

AGM 2024 Meeting Minutes

11/01/2024 @ 14:30pm

Board Members in attendance: Melanie Wilson, Peter Rice, Vicki Hill, Rosie Stroud, Ella Wahlström, Lewis Gibson, Helen Atkinson, Clare Hibberd

Apologies: Chris Drohan

Introduction and Welcome

MW welcomes all to the AGM 2024, the first held both in person and online since the start of the Pandemic.

Re-election of Board Members

MW notes that the ASDP is not running an election this year for new board members, due to the recent expansion of the board in 2023.

The ASDP will be observing the resignation by rotation point from the constitution, whereby 1/3rd of the board steps down at each AGM. SV, LG and MW will be stepping down at this stage. SV and LG will be immediately re-elected to the board by a motion of members present.

Majority Vote in Favour. Motion Passed.

Chair's Report

MW notes that 2023 remained a challenging year for the industry as a whole, but with some positive movement. MW reiterates there are large staffing shortages in the industry which is placing a huge strain on people's physical and mental wellbeing and is driving high burnout and staff turnover.

Sound Staff in the West End Reported continued lack of understanding and compromise by producers in regard to working conditions and pay rates.

At the end of 2023 BECTU secured an offer from SOLT which was given to their members. 93% of staff voted in favour, which secured a 7.1% pay increase, backdated, and a return to Double Pay on Sundays.

The subsidised sector is also suffering, with local arts centres and theatres facing cuts, in some circumstances facing 100% cuts to funding. This has a drastic impact on the work of early career

artists, and the sustainability of careers is suffering greatly. This runs the risk of consolidating the art of theatre to large commercial organisations based in London.

We are seeing an increase in diversity in the workforce, which while slow, is undeniable. MW notes that it feels ever more important that the ASDP look outwards to the rest of the country and advocates for and supports people at every stage of their career, across the full spectrum of what Sound means.

The ASDP has continued to participate in the work of AAPTLE, and have been developing work and support with them. We have helped develop the Mental Health support arm of AAPTLE and look to help develop new work including an updated website.

This year the ASDP has run 19 Panels, Seminars, Discussions and in conversation events online and in person, covering a range of topics from design, technical and professional development themes. There has been 7 Walk and Talk events, a marked increase over previous years, giving members much closer insight into the making of shows. The ASDP were back at NSDF, taking part in 4 online events during the week. There were 13 events ran in collaboration with Corporate Partners, an increase on previous years. A new partnership with SDUK has begun a series of sessions between sound designers and directors. This series will continue this year with further discussions. Most of this content is available on the ASDP Seminar Archive, updated by Chris Drohan.

The ASDP were present once again at Plasa, ABTT, Theatrecraft and Plasa Focus and thank you to all members who volunteered to help out, and to **Rosie Stroud** for the Creation of a new Booklet about Theatre Sound.

The ASDP Future Professional Members have been communicating regularly through a new Discord Channel, and are working hard on the creation of a new Audio Newsletter Component to the upcoming Echo.

Female, Non-Binary and Trans Members met up for a strategy session a year after the success of the Pause. Play. Discover event in 2022. There is now an ASDP Community Room group where members can meet and talk, and there is a new monthly meeting led by Carolyn Downing call Kaffeeklatsch. The ASDP has funded Treasurer LG and Exec Admin HA to train as Mental Health First Aiders.

The ASDP has supported the Hello Stranger festival, an international festival of performance design which featured some ASDP members.

The ASDP have partnered with RCSSD, allowing them to purchase a number of Spatial Sound Systems. This partnerships comes with the requirement that the equipment be shared with the ASDP, giving access to members.

The ASDP made a significant decision this year to make a change to the name, to the ASDP.

The ASDP have delivered the London Winter School Event, but this year added a Winter School event in Glasgow.

MW gives a huge thank you to everyone who contributed to the creation of the Winter School 2024.

Treasurer's Report

LG notes while it has been a challenging year for the industry, the Association has remained strong in terms of membership and finances.

In the year ending 2022, total income was £67,484 and total expenditure was £68,651. That is where the ASDP is hoping to be financially. Total funds carried forward is £50,968. Bank balance as of today is £68,400 and savings account balance is £15,220.

