

Friends of Stag

Newsletter

Summer 2012



Supporting Stag Community Arts Centre

DIARY DATES

FISH 'N' CHIP SUPPER AND RACE NIGHT

ENJOY THE THRILL OF A NIGHT AT
THE RACES

FRIDAY 12TH OCTOBER

PLAZA SUITE, STARTS 7.30

Sponsor a race - place your bets on the
horse of your choice please in aid of
FoS funds
£6 including food

FoS Membership benefits

- Social events free or at low cost throughout the year
- 3 free cinema vouchers per year for a single membership, 6 for joint membership and 9 for family membership
- Discounted tickets for shows and events (See over)
- 15 per cent discount at the Lodge Café, Stag Community Arts Centre
- 7 Hotel Diner (near Polhill) lunch special

Membership cards must be shown

See www.friendsofstag.org.uk for more information

FOR TICKETS RING THE BOX OFFICE ON
01732 450175, BOOK ON-LINE AT
WWW.STAGSEVENOAKS.CO.UK

NEW ROLES

TRUST CHAIRMAN *Simon Raikes reports*

'This has been a very exciting time for us at Stag Community Arts Centre. Most notable has been a change of management and chairman.

The Town Council seconded Linda Larter to the part time role of Chief Executive when it took on Stag three years ago, and she brought with her a valuable set of skills from her past roles in local government which included the challenge of a theatre in Weston Super Mare.

FoS will have seen for themselves how successful those initial years were – bookings of the theatre and Plaza Suite have exceeded expectations and some events such as 'Outside the Box' and the Magic Beans professional pantomime are amongst the best regarded in the country, not just the county.

The Stag Youth Theatre programme run on our behalf by Magic Beans has been highly successful in bringing together a diverse range of young people to work together on a variety of arts projects. Anyone who saw their recent production of Shakespeare's 'A Midsummer Night's Dream' cannot fail to have been impressed by the standard of creativity and acting ability demonstrated by such a young cast.

A measure of our success is that we have had more than 200,000 patrons in the cinemas since they opened, and are currently seeing about 100,000 a year. They get to see new releases and munch their popcorn (at competitive prices) without having to worry about how to get home from Knights Park or Bluewater afterwards. Overall, about 250,000 tickets are sold annually for the cinemas, theatre and Plaza Suite. But that understates the success of the Stag, because it takes no account of the number of participants in performances. A musical will have maybe 50 or so performers on stage, and dance show may involve hundreds of young people. A recent concert I attended had at least 150 on stage. Each show produced by each community group will be the culmination of weeks of working together as a community, learning and socialising. And, of course, 'Panto Factor' has launched several newcomers into a successful performing career.

The audiences are an economic benefit to the town. Quite apart from the direct employment generated by the venue itself we can see that the cafes and restaurants benefit from the theatre. This was one of the overriding considerations for Sevenoaks Town Council in deciding to take on the lease. But Sevenoaks Town Council needed their town clerk back to undertake a range of projects, so a new general manager to take over her role on a full time basis had to be recruited.

The role was advertised widely and drew a strong response. We are confident that in Andrew Eyre we have found someone who will consolidate and build on the initial success.

He has a challenging job ahead of him, with the likely loss of the financial support of Sevenoaks District Council at the end of 2013. This is why the support of FoS is vital to our continued success. There is so much that needs to be done to ensure that we remain a leading arts venue in the south east. It is a constant struggle to improve our facilities and keep the existing ones up to date. We are so grateful for the contributions that FoS has made in supporting us in this. I feel that this epitomises the "community" aspect of Stag Community Arts Centre. FoS and our volunteers are an integral part of our Stag community without whose support we could not exist.

STOP PRESS

The House in the Basement Youth Café has now opened in what was once the derelict costume store. A town council initiative, it has been made possible by charitable donations from Cory Environmental Trust and HOUSE whilst the Stag provides the facilities and premises. It ties in well with our youth programme.'

Wanted!

Support the Stag

Join the Friends and help ensure
this vibrant venue is not lost.

Please visit

www.friendsofstag.org.uk

IMPORT INFORMATION

The cost of postage means that
unfortunately FoS is no longer able to
post the Newsletter to members who
are not on e-mail.

Please collect future copies from the
Stag or provide the membership
secretary with an e-mail address.

FoS ticket discounted shows ...

The Guy Tortora Band
(Plaza Suite, 8pm) -
15th September **Blues
with Bottle Club**

Something Blue (Plaza
Suite, 8pm) - 21st
September
Brandywine Music

Cara Dillon (Theatre,
7:30pm) - 29th
September
Brandywine Music

Ultimate Eagles
(Theatre, 8pm) - 5th
October **Brandywine
Music**

Big Girls Don't Cry
(Theatre, 8pm) - 6th
October **The
Showbusiness
Company**

Walter Trout (Theatre,
8pm) - 11th October
Brandywine Music

Sam Baker (Plaza Suite,
8pm) - 13th October
Brandywine Music

Fay Hield and the
Hurricane Party (Plaza
Suite, 8pm) - 26th
October **Brandywine
Music.**

**For more information about these events and details
of other show discounts log on to
www.friendsofstag.org.uk**

Illuminating

ADAM JONES REPORTS

'The Stag is proud to have a full-time dedicated technical department to ensure the smooth operation and upkeep of its equipment for all our hirers and patrons and to try and take advantage of the huge strides forward in this industry over the last 10 years.

