

Shipham Players

Minutes of the SPEC meeting held on Monday 9th March 2026

Star Room, Shipham Village Hall, 7.30pm

Present: Debbie Andrews (Chair), Wendy Baker, Mervyn Brown, Steve Dodd, Peter de Hallé, Daniel Jeffrey, Nigel Oakley, Dave Peake, Ginny Power

Agenda

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Kate Price. Debbie welcomed the new committee to the meeting including the new members – Nigel, Mervyn and Ginny.

2. Previous minutes and matters arising

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved by those who had attended and matters arising/actions formed part of the agenda for this current meeting.

3. Financial Summary

Steve Dodd (Treasurer) presented a financial summary for the group. It was noted, as declared at the recent AGM, that we made an excellent profit on our recent pantomime, Robin Hood & His Merry Maidens - £4,500 – which is a fantastic result. This now means that we currently have a healthy bank balance with which we can develop our assets and also support our local community.

It was noted by Daniel that we are waiting for Tony Butler to decide on where the charity donation will go this time – this will be £200. It was also agreed that we would make a donation of £150 to Shipham Scouts. Our future expenditure plans will focus on our June and October productions for 2026.

There was some discussion on what we might spend some of our funds on; Daniel discussed some possible reinforcement mics for above the stage – we currently have four in front of the stage and 2 nearer the front, but more could help and be a good investment. Should also be useful to any audience members who may be hard of hearing. Daniel and Nigel to discuss amongst sound engineers and find quotes.

Possible further expenditure could be for a contribution to storage units round the back of the Village Hall (**see item 5**). The Hall are prepared to spend some money for extra storage, and the committee are in agreement to make a donation towards the purchase of this as we have a vested interest. This is likely to be helpful for scenery storage in particular.

Actions:

- Daniel to confirm Tony Butler's charity recipient
- Daniel and Nigel to explore the potential of reinforcement mics – costs, etc. and report to next meeting.

4a. Productions:

We have now renewed our annual membership of the Somerset Performing Arts Service for £26 and have recently obtained three sets of scripts for play readings that we will begin to read from Wednesday 11th March 2026 in readiness for our June production and potentially identifying suitable scripts for future productions. The committee agreed that it would be helpful to have a programme of forthcoming productions available, both for casting commitments and for audience anticipation.

Our June production will take place on the 11th, 12th and 13th June 2026 – our initial focus is therefore on selecting a suitable production for this. Everyone is welcome to the play readings which will take place on Mondays and Wednesday evenings at the Village Hall.

There was some discussion regarding the October production – owing to the popularity of the Village Hall it has not been possible to secure a three-night run for this year. As it is the 20th anniversary of Shipham Players' inception, it was agreed that we should hold a Gala evening with dinner (possibly black tie) as a celebration, inviting past and present members to attend to reminisce and celebrate together. At this event we could provide a medley of drama, songs and sketches reflecting our history.

It was proposed that there should be the formation of a sub-committee to develop this idea and Debbie agreed to chair this but requires other members to come forward to help – offers to Debbie please. The date for this evening will be **Saturday 24th October 2026**.

Actions:

- All members invited to attend the play readings – Wendy to advertise
- Volunteers from the membership to help Debbie plan the October event – please contact Debbie direct

4b. Moving Forward –

It was agreed by the committee how important it is that we are more robust in planning ahead for future productions in an effort to encourage new members and for us all to consider the range of genres that we could be producing. It is therefore important we give some time to reading scripts well ahead of the dates. (**see item 7**). We know that our future productions for 2027 are likely to be (pending Village Hall bookings):

- February 2027 – likely to be a children's focused show (not a pantomime)
- June 2027 - play
- October 2027 - play

4c. Tech Support

Now that Tony Butler has stepped down from sound effects and recordings (thank you so much Tony – we WILL miss you!) we are in need of new people who might take on the role. Tony has kindly offered to do some handover training, for which the committee are very grateful.

Nigel and Wendy both offered potential contacts who might be interested, and it was agreed that these people should be contacted. Other possible sources of support were mentioned and will be explored if the initial contacts are not able to take this on. Debbie has put an introductory advert for someone in the Parish Newsletter.

Action:

- Nigel and Wendy to follow up with their potential contacts and report back to the next meeting on progress.

