

The Constitution of the Settlement Players

(Last amended July 2024)

(1.) Name & Location: The dramatic group of The Letchworth Educational Settlement shall be known as "Settlement Players", hereinafter called "the Players". The Players are based at The Settlement, 229 Nevells Road, Letchworth Garden City, SG6 4UB.

(2.) Mission statement: To provide good quality amateur theatre for local audiences to enjoy at an affordable price. And to provide members with a friendly, inclusive, safe and supportive community where their skills and talents, in all areas of theatre, can be nurtured and celebrated.

(3.) Membership:

Membership is open to individuals aged 18 or over, providing they support the Players' aims, abide by any rules made by the Players and the Settlement, and pay the annual membership detailed below.

Membership runs from September 1st - August 31st; if a member joins midway through a season, the full membership fee will be payable. The Committee should keep a list of current members.

(i.) Membership fee: The Players' annual membership shall be agreed by the Annual General Meeting and shall be additional to their membership of The Settlement. All membership shall be due on September 1st. To adhere to insurance regulations, any participants in the Players productions, whether on or off stage, must be a current member of both the Players and the Settlement.

(ii.) Refusal of application for membership:

The Committee:

(a.) may only refuse an application for membership if, acting reasonably and properly, they consider it to be in the best interests of the Players to refuse the application.

(b.) must inform the applicant in writing of the reasons for the refusal within 21 days of the decision.

(c.) must consider any written representations the applicant may make about the decision. The Committee's decision following any written representations must be notified to the applicant in writing but shall be final.

(iii.) Removal from membership: The Players aim to create an environment in which everyone can share their love of the theatre. If a member of the Players displays unacceptable conduct towards any other member, visitor or towards the Settlement/Players' property, the Committee will take appropriate action to address this, which may include, in extreme cases, removal from membership of the Players and a ban on participating in future productions or events. Unacceptable conduct includes, but is not limited to, bullying, harassment, and deliberate damage.

A member may be removed from membership by a resolution of the Committee that it is in the best interests of the Players that their membership is terminated. A resolution to remove a member from membership should be by unanimous vote of the Committee, and may only be passed if:

(a.) the member has been given at least 21 days' notice in writing of the meeting of the Committee at which the resolution will be proposed and the reasons why it is to be proposed;

(b.) the member or their representative (who need not be a member of the Players) has been allowed to make representations to the meeting.

(4.) Governance:

(4a.) Committee

(i.) Composition: The committee shall consist of the following officers:

- Chair
- Vice Chair (optional)
- Secretary
- Treasurer

In addition, the committee should include at least 2 other ordinary members, up to a maximum of 12 total members. All members of the committee are entitled to one vote. The Chair holds a casting vote.

The committee has the power to set up sub-committees. Such sub-committees shall report to the committee. Any executive decision based upon findings or recommendations of any such sub-committee shall be made by the committee.

(ii.) Selection: The officers & other committee members should be elected at the Annual General Meeting by members of the Players (see section 4b below). All officers and committee members are elected for a term of 12 months. The committee is also able to co-opt other members as needed to help the smooth running of the Players. If a member of the committee resigns prior to an AGM the committee shall have the power to appoint any member of the Players as a replacement. This is also true in the case of an officer.

(iii.) Function: The affairs of the Players shall be managed by the committee.

The committee will select a programme of main plays to be performed across each year. All members will be given the opportunity to submit play proposals. Plays will be chosen to create an interesting and varied season, taking into consideration suitability for the intended audience, required budget and resources. The committee will appoint an appropriately experienced producer/director for each play and assist and support them in all aspects of the production including casting, appointing technical and back stage crew, set building, props, wardrobe, publicity, front of house and box office. In addition to the main productions the committee will facilitate the production of plays to enter into festivals and/or less formal performance evenings, as and when possible.

The committee should liaise with the Settlement to ensure that all appropriate Settlement policies are followed, and is also responsible for the finances of the Players (see section 5 below).