The Stag has an analogue sound desk with a rack of gadgets to enhance sound. As with all technology, all of this can now come digitally which would enable us to enhance the sound even more.

Along with some upgrades to our other PA equipment, we would be in line with leading venues across the world. That is the level of equipment already in place at the Stag.

The lighting industry has also moved forward, allowing new 'intelligent' fixtures to be used to create a visual enhancement to any musical or one-night rock concert.

The last year has seen the purchase of LED units which are both power saving and green technology and now allow us to have any colour wash on stage with much more flexibility on brightness. To complete the flexibility across the stage we need four more of these which we hope to have the funds to purchase within the next 12 months. Moving head lighting fixtures are the way forward in technical theatre providing lighting movement and flexibility, however the cost of these units to purchase and maintain is, for the Stag, too high for the current sporadic use. As a lighting engineer I would love to have a stockpile of them.

We now offer a bespoke design and hire service which can often get you the best deal possible to hire in the latest state of the art lighting for your production to match the bespoke lighting design service we can now provide. Ask at the Stag for more details.

As the Stag Theatre continues to grow in its success we will grow with it as a technical department and move forward with the Stag's technology. At present we can offer excellence in the level and reliability of the stage equipment at the Stag, however we would like to move forward and offer users the wonderful effects and qualities that technology now allows and companies wish for in their productions.'

For further information please contact Adam Jones at
adam.jones@stagevenoaks.co.uk

Good in parts

'The last year for FoS has been something of a curate's egg – good in parts. I need to repeat what I said last year, that, whilst the Stag itself has gone from strength to strength, your FoS Committee has found it hard to maintain the same pace.

There is some good news in respect of Committee members. In addition to those appointed at the last annual meeting – Rose Bates, Liz Chadbon and Carolyn Weekes - we have been joined during the year by Jeanne Barsby and Roger Walshe. We will be proposing Anthea Parkin as a further member later in this meeting.

The bad news is that we have yet to find suitable candidates to fill the roles of Chairman and Secretary, which become vacant at the end of this meeting as Alison and I stand down. We have both served one more year than we had planned, but for personal reasons, we must both now stand down.

It may be that some solution will be found in the course of this meeting. I certainly hope so, because the committee cannot function effectively without those officers in place.

Back to some good news. Rose Bates, having joined the Committee, volunteered to take on the roles of Membership Secretary and Webmaster. The result is that we have buttoned down our membership records and have a significant number of subscriptions now paid by standing order. We have an effective communication system, and a brilliant website (for which we are very grateful to the local web design company Conceptulise, who designed and implemented the website free of charge). As if that were not enough, Rose was also heavily involved in the design of our new membership application form. I think you will agree it is more classy than its functional predecessors.

Membership is fairly static, at around 200 people.

During the last year, although the Strawberries and Pimms social event in the bar last August was very well attended, it was not billed as a fund-raiser. We intend to change that this year by adding the attraction of table-top Olympics, for which a modest charge will be levied for entry to each event. So please reserve the date, Saturday 18th August, and come along.

Our quiz evening last October was not well-attended, but we managed to raise £287. This year we are planning a Race Night as an alternative event. This is booked for Friday 12th October. We are hoping the novelty value will flush out more punters!

Instead of our usual anniversary event in February we supported the 'Journey to the Throne' production. We also supported the Stag's trial youth quiz evening in March. It was very poorly attended.

Our major donation to the Stag during the year was towards the cost of the motorised tabs. We will continue to make instalment donations until the total cost is covered. We also covered the cost of the wireless system for the projector in the Plaza Suite.

We continue to benefit from the support of the management and trustees of the centre in allowing concessionary use of facilities here for meetings and fund-raising events, as well as supporting us with member benefits.

Now that the new Marketing Manager has settled in, we hope to improve on FoS publicity and marketing as well as better advertising of performances for which discounts are available to FoS members. They are advertised on our website, but have not consistently appeared in What's On.

I would like to express my thanks for the support and hard work undertaken by Alison, our Secretary, as she stands down at the close of this meeting. Without her commitment we would not have the well-organised structure you see today.

As I too stand down I would like to thank those members remaining on the committee, whose past contributions I also acknowledge with gratitude, and those new members who, with your approval, will shortly be appointed.'

*****STOP PRESS*****

The FoS Committee has elected Rose Bates as Chairman and Roger Walshe as Secretary.