on 25<sup>th</sup> March.

**ACTION:** Committee to consider contacting Charlotte Bence and look at how to take putting a motion together around Women's Safety forward.

**AOB**

Restless Theatre is launching a new series of short videos: restless thoughts on starting 21<sup>st</sup> April.

**Date and Time of Next Branch Meeting: Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> May 2021 at 4pm on Zoom.**

**Summary of ACTIONS:**

**ACTION:** SMC to send off paperwork and payment to Torbay Trades Council.

**ACTION:** Committee to consider contacting Charlotte Bence and look at how to take putting a motion together around Women's Safety forward.