

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF FESTIVAL PLAYERS 2025

The ADC Bar, Cambridge, Sunday 23rd November 2025 @ 5.30pm

Present:

Oliver Fisher (Chair), Fran Watson (Treasurer), Ana Sanderson (Secretary), Catriona Clarke, Matt Brown, Helena Cornu, Rich Evans, Matt Wilkinson, Jonatan Rosten, Rupert Fisher, Ariella Gordon

Joining remotely: Warren Clark, Davinia Fisher

1) Apologies

Apologies were received from:

Michael Husband, Adam Pickles, Lucy Farrow, Luke Thomas, Michael Broom, Kate Harvey, Andrew Ruddick, Emma Viecegli.

2) Minutes of the last AGM

The minutes of the last AGM were proposed by Suzanne Emerson and seconded by Helena Cornu. Unanimously adopted.

3) Matters arising

None.

4) Chair's Report - Oliver Fisher



Chair's Report, Annual General Meeting 23rd November 2025

Superfans of the 35th President of the United States may remember with disappointment the section of last year's report which didn't draw on JFK's extensive catalogue of inspiring quotes, and instead introduced the new Festival Players vision.

It laid out our intention to stage high quality performances of challenging productions, grow and foster our community, and take considered and financially-sustainable actions to preserve the society for future generations.

This year's committee has pursued that vision with characteristic enthusiasm, and over the next... couple of hours..., I hope to give you a sense of where we are in delivering it. None of what follows would be possible without the dedication and talents of my fellow committee members this year - Ana, Catriona, Fran, Helena, Joe, Matt, Rich, Susan, and Suzanne - to whom I extend thanks, on behalf of the countless members of the Festival Players community.

Indeed, my final words last year gave thanks in advance to that community of creatives, casts, crew and musicians. And as the Festival Players year closes, I can report that that community totalled upwards of 110 named individuals, as well as representatives of organisations, venues and partners. That number of contributors underlines a fundamental shift in the nature of our community over the last decade, from a more limited number of longstanding members and loyal supporters, to a transient membership who bring their skills and energy to each project on its merits.

Illustratively, almost all of your Festival Players committee have worked with another of the Cambridge musical theatre groups in the last couple of years.

The committee comes across this new fluidity in a surprising number of our conversations. Who are we choosing our shows for? Who does our insurance cover? Who is eligible for our awards? Who the hell can make the AGM viable?

It also has two broader implications for how Festival Players, and the other groups that serve our community, operate.

First, we need to recognise and collaborate with those other groups. We have, as Jo Cox said, “far more in common than that which divides us”. Our cast members have the same points of view on rehearsal schedules and costume provision, whichever group is producing. Our production teams are all thinking about venue costs, costume storage, and musician rates.

Collaboration between the groups, on behalf of this increasingly transient single musical theatre community, has been a growing need for some time. But in February, Festival Players took the initiative and instigated a formal cross-group forum with representatives of CaOS, Pied Pipers, Cambridge Theatre Company, and Between the Bars. We have met several times since, chairing in rotation, and those conversations are already bearing fruit.

In the spirit of this collaboration, I’d like to express our congratulations to Between the Bars, who marked their 15th anniversary very recently, and to Pied Pipers who will be 75 next year. Both groups bring something very different to the community, and we celebrate their ongoing success.

Separately, the community held its first joint social event in September, organised by Suzanne, Cat Nicol and Emily Starr, which brought the committees, and the creatives, casts and crew from Between the Bar’s Fun Home and Amelie, Festival Players’ Little Shop of Horrors and Jesus Christ Superstar, CTC’s Nativity, CaOS’s Bonnie & Clyde, and Pied Piper’s Pippin, all together for one big fabulous ceilidh

evening. The snacks were plentiful, the drinks underpriced, and the dancing chaotic. What better way to bring people together!

However, coming together doesn't mean we lose our individuality. This transience actually increases the importance of the distinct qualities and behaviours of each group. People who may never have worked with us before, need to know what to expect from a Festival Players experience, and that comes through others' experience of Festival Players, which is quite often shaped by the 'little things'.

