Welcome to Network Theatre Company’s 82nd anniversary AGM via Zoom technology.

I hope you will have had a chance to read this before we meet virtually.

As the Theatre has been closed for physical productions for the entirety of this year’s report, there is little to talk about on that front. However, a number of the Committee members organised readings of plays over Zoom and these were appreciated by those who joined in.

Thanks go to Dom Thomson for re-launching our YouTube channel last summer. This went live with a very successful New Writing Festival organised by Rosie de Vekey and Sarah Wenban called Everything is Alright. The content was amusing and thought-provoking and thanks also go to Emma Byrne for the bringing the technical elements together so well.

Your Committee continued to meet regularly (via Zoom) throughout the closure of the Theatre.

Our Technical and Theatre Manager continued to use the closure as an opportunity to work on improvements to the premises. This included upgrading our emergency lighting to comply with legal requirements. The Theatre passed the health and safety audit that took place in September 2020.

For those of you who are aware of the damage to props and furniture from falling ceiling debris, the covering of these areas and cleaning and organising of the stores has been a big improvement. The Theatre workshop was gutted and re-organised. A catalogue of props and photographs of furniture have now been completed and will be available for production teams to consult. The wardrobe has also benefited from a complete clear-out and re-ordering with new rails and shelves installed. The stage right dressing room has benefited from a clear-out, clean and organisation of costume boxes.

Redecoration of the toilets, Green Room, foyer, box office and back arch has also taken place. The auditorium continues to be painted regularly to compete with the damp.

A COVID-19 risk assessment was developed ready for when the theatre could re-open. In addition, a “fogging” machine was purchased that would enable us to sanitise the premises before, during and after anyone is using the Theatre. My thanks to Paul Evans for all the great work achieved in order for us to be ready to open when allowed.

We launched a Crowdfunder campaign in the autumn and raised £1,320 from 29 supporters.

Our “Back With Love” event, which was initially being produced by Lee Copp in February 2021, had to be held back as re-opening of amateur theatres continued to be pushed further back in the year. It is hoped that this will now take place in July 2021.

Your Committee is monitoring the situation closely and will be doing everything possible to open in a safe manner as soon as we are able.

As always, I am grateful to my two supporting Officers: Moira Cane as Secretary and Fred Johnson as Treasurer. Thank you so much to them both and to the whole Committee for enabling Network Theatre to ride out the long closure.

Thank you for your support for Network and I look forward to meeting up as soon as we possibly can.