**MINUTES OF THE 73rd ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE BOURNEMOUTH AND BOSCOMBE LIGHT OPERA COMPANY HELD ON MONDAY 8 DECEMBER 2025 AT ST PAUL'S CHURCH, LANDFORD WAY, THROOP, BOURNEMOUTH BH8 0NY**

The Chairman, Darren Ellery, welcomed everyone to the meeting.

1 **Apologies for absence were received from**:
Laura Alborough, Amy Alner, Millie Bagnall, David and Jenny Bate, Edward Brennan, Anne-Marie Bridle, Jonathan and Sarah-Jane Busk, Beth Chumley, Charlotte Curtis, Sallie Evans, Rachel Forsdike, Kim Geliot, Paula Gerken, Samantha Gould, Duncan Hook, Kayleigh Jackson, Jason Knight, Judi Knight, Paul Mathews, Eve Mitchell, Lizzie Newson, Kiera Rickford, John Rimell, Janine Savage, Chris Smith, Alastair Snell, Sarah Stevens, Jenny Wakefield, David Walker, Trevor Willetts, Michelle Wright, Emma Wogan, Penny Young

2 **Minutes of the 72nd AGM held on held on Monday 7 October 2024 - Proposed** by Jenny Corbin, **Seconded** by Laura-Jayne Hargrave Fletcher, and accepted by the meeting.

3 **Matters arising from the Minutes** – None

4 **Chairman's Report**

**Overview of 2025**
This year has been eventful, with two very different productions—*Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and *Annie*. Both shows were well received, earning outstanding reviews and positive feedback from audiences and critics alike. However, while *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* was a spectacular achievement, it came at a significant financial cost and resulted in a considerable loss. We are extremely grateful to Dave Hart and 7th Wave for generously offsetting £10,000 of their costs to help us continue. This situation prompted an urgent committee meeting to discuss the way forward. Stevie will provide more detail in the Treasurer's Report on behalf of Chris. Despite the risk, the decision was made to proceed with *Annie*. This was a huge concern for us all, as any further loss would have meant the company folding and being £10,000 in debt. We cannot continue to operate in this way. The committee unanimously agreed that we need a more robust operating model—one where sufficient funds are secured upfront to cover any potential shortfall.

We remain committed to producing exciting, high-quality shows, but we must also recognise that this requires time, planning, and financial stability. After careful consideration, we regretfully decided not to proceed with two shows in 2026 and cancelled the rights for *Little Shop of Horrors*. While it would have been a fantastic production, it does not cater for a large cast and may not have been commercially viable given the costs of sets and puppetry. Thanks to the hard work of Chris and the committee, *Annie* was brought to the stage on a slightly reduced budget. I would like to extend special thanks to Helen, Ian, Heather, and Duncan for reducing their fees to support us, along with many others who showed incredible generosity. Full financial details will follow in the Treasurer's Report.

**Acknowledgements**
I want to thank everyone who has contributed to keeping the company going this year. Rather than list names individually, I offer collective thanks to all who made it possible for us to still be here. A special mention goes to Becky, our Vice Chair, for her unwavering support during a turbulent year. It is important to remember that the committee receives no benefits in kind for their work. We pay subscriptions like everyone else, buy tickets, and balance our responsibilities alongside families and jobs.

**In Memoriam**
This year we sadly said farewell to Beryl Parker, a loyal and faithful supporter of the company and a dear friend to many. We also lost Betty Richardson, another cherished friend and supporter. Our thoughts and love are with their families.

**Celebrations**
On a happier note, we welcomed baby Matilda Grace into the BBLOC family and send our congratulations to Harriet and Sam.

**What Makes BBLOC Special**
BBLOC stands out for two reasons:

- **Quality Productions** – We are not a typical amateur theatre company. Our attention to detail and the experience of performing on the Pavilion stage is second to none.

- **Our People** – BBLOC is its members. Each of us is a vital cog in the mechanism that keeps the company moving forward.