When we come to the proposed changes to the constitution later, you will see some of this thinking come through. Clarity on how membership is now described. Some small but important changes around gender neutrality. The formal requirement to share our upcoming plans not just with members, but now with the wider community. And, with apologies to Tommy and his cereal packet register, the replacement of a constitutional requirement to track rehearsal attendance with a broader Code of Conduct which caters to the expectations of the whole team - from Director to Spear Carrier 3.

Elsewhere, we've started to look at other ways to improve how we show up. We've deliberately asked prospective creatives about their values and their approach, not just their ideas for the production itself. We recently reached out to the community for ideas for 2027. The Come From Away 'audition information pack' is undoubtedly the most comprehensive and inclusive yet. And our new branded email addresses reinforce who we are each time we coordinate something, ask our community for help, or thank them for their efforts. Every little helps!

Of course alongside the 'community' focus in our vision is a continued intent to stage brilliant productions. In April, Ana and Helena enjoyed a delicious lunch at the annual NODA awards. Our production of The Producers won 'Best Musical' and 'Best Overall', Ana won the raffle, and Adolf the Animatronic Pigeon won the hearts of the whole NODA community. It is worth noting that in a crowded NODA district, Festival Players has now won 'Best Overall Production' 4 times in the last 6 years.

So, how do you beat that?! First, in January this year, a Fisher family favourite, Little Shop of Horrors, directed and choreographed by Kirsty Smith, co-choreographed by Charlotte Dargan, and musically directed by William Davies. Our new NODA rep wrote: Festival Players have once again proven their reputation for quality productions ... As a first-time attendee to a Festival Players' show ... my expectations were very high. I was not disappointed."

And then, in June, we completed a trio of classic Andrew Lloyd Webber smash hits with a sold-out production of Jesus Christ Superstar, to follow our award-winning Cats and Evita in 2018 and 2019. Directed by Suzanne, musically directed by Sam Kirby and Joe Griffiths, with choreography by Laura Saunders, reviewers pointed to its 'high standards', 'skillful choreography', and 'strong ensemble singing'. Susan Elkin wrote that she "had to swallow a lump in [her] throat during the moving postlude".

This year's winner of the Roy Braybrooke Award for that show, recognising a special contribution to our main production, was Jesus herself - Vikki Jones - for her strength and leadership during the process. And the Tommy Thomas Award, for outstanding musical contribution, went to Kathryn Salmond.

As ever, these quality productions would not be possible without the support given by the Penguins and other behind-the-scenes contributors. And the Festival Players committee is delighted that one of those behind-the-scenes is the recipient of the 2025 Tom Farrell Award. This award recognises someone's positivity, generous spirit and good nature. This year's recipient ticks all three of those boxes, is unrivalled at their craft, and is always the first to arrive and last to leave. It's impossible to think of Cambridge Musical Theatre sound design without thinking: Nick Hall.

For our main show in 2026 we turn to a modern tragedy, the true story of a transatlantic-atlantic voyage cut short by a shocking turn of events. No Rich, it's not Titanic despite the 114th anniversary this year. No, Come From Away is actually about... you guessed it... community. And the successful creative team of Justin Murray, Sam Kirby and Frances Sayer are weaving that theme through their plans.

Come From Away is a musical theatre phenomenon, which has drawn more creative applications and audition interest than Festival Players has ever had before. We're very excited to bring it to Cambridge in June.

But first, rehearsals are already underway for the highly anticipated return of the Festival Players Touring Show in February / March - coming to Huntingdon and Haslingfield, Coton and Cambridge, Fulbourne and Cambridge again. Danielle Padley, Matt Brown and Lancia Wilson promise us a fantastic night of songs from the musicals, entitled Heroes & Villains. Not to be missed!

Whatever your role in the Cambridge Musical Theatre Community, we hope you enjoy working with Festival Players in the coming year.

Having got this far without, it would be rude not to leave my final words to the great John F Kennedy, who would surely challenge next year's committee to 'ask not what the Cambridge Musical Theatre community can do for Festival Players, but what Festival Players can do for its community'.

