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Theatre Forum Limited

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) held on 14 September 2016

Notice of the AGM

The Annual General Meeting (AGM) of Theatre Forum Limited, Registered No. 370469, was held on 15 September 2016 in the Abbey Theatre, 26/27 Lower Abbey Street, Dublin 1 for considering and, if agreed, passing resolutions as to the ordinary business of Theatre Forum Limited.

Previous AGM Minutes

There were no matters arising from the minutes of the previous 2015 AGM held in Smock Alley on 8 September 2015 and those minutes were approved by the members.

Directors' Report & Financial Statements

Chair Mona Considine spoke about the Directors' Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 31 December 2015 which had been circulated to members on approval by the Finance Sub-Committee and had been filed with the CRO earlier in the summer. On behalf of the directors and members, the Chair acknowledged that prudent financial management in the 2015 financial year had produced a small surplus for a second year. Other points noted were the lack of any reserves, the large number of individual members paying only a very modest subscription as well as the continued diversification of Theatre Forum's sources of funds, including identifying new sponsors. The Chair invited questions about the Financial Statements, of which there were none, so they were adopted by the members.

Remuneration of the Auditors

The Directors were authorised to appoint and fix the remuneration of the JPAS Ltd. for the preparation of the 2016 Financial Statements at their proposed reduced fee of €2,600 plus VAT, that fee staying the same as the previous year's one which was a reduction on the 2014 fee.

Compliance

Members agreed to adopt the draft Constitution of Theatre Forum Company Limited by Guarantee (CLG) to meet all the requirements of the Companies Act 2014. The Constitution for Theatre Forum CLG had already received Charities Section of Revenue approval and is to be filed with the CRO before the November deadline.

Once more, the need for governance information and resources to be centralised and available to member organisations to minimise duplication of effort was highlighted.

Chair's Report

The Chair presented a Report on the activities of the organisation in the previous year. This Report is an annual one accompanying the Financial Statements for the same year.



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A range of services and events, including a well-attended and enjoyable Conference in Galway, was delivered efficiently and effectively in those twelve months by the executive team, included information provision with increased levels of traffic to the Theatre Forum website, training and professional development programmes including MAKE and The Next Stage, audience development initiatives, Local Authority and Arts Council funding research as well as advocacy. Artists have been welcomed into the organisation and their voices heard in discussions. The Chair noted the spirit of partnership and friendship that pervades the organisation and its events.

Matters arising

The near standstill in arts funding was highlighted as falling short of what is required to keep the sector viable and vibrant. Economic recovery should improve the arts sector too and the Chair called for support for the NCFA campaigning at national and at local level. The Arts Council's Strategic Three Year Plan, Making Great Art Work, was broadly welcomed but it was agreed that members would need to more closely align their thinking and approach with the Arts Council to maximise their future funding and support. It was noted that the Council's own budget allocation would have to increase if it's to match the ambition of its strategy. The value of the national arts infrastructure, venues and arts centres, was restated too and the value of Theatre Forum's many partnerships acknowledged. The Chair also acknowledged Lian Bell's call to action, #WakingTheFeminists, and expressed the organisations support to all members working to achieve equality in Irish theatre.

Appointment of Chairperson

Following the resignation of Mona Considine from the board, director Peter Daly was appointed to the role of Chair.

Election of Directors

The directors retiring by rotation were Niamh O'Donnell and Mona Considine. Co-opted director John Crumlish had agreed to stand for election. The new Chair acknowledged their commitment and willingness to stand for election. With three candidates, Jen Coppinger and Julie Kelleher as well as co-opted director John Crumlish, standing for election for three positions, the candidates were deemed elected to the board without a ballot. On behalf of the members, the Chair thanked the resigning as well as the newly appointed directors.

Looking Ahead Reprising the Looking Ahead discussion at the 2016 Conference in Galway, Graham McLaren, then soon-to-be Director of the Abbey Theatre, set a message of thanks and said the Abbey's doors were open to the performing arts community.