**Challenges and Reality Check**
Looking back over Chairmen's messages from the past 30 years, one recurring theme is the need for all members to support the company—even when not in a production. During *Annie*, we hit a wall. At times, we struggled to find members willing to help with simple tasks like making tea at rehearsals, leaving the same few people to shoulder the burden week after week. We are no longer in a financial climate where we can survive without a stronger operating model. This may sound harsh, but it is reality. Some members did not even buy tickets for our shows, let alone sell them to friends and family. That is not good enough. We are a society run by members for members, and without everyone doing their part, we will not be here in five years—let alone another seventy.

**A Call to Action**
This is a line in the sand. We are not asking for the impossible—just commitment. Thank you to those who have stepped up: baking cakes, selling programmes, making tea, supporting promotional events, chaperoning children, sourcing raffle prizes, and selling tickets, even when not performing. Thank you to those who pay on time and prioritise what they can do rather than what they cannot. Moving forward, we must work smarter, not harder. This is your company - not mine, not the committee's, but yours. If we take one thing away today, let it be this: **we are all accountable for BBLOC's success and survival**. Don't assume someone else will answer the call for help - ask yourself, '*What can I do?' We are all busy but there are things we can do.*

**Looking Ahead**
At this point, we are not ready to announce our plans for 2026. We want the new committee to make this decision following today's AGM. However, we can confirm that we will perform a show at the Pavilion during the week commencing **12 October 2026** (not half-term). This gives us time to raise funds and strengthen our financial position. We are also exploring ways to use the early months of the year for fundraising and engagement, including the possibility of a smaller-scale performance around May.

**Thank You**
Thank you all for your attendance and continued support.

5 **Treasurer's Report and Receipt of Accounts for Year Ended 30 November 2025**

*Stevie presented the report on behalf of Chris Smith*

**Treasurer's Report 2025** - This report covers an extended reporting period of 1 September 2024 through to 30 November 2025 (15 months). It was another two-show year starting with Charlie and the Chocolate Factory and ending with Annie. At the start of the year, we had £13,596 in the bank. With so many upfront costs to pay to put on a show we need to bolster this position. In May, Charlie and the Chocolate Factory was a theatrical success but a massive financial burden with the production costing £130,160 against an income of £117,308. This resulted in a loss of £12,852. Whilst we could afford to pay our bills, it left us with next-to-no working capital for our production of Annie. An emergency committee meeting was convened, and it was agreed to accept an offer from David Hart of Seventh Wave Audio to defer £10,000 of his show cost. This action, coupled with numerous fund-raising efforts, enlisting additional Friends of BBLOC, a grant from Bournemouth Pride and generous donations from members enabled us to proceed with Annie in October.

The costs for Annie were vigorously controlled and much lower, coming in at £105,931. The production was both a theatrical and financial success, producing a profit of £13,936. David Hart was immediately paid the money owed. Other income and expenditure during the year saw a net inflow of £8,164. This included income from subscriptions, donations, Friends and Bitesize with the prime expenditure being the rent. Following all the activity and ups and downs of the year, the bank balance was a much healthier £27,078 at the end of the year.

Looking forward to 2026, it is scheduled to be a one show year. With a healthy opening bank balance and tight budgetary controls and continued fundraising, BBLOC must continue to improve its financial position. I will continue to monitor the account very closely to ensure that we remain in that position. Going forward, I propose the budget should be around the £100,000 for a six-show production. This appears to be the sweet spot when factoring in the economic times we are currently living in. Finally, Macmillan Caring Locally remains our nominated charity, and I am pleased to confirm that we have raised a further £2,834 during the year bringing the current balance to be donated to £4,430.48."

There were no questions and it was **Proposed** by Phillip Fry and **Seconded** by Fiona Thompson that the accounts be accepted.

6 **Review of Subscriptions** – Agreed that they should remain at £120 pa (£10 pm). Darren explained that these needed to be paid by standing order monthly to cover the cost of the hall rental.

7 **Donations to Charity** – Agreed that we continue with Macmillan Caring Locally as our chosen charity. We are one of their Golden Partners and benefit from their publicity on our behalf. We have raised a further £2,834 during the year bringing the current balance to be donated to £4,430.48."