Oliver Fisher, Chair
November 2025

5) Treasurer's Report - Fran Watson

Festival Players Accounts

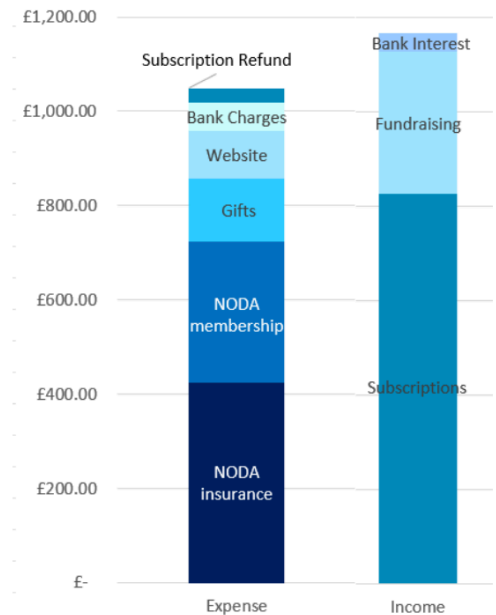
1st October 2024 to 30th September 2025

Account Breakdown

1. Main Account

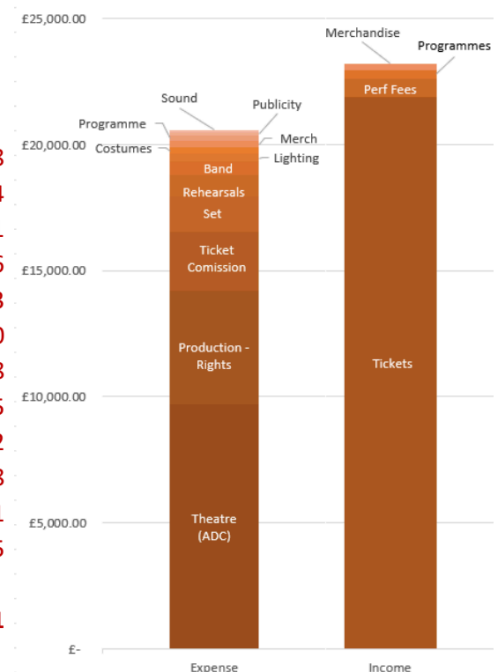
Income		Expense	
Subscriptions	£ 825.00	NODA Insurance	£ 423.73
Fundraising	£ 300.40	NODA Membership	£ 299.99
Bank Interest	£ 40.96	Gifts ^{1.1}	£ 135.00
		Website	£ 100.80
		Bank Charges	£ 60.00
		Subscriptions Refund	£ 45.00
Total	£ 1,166.36	Total	£ 1063.53
		Sum Profit 2024-25	£ 102.83

1.1 – The £135 in Gifts was for NODA Dinner Tickets for individuals representing Festival Players



2. Little Shop of Horrors (LSOH)

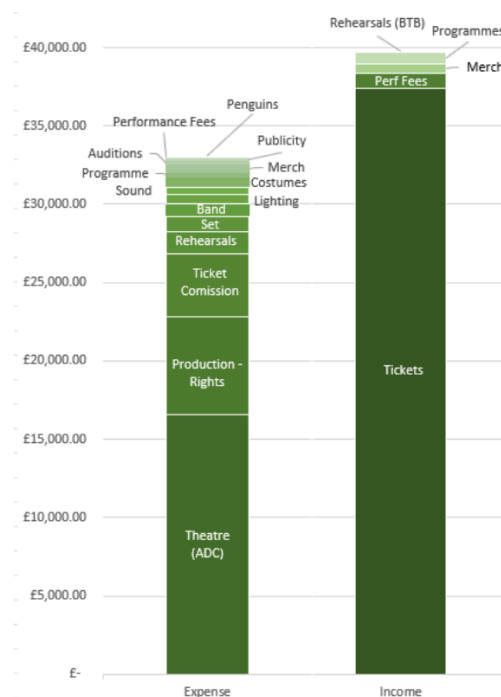
Income		Expense	
Tickets	£ 21,858.30	Theatre	£ 9,705.08
Performance Fees	£ 760.00	Production - Rights	£ 4,485.34
Programmes	£ 349.00	Tickets	£ 2,360.71
Merchandise	£ 255.00	Production - Set	£ 1,375.26
		Rehearsals	£ 868.93
		Band	£ 540.00
		Production - Lighting	£ 300.48
		Production - Costumes	£ 244.45
		Merchandise	£ 240.02
		Programme	£ 225.08
		Publicity	£ 126.21
		Production - Sound	£ 100.75
Total	£ 23,222.30	Total	£ 20,572.31
		Sum Profit 2024-25^{2.1}	£ 2,639.99



2.1 – The Production Rights (£500) for Little Shop of Horrors (LSOH) were included in the 2023-24 accounts, resulting in an overall profit of £2,139.99 for the production.

