**Essex and Hertfordshire Branch Meeting 24th May 2025**

**At The Link, Trinity Methodist Church. Chelmsford and via Zoom**

**Present**

Dee Mardi,(Chair), Stephen Moriaty (Secretary) Liz Mullen, Martyn Harrison

**On Zoom**

Andrew Alton-Read (Treasurer), Erin Battle, Andy Wilkinson, Chris Gasper, Richard Earl, Sharon Eckman, Iain Croker (Regional Official) Natasha Rickman (Guest Speaker

**Apologies**

Danny Worthington, Anne Albici, Ian Britten-Hull, Salvo, Bao Tieu

**Speaker**

LM introduced Natasha Rickman the new Artistic Director at The Mercury Theatre in Colchester,

She was originally an actor and was in The Mousetrap in London. She directed a play at the Fringe and then went to The Globe and RSC. She feels that she can do more as a director and like the opportunities to direct her own work. She went to Jermyn Street Theatre as an associate and then became associate director at The Orange Tree. The opportunity to come to The Mercury was too good to miss. The 2026 main house programme is sorted but the Studio has mor flexibility. The Creative Engagement team is amazing working with 5-18 yrs and 18 plus.

**News from Guild House**

IC said he would leave details of the Conference to DM and EB who attended. Paul Leming’s letter to Lisa Nandy is on the Equity website. Committee elections are happening and most are being contested. There are some concerns about the contract being used by Ovo theatre at St Albans

IC suggested that the branch could have a meeting at a theatre and then see a matinee.

**Minutes of Last Meeting**

Approved (AW proposing AAR seconding) – No matters arising

**Reports**

**Chair**

DM’s detailed conference report is on the webpage. [**Essex & Hertfordshire Branch - Equity**](https://www.bing.com/ck/a?!&&p=6badcf595e3d33dfJmltdHM9MTcyNjE4NTYwMCZpZ3VpZD0xZjhjY2VkMC1kODlmLTYyZTYtMmMzNi1kZGZlZDk3ODYzZjkmaW5zaWQ9NTIwMQ&ptn=3&ver=2&hsh=3&fclid=1f8cced0-d89f-62e6-2c36-ddfed97863f9&psq=equity+essex+and+hertfordshire+branch+website+login&u=a1aHR0cHM6Ly93d3cuZXF1aXR5Lm9yZy51ay9nZXQtaW52b2x2ZWQvZmluZC15b3VyLWJyYW5jaC9lc3NleC1oZXJ0Zm9yZHNoaXJlLWJyYW5jaC8&ntb=1) (ctrl+click) as is report from EB who attended Conference for the first time

**Treasurer**

AAR confirmed that the present balance is £2320.60

**Speaker Secretary**

LM is looking for ideas for speakers. DM mentioned that the MP John Whttingdale is a big supporter of the arts. IC suggested using the SE Area WhatsApp group for speaker suggestions and that GH staff always willing to attend meetings.

**AOB**

CG The Southend Pier Puppet Festival pleased to have secured this Year's Festival on 1st to 3rd August. 5 puppeteers are involved over the 3 days, from Southend, Ipswich and London.

SM mentioned AMA Theatre’s Resurrection – The Musical at venues in Bedford, Cambridge, Framlingham and Kent. Details on their website [www.amatheatre.biz](http://www.amatheatre.biz)

The meeting ended at 1.10pm with the next meeting datye to be fixed