(iv.) Meetings: The committee shall meet no less than three times a year, with at least 7 days' notice of a meeting given to the members of the committee. The quorum for a committee meeting is four committee members, with at least one officer present. The committee can invite other members of the Players or guests to attend meetings where appropriate.

(4b.) Annual General Meeting (hereafter referred to as AGM)

(i.) Function: The function of the AGM shall be to:

- a. Receive and approve appropriate reports by the officers on the activities of the past year.
- b. Present the accounts to date for that financial year. Final accounts will be available to the membership thereafter, once reviewed.
- c. Elect the officers and ordinary members of the committee.
- d. Transact any other business on the agenda.

(ii.) Notice: At least 14 days' notice shall be given in writing (recommended by email) to each member of the Players.

(iii.) Election of Committee:

The secretary should send out information asking for nominees for election to the committee with sufficient notice of the AGM. Any current member of the Players can put themselves forward for election to the committee and/or named officer roles, by submitting their name to the incumbent secretary. The same is true of any current committee member.

The secretary should send the list of nominees to the membership with at least 14 days' notice. If any member of the Players comes forward with concerns about a nominee, this should be examined by the committee (if applicable excluding the nominee about whom the concerns were raised). If the committee finds the concerns to be compelling, they should inform the nominee of such in writing. If necessary, they may then need to delay the AGM if they need to find another candidate for a named officer role.

At the AGM, nominees should be elected by the members who are present, with each member having one vote. If a member cannot be present at the meeting, they can submit their vote in writing beforehand to the incumbent secretary. If an officer role is contested, the election shall be determined by simple majority. If more nominees are proposed than spaces on the committee, then the election shall be by ballot.

(iv.) Voting on other matters: Only members of the Players are entitled to vote at the AGM. The Chair shall have a casting vote.

(4c.) Amendments to the Constitution:

Amendments to the Constitution shall only be made at the AGM or an Extraordinary General Meeting. Notice of proposed amendments shall be given in writing to the secretary at least 28 days before the meeting and details of such proposals shall be sent to the whole membership in the notice convening the meeting. Members should be given a chance to ask questions and raise comments about the proposed changes at the

meeting, before a vote is taken. A proposal to amend the Constitution shall only be carried if passed by at least two thirds of the members present and voting at the meeting.

No amendments may be made to alter the previously stated aims of the Settlement Players if those changes would undermine or work against the existing aims of the Players.

(4d.) Extraordinary General Meetings

The Committee shall have the power to call an Extraordinary General Meeting and shall be bound to do so within 21 days on receiving notice in writing signed by not less than 10 members. At least 21 days' notice shall be given in writing to each member of the Players. An agenda and any other necessary documents or proposals shall be provided at least 7 days before the meeting.

(i.) Business: The business transacted must appear on the agenda and no other business may be discussed.

(ii.) Voting: As for the AGM (see (4b.), point (iv)).

(4e.) Dissolution

The Settlement Players may only be dissolved by a special resolution passed at an AGM or Extraordinary General Meeting. Such a resolution must be passed by 75% of all members, whether present or not. In the absence of any resolution to the contrary, the whole of any assets of the Players shall become the property of The Letchworth Educational Settlement.

(5.) Finance & Properties

(a.) The Treasurer will maintain a bank account for the Players. Any cash received by the Players will be kept securely and deposited into the account at the earliest opportunity. Any payments out will require authorisation from the Treasurer plus one other officer.

(b.) The Treasurer will maintain accounts for the financial year 1st August to 31st July, including suggesting to the committee a competent person to review the accounts at the end of the financial year, who shall be appointed by the committee.

(c.) All properties, stage equipment etc. which have been or may be acquired by the Players shall be considered to be the property of The Settlement Players. The Committee has the authority to sell or otherwise remove property owned by the Players as it sees fit.

(d.) Any appropriate expenses incurred for the Players will be reimbursed. A valid receipt should be submitted within 28 days to the Treasurer.