3. Jesus Christ Superstar (JCS)

Income		Expense	
Tickets	£ 37,389.80	Theatre	£ 16,601.08
Performance Fees	£ 1,000.00	Production - Rights	£ 6,214.96
Merchandise	£ 568.00	Tickets	£ 4,038.10
Programmes	£ 744.00	Rehearsals	£ 1,407.00
Rehearsals ^{3.1}	£ 50.00	Production - Set	£ 973.73
		Band	£ 810.00
Total	£ 39,751.80	Production - Lighting	£ 600.00
		Production - Sound	£ 595.40
		Production - Costumes	£ 464.05
		Programme	£ 330.50
		Merchandise	£ 485.32
		Auditions	£ 239.65
		Publicity	£ 162.65
		Performance Fees	£ 120.00
		Penguins	£ 20.00
		Total	£ 33,062.44
		Sum profit 2024-25^{3.2}	£ 6,689.36



3.1 – Between the Bars paid Festival Players for a one-off Amelie Rehearsal at Newnham Scout Hut

3.2 - The Production Rights (£1230) for Jesus Christ Superstar (JCS) were included in the 2023-24 accounts, resulting in an overall profit of £5459.36 for the production.

4. Producers

Income		Expense	
Rehearsals ^{4.1}	£ 30.00	Production - Costumes	£ 1,110.39
Total	£ 30.00	Total	£ 1,110.39
		Sum Loss 2024-25^{4.2}	£ 1,080.39

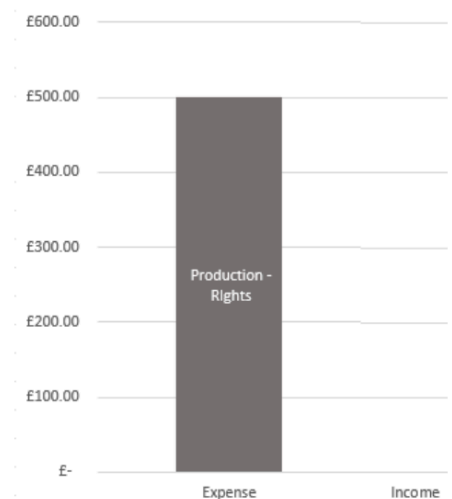
4.1 – Return of deposit from Romsey Mill Trust Ltd. after use of rehearsal space.

4.2 - The Producers made a profit of £2,079.68 in the 2023-24 accounting period, resulting in an overall profit of £999.29 to-date.



5. Come From Away (CFA)

Income		Expense	
		Production - Rights	£ 500.00
Total	£ 0.00	Total	£ 500.00
		Sum loss 2024-25	£ 500.00



6. Touring Show

Income		Expense	
		Auditions	£ 76.80
Total	£ 0.00	Total	£ 76.70
		Sum loss 2024-25	£ 76.80



CAF Cash Account Summary 2024-25

	Income	Expense	Balance
Main Account	£ 1,166.36	£ 1063.53	£ 102.83
Little Shop of Horrors	£ 23,222.30	£ 20,572.31	£ 2,649.99
Jesus Christ Superstar	£ 39,751.80	£ 33,062.44	£ 6,689.36
Producers	£ 30.00	£ 1,110.39	- £ 1,080.39
Come From Away	£ 0.00	£ 500.00	- £ 500.00
Touring Show	£ 0.00	£ 76.80	- £ 76.80
Net Cashflow	£ 64,170.46	£ 56,385.47	£ 7,784.99