Expenses in year ending 2023 were £65,098. Total income is not known, but expected to be slightly more than expenditure.

Membership numbers last year sat at around 914, but this year sits at 986 members. 83 Associate Members, 106 Corporate Members, 121 Future Professionals, 63 NCO Members, 611 Professional Members. Active Members currently stand at 896, but this number often grows through the year. 33 new members have joined in the last month.

Items from the Last Agenda

Report on the Role of the Co-Chair

Peter Rice took on the role of Co-Chair for the last year. After some discussion, it has been decided that the process has worked, enabling better coverage among the work, an increase in diversity of thinking, and a continuity benefit in having an experienced person in the ways of the organisation supporting in the transition of chairperson. This role has operated as both a Co-Chair and a Deputy-Chair during the year. One unintended consequence of this is the increase of communication for the exec administrator, and HA has done good work in supporting that. The workflow has been refined and settled throughout the year. MW believes we have managed to do more work and manage the workload better due to this setup. The official recommendation is that the role of the Co-Chair is beneficial for the ASDP. This could sit as either a Co-Chair or Deputy-Chair depending on the people involved. This will be a discretionary role, not a formal role acknowledged in the constitution.

Update on the Educators Working Group

Some new participants have joined the group. Online meeting attendance has dropped however, likely as a result of post-covid working. PR and CH to meet to work out how to redevelop the Educators group to yield better engagement.

Update on the Equipment Loan Scheme

SV reminds any new members that the ASDP owns some equipment and has agreements in place with others whereby members can borrow equipment that isn't common, or hard to source.

Last year the ASDP expanded this scheme to the Royal Exchange Theatre in Manchester.

SV runs through a basic update on what equipment is available. Find out more about this at <https://www.theasdp.com/kitloan>

Plans for the future include an expansion to Scotland, and expanding what we have. A call will go out this year to the membership about what they might want to see.

Wrap up on the Name Change Process

This process started in 2022, where members voted on the association exploring a name change. At that initial meeting 550 members were invited to vote. 292 members voted with 156 voting yes and 136 voting no. A working group was formed off of the back of this vote to explore potential options.

Alongside that working group activity, the ASDP employed Zoe Milton to run some research into the membership alongside VH to help shape this work. A membership survey was proposed, which ran in the summer of 2023. The results can be found on the Association website.

In September of 2023 a vote was undertaken by the membership. They were asked whether they wanted to change the name, and which of three options they preferred. These three options were voted on by the Board, taken from suggestions, the working group and the initial town hall.

The vote was briefly paused after opening due to some grammatical errors and membership miscalculations, but did not affect the voters who returned and voted in the final vote.

There were 377 votes undertaken. 193 voted yes, and 184 voted no. 153 people voted for the name The Association for Sound Design and Production.

The charity commission have approved this change, and the ASDP have updated all of the graphics, marketing and the website with the updated branding.

MW thanks the membership for their engagement in the process.

Update on the Mentorship Scheme

Last year the mentorship scheme was updated to include some financial assistance. This has yielded a marked increase in the number of applications to the scheme. Not all accepted Mentee's receive financial support through this.

The various mentoring pairings have ranged in their style, with some being simpler conversations, and some being long term working.

PR highlights a few success stories from the year.

Seminar Programme

Aiming for a full programme of events this year. The Board would love to hear input from the members about what they would like to see in the seminars.

Benefits Scheme

At the last AGM there was discussion about the Edenred Scheme. Takeup was low, and it did not feel like good value for money. It was agreed that the scheme would be given one further year, and if take up did not rise, the scheme would not be continued.

Take up has risen, with roughly 35-40% of members using the scheme month on month. The amount being spent is also increasing. The savings made through the scheme still don't match up to the amount being paid by the association to fund the scheme. It has been decided that it doesn't make good value for money, and so the association will likely be ending that scheme in October when the current scheme runs out.

AOB

VH would like to thank Mel for her work as the Chair of the ASDP. VH acknowledges that little of the work achieved by the ASDP would be possible without her.

MW thanks the board for being incredible colleagues. MW officially steps down as the Chair of the ASDP.

PR officially ends the AGM 2024.