



Meeting #16 Minutes

Date and Time: Tuesday 6th October 12.00 - 1.30pm

Chair: Stage Sight (Bruno Poet)

Minutes: Stage Sight (Bruno Poet)

Present:

ABTT: David Evans

ALD: Johanna Town, Ian Saunders, Lucy Carter, Nick Wooley

ASAM: Grit Eckert

ASD: Rob Bettle, Zoe Milton

CITA: Claire Hartley,

FMTW: Peter McKintosh, Sunita Hinduja

MDA: Struan Leslie, Asha J-G

PMA: Helen Mumby

PMF: Mandy Ivory-Castile, Dan Shelley, David Evans (ABTT, SIPA)

SBTD: Cat Silver, Fiona Watt, Katie Scott

Scene/Change: Anna Fleischle

SDUK: Alex Sutton

SMA: Arran Pallan (FTF), Andy Rowley, Owen Thomas

Stage Sight: Bruno Poet

1. Welcomes and Apologies

Apologies: Diane MDA,

Stage Sight welcomed everyone to the meeting and a new individual was introduced.

2. Housekeeping

- Google Drive can be accessed by a link in slack, and all documents will be moved from slack to the Google Drive so they can be found. Link is also here https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1eg_Zd3T-Tc_VmPHqkTaA0kaP63TmLW_J?usp=sharing
- Welcome guide is also in the google drive
- All agreed new logo was great and thanked all involved in making it.

3. Future Guests

Future guests to invite to the meeting were discussed

Actions

- Helen Ryan from BECTU to be invited by CITA
- BECTU questions- Lucy Carter, Nick Wooley (ALD) to formulate group, any questions in the #Union channel
- BECTU training access for AAPTLE members to be discussed
- Sunita to work out a Tuesday when Amanda Parker from Inc Arts to come
- IPSE and CIF to be invited by Paule – Bruno to check with Paule.
- CITA to contact Patrick Maloney from Cultural task force
- Bruno Poet to check video code aware they are welcome to all meetings
- Anna Fleischle to invite Backstage Niche
- Fiona Watts to invite Sebastian from UK theatre

4. Back to Work Guidance letter

- The letter was discussed and the members who wrote it were thanked
- A GDPR compliant mailing list was discussed
- All agreed that FMTW could put a sign-up sheet on their website for producers
- Mailing list added to the AAPTLE dropbox
- Only publicly available emails can be used, but some personal ones can be guessed
- Use of personal email addresses was discussed - Can we use named email addresses at companies without breaking GDPR?
- Google informed us that a personal email address cannot be used unless it is found from the public realm
- It was mentioned that artistic directors of regional theatres are struggling with finances, it is complex and nuanced for buildings with subsidy
- Commercial theatre producers are the most important people to get the letter directly
- Hashtag for social media was discussed. It was agreed that #AAPTLE should be used.
- We were warned to be cautious about trade associations breaking the law about collective bargaining, but it was felt the letter was a long way from doing this.

Actions

- Add GDPR compliant email addresses to spreadsheet
- Letter to be distributed
- #AAPTLE to be used

5. COVID Working Practice Documents

- Should AAPTLE be producing COVID working practice documents?
- Detailed guidance should be done association by association so can be specific to the association
- Helpful for associations to share their COVID working practice documents
- Suggestion to have all these documents from the different associations in one place.
- Publish to AAPTLE Google Drive
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Actions

- Associations to upload their documentation to the AAPTLE google drive so information can be shared.
- Encourage all associations to put their guidance on the public side of their website

6. Slack Training

- Slack training sessions to be organised
- Doodle poll with time for people to have training

Actions

- Sign up to training via the Doodle polls in slack

7. Website

- Costs covered for the next year

8. Representation within AAPTLE

- It was said that publishing the letter was a positive step

- Representation on the agenda was to talk about the lack of the ethnic diversity in the room and little progress has been made
- Some associations have offered AAPTLE attendance to their members, but have struggled to find ethnically diverse volunteers.
- One association felt that it was inappropriate to “force” their members to join the AAPTLE room
- It was questioned whether more members of the associations should be encouraged to engage with AAPTLE - Not just those running the associations.
- We need to cast our nets wider and work harder
- The difference between being just a member of an association, and being a board member and responsible for the association was discussed. Can a member speak for the association, if they are not one of the group running the association?
- A new association talked about how they are aiming embrace the diversity of their membership The need for unconscious implicit bias training was discussed
- It was commented that Amanda Parker runs unconscious bias, implicit bias and anti-racism training and could explain how and why she does this training when she talks to AAPTLE.
- It was remarked that inappropriate language is still being used. Everybody knows about the issues, but they don't know how to speak about it. Backstage ethnic diversity is really under-represented. We have been talking about it for months, but we are slipping back into old ways, and nothing is changing.
- Speak – Listen – Reset – Heal anti-racism conference was mentioned.

