

Everyman Chair Report 2023/24

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Introduction

The aim of this report is to review the board year, September 2023 to September 2024. It will identify the board's recommended core aims and objectives for the coming board year, 2024/25 and clarify its current financial position. Finally, it will seek to conclude how we as a membership embrace the challenges we face and identify new opportunities for the future.

Strategic Goals for 2024/25

The strategic goals identified below are recommendations only and not enforceable, the new board reserves the right to disregard if they so wish. Regarding the Festival at Sophia gardens, due to financial viability, summarised in the [Treasurers Report](#), the current Board recommends that the new Board does not commission a Festival at Sophia Gardens in 2025. For further details please read the [Festival Report](#).

The current board recommends the following:

- Develop opportunities for the membership to be involved in that will replace the Sophia Gardens Festival model
- Develop relationships with other venue providers
 - Everyman has begun developing relationships with Cardiff and Vale College (CaVC) and there may be an opportunity to use their venue
- Evaluate and continue to implement the Everyman Business Plan in its final year, specifically:
 - To run the company and manage our delivery activities effectively and efficiently
 - To be viable and sustainable
 - To perform to a Growing audience Base
 - To grow our membership And invest in their talents and Potential
 - To build our reputation in the theatre scene in Cardiff and South Wales
 - To achieve greater levels of diversity across all our activities (from governance and delivery to Partnerships and community engagement). Please read the [Community Report](#) for more details
 - To be a sought-after partner with organisations who share our Passion, ambition and values

Financial Performance

The financial performance of Everyman has been challenging as identified in the [Treasurers Report](#). The Playhouse season made a combined loss of £268 and the Festival a loss of £45,000. Membership income has remained steady as will be identified in the forthcoming Membership Report to be delivered at the AGM, copies of the report can be obtained after the AGM on request. The festival losses have had a substantial impact on our reserves, which after our VAT reclaim due in October 2024 will leave us with reserves of approx. £30,000.

Artistic Achievements

Artistically, Everyman continues to innovate, we began the season with ***Two Play's After*** by Brian Friel, directed by Barry Slack which was a performance of two one act plays – each a two hander, influenced by the works of Anton Chekov – notably ***Uncle Vanya*** and ***Three Sisters***.

November saw a detour from Everyman's normal Playhouse programme, we mounted a full musical, ***Rent*** by Jonathan Larson, directed by Wayne Vincent. This was a sell out run and arguably encouraged a wider base for our membership, given this was a musical rather than a straight play.

In February we staged ***Private Fears in Public Places*** by Alan Ayckbourn, directed by Robert Gairey – an innovatively staged production of one of Ayckbourn's lesser known plays. We completed the Playhouse season with a production of ***The Glass Menagerie*** by Tennessee Williams, directed by Rob Phillips – his first time directing with us. This was an excellent debut, a critically acclaimed production that received good houses.

Everyman Cardiff Open Air Theatre Festival received excellent reviews for all its main season productions – creatively it was remarked as one of the strongest in the Festival's forty one year history with acclaimed productions of ***The Tempest***, ***One Man, Two Guvnors***, ***Guys and Dolls***, Everyman Youth Theatre's ***Romeo and Juliet***. Audience participation, not helped by the weather was sluggish to begin with barely 50% in some cases but increasing markedly as the Festival continued.

Though not main season, Club Nights under the stewardship of Barry Slack continue to thrive and really are the beating heart of Everyman – providing a much needed platform for new members as well as an inclusive environment to explore, learn and investigate all aspects of theatre. Notably workshops delivered by professional practitioners, part of Everyman's **Melting Pot** Programme. Please refer to the [Club Night Report](#) for more details.

Everyman Youth Theatre, continues to thrive under the leadership of Sarah Bawler, its members have performed comedy nights at the Mansion House, Cardiff and performances of ***Romeo and Juliet*** at the Everyman Cardiff Open Air Theatre Festival and the Willow Globe, Powys. It is worth noting that the Everyman Youth Theatre will be celebrating its 30th anniversary in 2025 – we hope the membership will be keen support where they can in celebrating this incredible achievement. For more details, please review the [Youth Theatre Report](#).