Website – Peter reported that some audience members had contacted him to let him know that it was a bit difficult to buy tickets on mobile phones for our last production. The current software developers have not made any progress in addressing this; EsciT (our website hosting & tech support) have been considering the development of a plug-in that would give us what we need. Peter has asked if it would be possible for a budget to support this workaround from EsciT. Peter asked if we could consider setting a small budget for any future web developments that we may require. It was agreed that Peter should discuss this with EsciT and report back to the next committee meeting with figures (this is separate to the issue with tickets).

Peter also raised the issue that, following many personnel changes, our policies and general information are required to be updated. He also mentioned that, going forward uploading the minutes of the committee meetings to enable all members (and potentially new members) to view would be a positive move forward. It was agreed that in the spirit of transparency this is possible, as well as uploading the minutes to the What's App membership channel with suitable redactions of names or sensitive material as required prior to uploading and with agreement of the committee.

Actions:

- Peter to investigate improvements to our ticket concerns/possible plug-in development with EsciT and develop a proposal for ongoing website development support with costings, reporting back at the next meeting.
- Committee to review the current policy documentation and table this as a key agenda item for the next meeting.
- Starting with this meeting, the minutes will be typed up by Ginny as Secretary, sent to the whole committee for amendments/approval and then Ginny will send a final copy to Peter for the website and upload a copy to the membership What's App group.

5. Storage

Daniel reported that the roof in the Hall is full and we therefore need to perform a major sort to identify items to keep, donate, sell or recycle. Halogen lights are currently up there, and it was suggested that these should be removed from the roof as we don't need them all and they take up a lot of space. Daniel will contact interested parties who might be interested in taking these from us.

The date for sorting out the roof was identified as **Sunday 10th May 2026**. Daniel will enquire and book the date with the Hall. Once confirmed Daniel will let Ginny know and she or Wendy will publicise it on the Whats App membership channel.

Actions:

- Daniel to contact possible recipients of the halogen lights.

6. Membership

There was considerable discussion about the Players' membership and the need to attract a wider age range to the group. As with many village groups (not just Shiphams) it is becoming very difficult to attract new members, and this potentially prevents us putting on a wider range of productions. One idea is to create a series of workshops, including play readings (**see item 7**) to reach out and hopefully attract new members. Any ideas from the membership regarding attracting new members would be very welcome – please let the committee know.

We have had enquiries from past members and regular audience attendees about the possibility of a Patrons Membership as a way of keeping them in touch with our activities and acknowledging their involvement and support. This might also include Honorary Patrons. It was agreed that Ginny will work up a proposal to be presented at the next committee meeting for discussion.

Actions:

- All members to consider how we might attract new members to the group and to feed these suggestions to committee members.
- Ginny to develop a proposal for a Patrons/Honorary Patrons membership scheme for Shiphams Players and present this at the next committee meeting.

7. Workshops

Traditionally we don't put on productions in the period from June to September (excluding August as a holiday period). It was agreed that this would be an ideal time to hold workshops and taster sessions that could attract new members but also provide existing members with the opportunity to develop their skills, read plays and socialise. It was also agreed that we need to start reading scripts immediately after previous productions – not only does this give us an opportunity to socialise together but also to plan ahead (**see item 4b**)

In particular, readings could take place in June/July with taster sessions proposed in September should look ahead to the February production and could include separate sessions for working with adults and children.

There was some discussion about what these workshops should look like and how the evenings would run. This would include numbers of attendees, etc. We would also need volunteers from the

membership who are willing to pass on their skills and expertise in, for example, voice, characterisation, make-up, improvisation, sound, lighting etc. Debbie suggested that we discuss this again at our next meeting but in the meantime any members who are interested in leading on sessions to contact her.

Actions:

- Committee members and the membership to consider the format of a 2-hour workshop session and submit draft ideas for the next committee meeting
- Potential volunteers from the membership to contact Debbie with offers of workshop facilitation or support

8. Any Other Business

- Steve will remind the new committee (particularly new appointees) about the liability of members and will share the appropriate information with the committee.
- Wendy raised the idea of the Summer Social and will share a Whats App with the membership to arrive at a suitable date
- New committee members to provide a photo (unless using a production shot) and a short bio to Peter for the website
- Daniel mentioned that we may need to review the social media policy regarding the use of names and images of our young people (a secondary site used images from our recent production plus names of individuals).
- In line with our policy reviews we need to ensure that we have our Safeguarding Officers in place – this needs to be one male and one female. Debbie has agreed to be one of these Officers.

Agenda items for next time:

- Actions arising
- Policies update
- Patrons Membership proposal
- Workshop – draft workshop plan for discussion
- Updates on productions

Date of next meeting:

14th May 2026

7.30pm - Star Room