Actions

- All associations should actively invite a more diverse selection of their members to attend AAPTLE meetings

5. New initiatives

- It was discussed that some associations are doing outreach work to schools, and further education colleges on zoom, and that it might better to reach out as AAPTLE rather than as individual associations
- Draw together a list of schools and divvy up the legwork between AAPTLE members, look for a bigger variety of schools to go to, and a bigger variety of people to speak
- Much easier to do on zoom than to visit in person
- It was commented that a dialogue across associations in schools would be beneficial we should unify our outreach
- It was mentioned that the police, the armed forces etc are out in force at career fairs. SOLT and creative skills initiative have gone to these events and spoken up for backstage careers. Need to get idea into people's heads
- Careers teachers unaware of backstage jobs, and how many trades there are in theatre
- Contacts and lists need to be found
- It was mentioned that it would be beneficial to encourage young people with neurodiverse and invisible disabilities to join our industry. We need to make the effort to find people who might not normally consider it.
- Initially offer a zoom to relevant cohorts
- Connections through education departments of theatre organisations could be a good a good way to get introductions to schools
- Need to make the effort to encourage people into a world that they don't see any entry point into. Push open doors that are not normally open
- Talk to groups that look after children that are on the spectrum or other groups. Should find a treasure trove of interest.
- Stagedata.org have 100 + connections to schools that have an interest in the industry.

Actions

- A subgroup to be set up to look into this and report back. Dan Shelly, Cat Silver, Katie Scott, David Evans, Andy Rowley, Struan Leslie, Zoe Milton and Bruno Poet to join. Open to others via slack.
- #education-outreach channel set up on slack.

Mental Well Being

Actions

- Further discussion needed – to be put on agenda for next week

6. AOB

Discussion about the Equity/SOLT deal

- It was said that many actors are baffled by it, and the pressure to choose yes, or they lose everything. They were not expecting it. Vast swathes of West End cast and crew saying it is a terrible deal, and can't live on the money.
- Jamie from Equity will come back soon with the questions we asked last week
- Can send more questions to Paul Fleming via slack
- Hope was expressed that Equity would listen to their members before making these announcements
- It was thought that this adds poignancy to our letter, as it goes exactly against the desires set out in the letter as it asks actors to subsidise the industry
- Need to plan for a press pick up on the letter
- All associations and freelancers don't think they should share producer's risk
- Only members who had been on an equity contract in last 3 years to be balloted. Surely whole membership should be ?
- Do we care if producers don't use SOLT contracts?
- Should AAPTLE make a social media statement to show we in support of actors and Stage Management?
- Some regional theatres crew and makers are going back at 50% hours.
- It was pointed out that there can't be a general vote across all membership because it is an in-house agreement, can only vote if you are in that agreement
- It was said that SOLT assured that the shorter working week is only a short term "ease in", don't trust SOLT, but do understand the finances.
- Threat of losing the agreement real. Outside London crew on minimum wage with 50p more for HODs - and limited hours.
- Better to have an agreement to build from than nothing
- Believe that MU not agreed yet
- Danger that producers will go back to an 8 or 9 show week with a 5 show weekend, and that is opposite of what we trying to do in terms of well-being. 2 shows on a Sunday with no additional payment is a step backwards.
- Some Regional theatres can't afford to be members of UK theatre, but should still be aiming to pay people properly what the agreements say. Each theatre shouldn't be setting their own rates, negotiations not easy for individuals
- Engagement with SOLT was questioned – SOLT only went to privileged groups. RSC and other nationally funded organisations not at that table. SOLT being left off the hook and are hanging us out to dry. Should make sure the AAPTLE letter goes to as many SOLT members as possible
- It was pointed out that RSC, NT, Opera house has different agreements and not part of SOLT or UK theatre agreements
- Managements being aggressive on agreements
- We should encourage BECTU and Equity to take a stronger line on this.
- Conditions much worse than before, and many cross the line of acceptability.
- COVID related additional hours for testing etc not paid- so can be asked to work an extra 6 hours for nothing.
- Extra work in costume for COVID is doubled.
- BECTU eventually agreed that 30 mins per day could be unpaid but only because of audience delays.
- Testing depends on the individual company. Proper COVID testing is time consuming and need to fight this on an individual basis.
- Need to fight to not work for free. Big fight.
- It was pointed out that a spokesperson might be needed about the letter. Jo Town, Lucy Carter, Anna Fleischle , Peter Mckintosh, , Andy Rowley , Ian Saunders to form a group who can respond if needed.

7. Next meeting

- Host: SDUK
- Date: 13th October