Operations

Online Audition Applications

For the first time this year we used an online platform for scheduling auditions for the Festival. Whilst there were some operational considerations we need to improve on for future Everyman projects, it was overall a success. The online booking method reduced barriers to apply and was responsible for a substantial increase in applications to audition. Anecdotally it was noted we had the highest amount of applicants for some years for all productions with the quality remaining extremely high.

Paperless Programs and QR Code Generation

The board explored the introduction of paperless programs and trialed the format at the Festival. Whilst, as to be expected with any new format it was met with some opposition, overall the format

was met favourably. It would be recommended to continue to roll the format out to all productions, thus reducing cost and meeting environmental responsibilities where we can.

Effective Use of Microsoft 365 (M365) Licenses

The current board agreed on a policy of only conducting Everyman communications using dedicated Everyman M365 accounts (someone@everymantheatre.co.uk).

The following outcomes were achieved:

- Reduction in the use of email attachments
- Central location to store and record data such as using Teams and SharePoint with access where required
- Auditable and traceable correspondence
- Increased role based communication
- More robust information security

Membership Database

Membership is stored in a SharePoint location with strict role based access to the data

Applying for Performance Licences

Applying for performance licences is now a designated board activity. It is recommended it is no longer the responsibility of non-board members to apply for them. This reduces potentially costly mistakes and assumptions as to where and when licences have been applied for.

Member Communications

The board has reduced the supplier of email communications from two (Brevo and MailChimp.) to one. Brevo was chosen as it already hosts the Festival mailing list that currently hosts 18 thousand approx. subscribers.

Transparency and Accountability

Governance

In March 2024 the board created a new position titled **Quality and Assurance Coordinator**. The role was to ensure that Everyman's policies and guidelines remain relevant and up to date as well as create new ones when required. Under the guidance of Megan Sawyer we have created policies and guidelines for the following:

- Volunteer Code of Conduct
- Child Protection and Safe Guarding Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy

These new/amended policies complement our existing documentation on:

- Constitution
- Memorandum and Articles of Association
- Complaints Procedure
- Business Plan

Challenges

Financial

The board has had to deal with increases in supplier costs, particularly for the Festival ranging from 5% to 15%. The board has done their best to mitigate increase in costs by raising ticket prices and reducing where possible printing and distribution costs and bar stock wastage for example.

Where possible and to help with strategic planning the board had agreed three year deals with its core suppliers, related to the Festival to try and reduce and cushion increases in future years.

Chapter's costs for rent of the Everyman room and hire costs of their venues have increased substantially. In our forward Playhouse programme covering 2025/26 we have endeavoured to tread a fine line by electing for a programme that minimises losses and hopefully make a profit but without losing our creative edge. Our endeavour should always remain to take calculated risks to push our artistic/charitable objectives as a company both for our members and our audience but always being financially responsible.

Relationship with Chapter Arts Centre

Everyman's relationship with Chapter Arts Centre has been challenging. It would appear that Everyman can no longer rely on Chapter Arts Centre as Everyman's first choice performance venue. This is due to a change of direction creatively and operationally, in so much as Chapter are no longer prepared to accept bookings longer than approximately six months in advance and even then there is no guarantee Chapter will accept a booking from Everyman.

The board has done its best and should continue to do so to reach a middle ground, given our unique relationship with Chapter as tenant and founder member to at least agree a minimum baseline of two performances at Chapter per year.

Lack of Experience in Key Positions on the Board

When the 2023/24 board took over there was substantial gaps in terms of experience level regarding design/marketing and communications in general via email, print and social media channels. The board was keen to appoint from within even if the person had little experience. However the board was also extremely cognisant of the pressure, at times unreasonable expectations, of a volunteer in this role and risk of burnout for people in a marketing/comms/design role.

The board therefore attempted to put some guard rails in place to support the member representative taking on this role – these included:

- Mentorship and regular catch-ups with members who had experience already of similar roles
- Attempt to split the role in two – have one person coordinate Playhouse and the other the Festival
- Where financially viable to do so, hire in paid support for design of marketing assets
- As part of the Festival marketing budget, paid support for press communications and overall branding and messaging. This was intended to mentor volunteers and help grow the Festival audience
- Reach out to production teams to help generate their own marketing content

Playhouse Season Program for 2025/26

The current board is delighted to share with you Everyman's Playhouse Program for 2025/26.