Festival Players' Accounts Summary 2024-25

	Opening	Closing	Net Cash Flow
CAF Cash Account	£ 19,448.30	£ 27,233.29	£ 7,784.99
CAF Gold Account	£ 4,926.06	£ 5,028.59	£ 102.53
Cambridge Building Society	£ 13,735.28	£ 14,323.93	£ 588.65
Total	£ 38,109.64	£ 46,585.81	£ 8,476.17

Closing Net Profit £8,476.17

This year's accounts reflect two extremely profitable shows and a marvellous fund-raising contribution from the Musical Theatre Celebration Event organised by Suzanne Emerson, Cat Nicol and Emily Starr. Thank you to everyone who has given their time, energy and hard work to support the work of the Festival Players in putting on high quality performances of musical theatre and fostering a welcoming community for performers, creatives and behind-the-scenes contributors. My particular thanks go to Katy Russell for all her work on the accounts and to Michael Darvell for kindly giving his time and expertise to audit this year's accounts.



Frances J Watson
Treasurer, Festival Players

I have examined the foregoing accounts and balance sheet dated 1/10/25, together with the books of Festival Players, Cambridge and certify the same to be correct in accordance therewith.



Michael Darvell

Membership subscriptions

Membership fees will remain at £15 per year.

6) Secretary's Report - Ana Sanderson

Committee meetings

During the year, the Committee held 10 meetings during which:

- * We continued our review of the overall vision for Festival Players.
- * We began a review of policies, and agreed proposed changes to our constitution.
- * Our January 2025 show, 'Little Shop of Horrors' was reviewed.
- * Our summer 2025 show, 'Jesus Christ Superstar' was reviewed.
- * Our Spring 2026 Touring Show creative team was appointed.
- * Our summer 2026 show, 'Come From Away' was approved and a creative team appointed.

Additional activity

- * We engaged with other town societies in strategic discussions, and initiated a cross-society celebratory event.
- * We transferred platforms to a Google Charity Account.

Statistics

We have:

Facebook page – 1.4k followers

Instagram - 654 followers

Newsletter subscribers - 640

Total membership - 57 members

Matt Brown proposed that all three reports be accepted.

Suzanne Emerson seconded the proposal.

Unanimously accepted.

7) Proposed Changes to the Constitution

Oliver Fisher explained that the constitution was last reviewed in 2012, and outlined the summary of changes below. There were no questions.

Proposed by Catriona Clarke, seconded by Oliver Fisher. Unanimously accepted.



THE FESTIVAL PLAYERS, CAMBRIDGE

CONSTITUTION CHANGES (2025)

The 2024-25 Committee are proposing the following changes to the Festival Players Constitution, for approval at the Annual General Meeting (23rd November 2025).

Proposer: Catriona Clarke, Publicity Manager

Seconded: Oliver Fisher, Chair

Summary of changes:

1. Clarity added to terminology around types of Group and Committee membership, as well as required positions on each creative team (as appointed by the Committee).
2. Updates related to gender neutral terminology.
3. Change made to the minimal age for paid membership, with provision added for members under the age of 18.
4. President / Vice-President position made optional, to reflect today's reality.
5. Added clarity on the 'Subscription year' running from AGM to AGM.
6. Updated requirement for the Committee to share plans for the upcoming year with Members and the general public, to reflect today's reality.
7. Sponsorship Manager renamed Fundraising Manager, to widen scope.
8. Removal of the automatic status of creative team as ex-officio Committee members for the duration of their show.
9. Replacement of the requirement to track cast rehearsal attendance, with mandatory adherence to a broader Festival Players Code of Conduct.

Oliver Fisher
Chair, 2024-25

8) Presentation of the Tom Farrell Award

This was awarded to Nick Hall.

9) Election of Officers and Committee Members

As there was only one nominee for each position all nominees were elected unopposed.
Therefore the committee for 2025/26 is:

Chair	Oliver Fisher
Secretary	Ana Sanderson
Treasurer	Fran Watson
Business Manager	Helena Cornu
Publicity Manager	Catriona Clarke
Social Secretary	Matt Brown
Sponsorship Manager	Suzanne Emerson
Members	Susan Sadek, Rich Evans, Katy Russell

10) AOB

None.

The meeting concluded at 6.04pm.

Minutes taken by Ana Sanderson, Secretary.