

Friends of Stag

Autumn 2014



Supporting Stag Community Arts Centre

Major projects need your support

SOUND GETS UPGRADE ... NEXT IS REVAMP FOR THE BAR

The major spend by the Friends this year will be on sound equipment in the theatre which promises to make a real difference to the overall sound experience for theatre-goers.

More than £4,850 has been donated to buy a digital sound desk, extra speakers and amplifier in the upper/mid quality range and microphones (wired and wireless) and it is hoped this will improve the service the Stag can offer its hirers. The final sum FoS can provide is still to be finalised.

The decision to fund improvements to sound and lighting followed a survey of FoS and SCAT members (SCAT represents regular hirers of the Stag). Of 160 FoS members some 51 responded with their views as to where the money should be spent and 9 SCAT hirers also commented. The other project to win support was refurbishment of the theatre bar and FoS is spearheading a big push to raise funds for bar improvements expected to cost some £10,000. These will hopefully take place in 2015, depending on other projects at the Stag. Any donations – large or small – would be warmly welcomed.

The Friends' overall vision is that the bar area should be transformed into an attractive, convivial social area within the Stag reflecting the art deco style already prevalent within the building but with a modern twist.

Those who mentioned the bar area in their response to our survey were fairly unanimous that enlarging the size of the bar and including an extra till would be a bonus.

Other views expressed frustration at the difficulty in getting a drink particularly in the interval rush, finding anywhere to sit and getting in and out of the room at all. Some felt improvement might attract a larger daytime coffee and snack trade.

Brass bash



FESTIVE FUND RAISER



The Kent Police Band concert on Sunday 14 December will be the third and final Friends' fund-raiser for 2014.

It promises to be a great way to get your Christmas festivities underway as well as giving the Stag complex some festive cheer – funds to improve this important Sevenoaks asset.

The concert, from 4pm to 6pm, costs just £10 for a ticket (£9 for FoS members). FoS is considering a ticket 'bulk buy' to save members the £2 transaction fee charged by the Stag. Administration of this is still to be confirmed but please phone 01732 456766 if you are interested.

The band, consisting of 35 musicians from all over Kent and Sussex, has a vast repertoire ranging from marches and overtures to classical arrangements and selections from popular shows, films and even swing pop and rock numbers. So book this date in your diary now to be sure to get your Christmas festivities off to a swinging start.

Boot fair

Following on from the success of our Boot Fair last autumn, a second was held in the Plaza Suite on Sunday 13 April. Thank you to all those who gave their support, either by having a pitch or by coming along to hunt the bargains - and there were plenty!

Despite strong competition from the sunshine and it being Palm Sunday, there was a steady flow of punters through the door and a profit of £331 was reached by the end of the morning. Earlier in the year it had been agreed by FOS that any profit would go towards the purchase of new sound equipment for the theatre.

It's always encouraging to get positive feedback after an event and remarks amongst sellers included "one of the best local boot fairs for friendly atmosphere" and from buyers "quality of merchandise is second to none". And right across the board "refreshments included the best coffee cake in town", thanks to Liz Chadbon.



READING TO MAKE MONEY!

To fit in with the end of the Sevenoaks Festival we organised a Readathon. Well, you may ask – what's that? Sixteen of us sat down at the Stag, reading in turn through Jane Austen's 'Pride and Prejudice'. We devoted 12 hours between us to what proved to be a well worthwhile effort on behalf of Friends of Stag, as each of us had been seeking sponsors for our contributions. The final figure has not yet been finalised, but we know we will have raised over £600 towards enhancing the theatre's sound system. Reading like this can be great fun and really helps the Stag.

OVER £600
RAISED
AT STAG
READATHON



The Friends have joined up with Streetlife – a website for sharing information, news and queries within the local community.

The Friends will receive £2.50 for each person who joins Streetlife by using the web address below **before 31 October**. So if you live in postcode districts TN4, TN11, TN13, TN14, TN15, BR6 or DA4 you could help raise money for the Stag at the click of a button.

The idea behind it is that it allows Streetlife to reach even more people and so is ever more useful to the community whilst also supporting excellent causes within that community.

See their website www.streetlife.com/a/FOS1.

5050 club

The 5050 Club winners since our last Newsletter are below. If you are not yet a member of this exclusive club, why not consider joining? Just £12 means that you are entered into 12 consecutive monthly draws and you too could be a winner!

Melanie Divall has won £14.50, Jean & Paul Barsby £15, Ray Cullern £7.50, Alison Claridge two wins, each of £6.50, Chris & Margaret Holgate £9 and David & Vanessa Witchel £9.

Since the 5050 Club started there have been 14 different winners, winning a total of £186.

Comments or ideas? Contact us by email (info@friendsofstag.org.uk) or write to us c/o Stag Box Office – we'd love to hear from you!

Hand rails not the solution

The problem of how to make the Stag more user-friendly for those who have difficulty managing the stairs at the complex was raised at July's annual meeting.

Friend Barbara Hine called for hand rails, or some other aid, to be considered to make a visit to the Stag by those who may be physically challenged a more pleasurable, or in some cases, a viable option.

Stag general manager Andrew Eyre told FoS that the Stag takes safety very seriously and provides several routes to help those who may have a mobility problem.

He said that those who have a problem getting around should use the disabled seating provision. There are staff on hand to escort the disabled to the wheelchair places and assist those who need to transfer from a wheelchair to a seat.

If the visitor's partner, friend or carer requires extra help in getting up and down stairs a Front of House volunteer will help if asked.

Andrew said hand rails were not a viable solution to the problem as they block off sight lines and there are no plans to introduce them at the Stag.

He has spoken to the management at the Odeon cinema in Pembury which following a national upgrade campaign has installed hand rails in their main screen. "Their official advice is that these are not very good as they are too low (to avoid blocking off sight lines)."

He has ensured the new seat numbers are larger and clearer than previously and the auditorium lighting is getting some attention.

Cost of membership up

The cost of membership of FoS will increase with effect from January 2015 – the first increase since 2009.

Single membership will be £12, Joint £20 and Household £30. Young persons/student membership will remain at £5.

At the Friends' annual meeting on 29 July 2014 it was reported that there are some 342 individual members. Four members left since the AGM in 2013 and 10 joined. Twitter followers now number some 164.

Here is a reminder of some benefits in becoming a Friend of Stag:

- Lodge Café, based at the Stag, offers a 15 per cent discount on production of your membership card;
- Raj Bari, Indian restaurant just one minute from Sevenoaks Station, is a family-run restaurant offering a dine in or take away service with 15 per cent reduction on production of your membership card;
- Sevenoaks Candle Company offers a 10 per cent discount on all purchases by using the discount code 'FOS10' and putting your membership number in the special instructions on their website www.sevenoakscandleco.co.uk;
- Kentish Stores, selling many fine Kentish products, offers 10 per cent discount. To obtain your discount simply contact nigel@kentishstores.co.uk after visiting the website on www.kentishstores.co.uk.

If you are not yet a member, why not join now? Pick up a leaflet at the Stag or join via our website www.friendsofstag.org.uk