8 **Proposed Alterations to the 2024 Rules** – Darren explained that the BBLOC Rules act as guidelines for our operation and occasionally need a major or minor tweak to allow us to operate efficiently and realistically. Some AGMs see a single rule change, some none, and some a major re-vamp. This year falls into the last category and we have updated the language to make it more modern and easier to read, as well as cutting out old rules which no longer apply, and tweaking others.
**Proposed** by Sandie Amat and **Seconded** by Debbie Burns that the updated version of the 2024 Rules be accepted.

9 **Election of the Committee**

Two nominations had been received to fill 2 vacancies, and with the acceptance of the change to the old Rule 19, the new Committee would now consist of DARREN ELLERY, CAROLE GADSBY, SARAH STEVENS, BECKY BAGNALL, SARAH-JANE BUSK, FIONA FOX, SARAH BOYCE, JODIE SAUNDERS and KAYLEIGH JONES with ANDY BLYTH and STEVIE SMITH remaining as co-opted members

**Proposed** by Becky Bagnall and **Seconded** by Dale Gregory

10 **Any other business**

i. **Report from Becky on Bitesize** – Becky was delighted to share a roundup of their gig activity from late 2024 through 2025 and there was a fair bit to celebrate! Bitesize ended 2024 with a run of performances, including The Masons' Xmas gigs on the 6 and 10 of December, a festive appearance at the BBLOC coffee morning on 7 Dec and The Pavilion Christmas Cracker and they've been asked back to do all of those again this year - a clear sign that they made a great impression and delivered performances people truly valued.

With two major company shows this year, Bitesize's availability for gigs was naturally reduced, but as well as those repeat gigs this Christmas, they also made some fabulous things happen during the rest of the year….singing at Bourne Free in July for their family event which gave us a fantastic chance to promote Annie and they had a brand-new gig in November at the Melton Court where they entertained residents, including long-standing supporter and past member, Peter Jeffery, making this not just a performance but a heartfelt connection. They sang at this year's Christmas Fayre, offering festive entertainment to a small but wonderful audience of members and friends. Each of these events helps raise vital funds that support the company.

As inspiring as this year has been, it has also highlighted the very real difficulty of relying on a small, dedicated group of members. These individuals have carried the gig workload brilliantly, but they can't do it alone. For Bitesize to grow and continue, they urgently need more members willing to commit to gigs; members confident to volunteer to teach harmonies - is there anyone who can play or "bash out" notes on an instrument? - members with hidden talents? - Bitesize wants to hear from you! With a wider team, they can expand their repertoire and even plan larger-scale concerts again. These events are incredible, but they take a lot of work - and they need the people to make them happen.

Becky offered a huge thank-you to the committed members who had consistently turned up to rehearsals and performances. and the company is stronger because of their dedication. Additional appreciation goes to: Kayleigh Jones – for sourcing tracks, creating set lists, and saying "yes" to absolutely everything. Jonathan Busk – for coordinating with clients and keeping communication running smoothly. The extra technical support provided by Simon Bagnall who set up all the equipment before gigs with his assistant wife! This year Bitesize has seen lots of passion, music, and community spirit - and with more hands-on-deck, next year could be even more spectacular!

ii. **Social Secretary** – Dan had done a great job but would like a rest. Darren asked for volunteers but there were none forthcoming. (Harriet subsequently volunteered to take this on and we are grateful to her).

iii. **Drive to get new Friends of BBLOC** – some members had been very good with recommendations and others had done nothing. This is an important and excellent source of income and family, friends and colleagues need recruiting on a regular basis!

iv. **Presentation of Life and Honorary Life Awards**

- **Life Membership for 20 years' continuous service** was awarded to Amanda Alner, Paul Mathews and Fiona Thompson.
- **Honorary Life Membership** was awarded to Emma Wogan for her dedicated work in all areas of the company's operation over the years

v. **Jane Kerfoot** thanked Becky for organising members' participation in the enjoyable Christmas Cracker event at the Pavilion and hoped that more people would take part next year.

vi. **Jeremy** thanked Darren and the committee for their continued hard work on everyone's behalf to ensure the smooth running of the company.

***The meeting finished at 8.20 pm with refreshments kindly arranged by Carole and Amanda***