- January 2025: Amadeus by Peter Shaffer, directed by Simon Fuddy
- April 2025: Corinth by Tim Davies, directed by Seren Vickers (Dates TBC)
- October 2025: The Incident Room by Olivia Hirst and David Byrne, directed by Leanne Knibb (Dates TBC)
- January 2026: The Revlon Girl by Neil Anthony Docking, directed by Wayne Vincent (Dates TBC)
- April 2026: Antigone (Sophocles play), directed by Brian VanDuyn (Dates TBC)

We are proud of a programme that has a strong mix of established and new Everyman directors not mention new and established writing.

Acknowledgments and Contributions

The chair of the Everyman Board would like to thank the entire board of directors for their support and commitment in what could arguably be termed as one of the most challenging years, aside from Covid, in Everyman's history. It is safe to assume the challenges will continue unabated into the next 2024/25 board cycle as Everyman seeks to adjust to a new financial reality and life without the Festival as we have known it.

Special thanks must go to those that are leaving the board this year, notably our Treasurer, Ed Hayes. The Treasurer is perhaps the most challenging position on the board if not the most thankless. In his past four years with us Ed has offered guidance and a tireless work ethic to help us remain a viable organisation. On behalf of the membership the board offers him our thanks and warmest wishes to him and his family, who have probably forgotten what he looks like given the selfless commitment he has given Everyman in the last four years.

Thanks must also go to Fiona Gibson, as ordinary member, Fiona has become a formidable contributor, coordinating at times single handedly the volunteering arm of the Festival – with her leadership on this aspect alone the Festival would not have been viable at all. Fiona has also assisted as Everyman Community Coordinator – a latest addition to Everyman's core operations. Though Fiona will be leaving us as a board member, she will be continuing to support us as chair of the Everyman Community sub-committee and reporting regularly to the board.

Marketing has been a challenging role to fill this year and the board owes its gratitude to Megan Sawyer and Tyler Curle who have assumed the role as Marketing coordinator throughout the board year. Their contribution and creativity has been invaluable. Tyler, who currently holds the role has been instrumental in reinforcing our brand and producing high quality, innovative material to a consistent, professional standard, thank you!

Megan has also continued to excel in the role of Quality and Assurance Coordinator. A new role that has been sorely needed. Megan has helped build robust policies that protect us as a charity and provide a firm, safe and inclusive foundation within which members can thrive. Though Tyler and Megan will both be leaving the board, they will continue to assist us as crucial Everyman members.

How the Membership can help

As has been identified on more than one occasion and articulated in the Treasurers report, it is not sustainable for the board to do all the work and operate at a strategic level. In this challenging period it will require the members to collaborate more than ever to secure the future of a company and a hobby we all passionately enjoy.

How can you help?

- Fund raising ideas
- If you are a director or in production management for any of the productions in the forthcoming season, make every effort to reduce and optimise expenditure
- Support the board by contributing ideas and help implement them
- Encourage new members to join
- Help promote the projects we do going above and beyond and encourage as many audience members as possible to support what we do
- Be positive in your outlook and explore the opportunities available that perhaps the Festival has not enabled us to do
- Help us promote the social aspects of Everyman and reevaluate/augment what it means to be an Everyman member
 - Theatre trips
 - Dinner events
 - Cultural exchanges/ touring

What does it mean to become and be an Everyman Member?

Without your annual membership contribution we cannot support:

- Everyman Community
- Everyman Youth Theatre
- Club Night season – free to all
- Development of core operations such as our web presence and communications

What do you personally get out of your membership?

- The opportunity to perform, direct and take part in innovative productions in what ever capacity you are able
- Be part of an expanding social network whose influence stretches way beyond our shared love of theatre
- Early communications on offers and audition notices
- Exclusive offers such as ticket discounts for productions where possible and feasible to do so
- The opportunity to vote and directly take part in shaping the future of Everyman Theatre Cardiff

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