

Winchelsea New Hall STAGE CONSULTATION Monday 6 June 2016

Two groups who have been using the hall for stage performances include Winchelsea Singers and Winchelsea Primary School.

Winchelsea Singers currently have 40 – 50 singers and use the hall weekly from 2 – 4pm at the beginning of September to the end of April. They do one annual stage performance in the New Hall, and two annual performances in the church (Christmas carols and use of organ for). The annual stage performance in the hall has a Friday matinee and Saturday evening performance at the end of October. In the past they did a performance fun evening in January, but it was too much and now they hold a soiree, with food, every other year. She felt the kitchen is fine for their use.

They have a musical director and accompanist, both employed.

They book the hall in June for the whole year and at the end of August they book additional weekend rehearsals (10) for stage production. For the performance they need the hall from Friday to Sunday.

Six indoor bowls mats are kept at the back of the stage on two metal stands and take up a lot of backstage space. The Indoor Bowls Group move the mats from the back of the stage and put them the back of the hall for stage performances.

Winchelsea Singers has its own additional staging, which is stored on the right hand side of the stage (as you face it). This is used to build the stage into the audience, due to the stage pelmet creating poor acoustics. This overcomes the poor projection outwards. Suggestion of reflecting panels above the stage? Would need to move fixed lights.

Lighting bulbs need to be changed and the lighting control is unprotected in the table store. There are no spot lights over the stage, which raises health and safety issues. Suggest a theatrical lighting survey carried out if want to make improvements.

Backstage storage/clutter. The backstage is used by performers for make-up; as a dressing room; for costumes; and for waiting before going on stage. The bigger table backstage is sufficient for their needs. Could dispose of organ and 2nd (smaller), table to create more room.

Another 10 or so audience chairs are needed, but these can be borrowed from the court hall.

Would like black out blinds for the rear stage windows and roof lights.

Wooden steps arrangement is fine.

Curtains. The lining is torn and pelmet tatty and dirty.

Piano is owned by WS. Others can approach WS for use of piano. They will look into ways of securing it against casual use.

Changing costumes takes place back stage. Creaky floorboards seem to have been rectified.

Events which bring their own audiences would be good. The stage could be promoted as a 'good' facility as long as the indoor bowls mats are moved.

20 cars weekly attend WS as they have many people from the surrounding area, as far as Hastings.

Hanging rail for coats at the rear of the hall was considered a good idea to release space in the cloakroom for a disabled WC.

Would like furniture removed in female toilets, which is at foot of stairs to stage. And handrails up both sides of those stairs, in both toilets.

Winchelsea Primary School have used the hall occasionally over the years to put on Year 6 leavers performances. The children make and create themselves, writing scripts, casting, making costumes, writing music and songs etc. There are about 40 children on stage performing and playing instruments. 2 performances are done – a matinee and evening performance.

The sound projection outwards is not good and the children in front of the stage playing instruments, are not seen. Ideally she would like extra staging at the front to be able to accommodate a large group.

The cost of hiring the hall for performances was felt a lot and would like extra of: being able to pop into the hall to take measurements and afford an extra couple of hours for dress rehearsal, so going on stage in front of an audience wasn't their first time on the stage.

Potential Action Points

1. Get a technical lighting survey done and replace bulbs no longer working.
2. Protect the lighting control box in the table store.
3. Move indoor mats to under front of stage, so they are in position ready to pull out. The under front stage area is unused and this would free up space at the back of the stage and in the hall, where the mats are currently moved to during performances.
4. Remove organ and one table from back of stage.
5. Remove cabinet in ladies toilet at base of stairs to stage. Find new home for cleaning equipment.

6. Put hand rails on either side of stair walls which lead to up to the stage, in both toilets.
7. Blackout blinds at back of stage and roof windows.
8. Reflecting panels above stage to help sound project outwards.
9. Come to arrangement about extra staging with WS
10. Clear out storage area at the back of the stage
11. Look at performance booking package