



# Volunteer update

Spring 2022

## **Welcome Back**

The last time we were able to write one of these updates was Early 2020 – before any of us had heard of COVID!

So first of all, please accept a warm welcome back and a massive thank you to all the volunteers who have carried on, in whatever form, throughout the last two years.

There are a number of new faces as volunteers at the moment – so thank you also, to those of you who have chosen to give up some of your time to be involved.

## **Volunteer Meeting**

We are going to hold a volunteer meeting on

**Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> February – 8.00pm**

This is a great opportunity to catch up with other volunteers and find out what the new year has ahead for us all. We will meet in person and it will be here in the Seagull. Please come along.

## **Safeguarding**

As you will all appreciate, the Seagull offers a lot of support now to many different types of vulnerable adults and children, and as such its vitally important that we make sure all our volunteers are up to date on their safeguarding responsibilities.

We will offer further training this year, and we must ask that everyone who volunteers attends at least one of the safeguarding training sessions. They last about 3 hours, but it's really important that everyone regularly does this training.

We also want to draw everyone's attention to the two safeguarding policies that the Seagull works from. They are both on the policy page of our website

and we would be so grateful if all volunteers could take a look at them to remind themselves what we do to keep everyone safe.

### **Buildings**

As we speak, we are waiting for the outcome of an application we made to fund the big extension project. If we are fortunate to obtain this money, then we will be starting the work on the extension sometime this year! Obviously if we aren't lucky this time around, we carry on trying!

So much other good work has been done on the building over the last two years it would be impossible to list it all – but here are some highlights....

- A new burglar alarm
- Proper remote control and programmer for the boiler
- Improved lighting around the studio entrance doors.
- Removal and demolition of the rear derelict sheds
- Arrival of a container for storage of set and furniture
- New improved car park bollards
- A new improved dog waste bin – which has been relocated away from the main entrance
- Nearly £50k of roof repairs
- Lots of new stage lighting
- A new glitter curtain!

### **Projects....**

The number of projects we have running at the Seagull has increased significantly during the covid period. Whilst the show side of things was in hiatus, the community work in the building has grown and grown. Here are a few highlights

#### **Dementia Projects**

We received more funding this year to continue the various dementia projects.

- Memories Café which runs fortnightly
- Chair fitness – again fortnightly
- Sunday Classics Film Club – a monthly classic film with sing along.
- Music Appreciation group – an activity for families with dementia to listen to music and maybe join in.
- Carers Wellbeing group – a professional led supportive group for carers

### **Children's Projects**

We now have several specialist children's groups running.

On a Tuesday evening Thom Guttridge runs a group call Best Foot Forward (or BFF) for children in the 9 – 14 age bracket who lack confidence and struggle with school. On Saturdays we have a specialist girls' group for those who have issues with anxiety and self-esteem. Each Wednesday we have a group called Strive which is for children from families where substance misuse and addiction is an issue.

On Saturday mornings we also have a support group for the parents of children with SEND or mental health issues.

One Sunday a month we also run a series of free workshops for young people on a range of arts subjects – the next one is about Shakespeare and later in the Spring we are doing Magic, Dance and music composition.

### **Schools Work**

In addition to our normal Year 6 project which runs in the summer, we had a new Early Years drama project last autumn which worked with 4 settings for children aged 4 – 6. We were lucky enough to get funding to run this project again between January and March – and that is now up and running.

### **Singing Groups**

In addition to our Dementia music group, we have now started to other specialist singing groups.

Twice a month we run a Singing for Parkinson's group with the local organisation Swell Music CIC, and each Saturday morning we run a Singing for Lung Health group as well.

### **First Light Sessions**

Having been repeatedly postponed by the pandemic, we are now finally running our monthly series of short concerts by artists you may have seen in the First light festival. Next month we have African Drummer – Wild Roots and after that we will be having the ensemble Kosmos. These concerts are on a Sunday afternoon and are only £1

### **Heritage Action Zone**

We are in the planning stage for an exciting project for later this year, where we will be running events to celebrate the history of the shopping areas of Lowestoft. More news on this as the year goes on.....

### **Volunteers**

We are truly blessed to have such a great team of volunteers, but you can never have enough! We are always keen to recruit new people for Box Office and Bar.

If you have any friends or acquaintances who may be interested in joining us as a volunteer (especially for Bar duty and Box Office) – please do encourage them to get in touch.

### **Parking**

Despite having refurbished the car park, there is little we can do to make it much bigger. Sadly, we do receive complaints from time to time from our neighbours about our customers parking inconsiderately in Morton Road. We obviously have no control over how people visiting the Seagull choose to park their cars, but we would like to be a good neighbour, so would ask everyone to think carefully about where you park. If you cannot fit into the Seagull car park, there are free and low-cost public car parks within a couple minute's walk of the theatre. It's not always necessary to park on Morton Road.

### **How can you help out....?**

Many of you already do a fantastic amount to help out at the Seagull. But there are easy ways that you could help us out and enjoy yourself in the process....

#### *1) Come and see a show!!!!*

This sounds obvious – but to be successful we need good audiences and the more shows you come and buy tickets for – the better it is for us. Karen has to persuade bands, actors and companies to come and put on shows at the Seagull, and that's not easy if they don't think anyone will come and see them! So, the more often we can have big audiences, the better it is for the Theatre and everyone involved. This is especially true of shows you haven't heard of! We try hard to get new and interesting shows into the Theatre – so if you see something advertised and you don't have a clue what it is .... Come and give it a try!!

#### *2) Book in Advance*

Please Please Please – if you are going to come and see a show – please book your tickets in advance. A lot of theatre groups and bands ring us in the week or so before they are due to come, and ask about advance bookings.

Sometimes if too few people have booked in advance, they actually cancel the show because they don't think enough people will come. We know that a lot of you show up on the night and buy your tickets on the door, but convincing a band or theatre group of that can be hard. So please – BOOK IN ADVANCE!

*3) Share, Post and Like on Social Media*

If you are on Facebook – please like our Seagull Theatre page ([facebook.com/seagulltheatre](https://facebook.com/seagulltheatre)), share our posts and write comments. Facebook is one of the main ways we publicise events and we really need your help to make that successful. Every time you share our posts, they get seen by a lot more people. If you write comments then again, more people see the posts. The more people who see it the more might come to see a show. So please don't just read it – SHARE IT, LIKE IT and COMMENT

*4) Write a review*

We are not just on Facebook! We are also on Tripadvisor. Leaving us a review on TripAdvisor really helps people from outside of Lowestoft find us. It only take a minute or two but it really does make a difference!

*5) Make a regular donation*

If you are feeling particularly generous you can set up a regular donation to the Seagull. We have a number of regular givers who provide a monthly amount to support the Theatre. This money make a real difference to us and has contributed massively to being able to fix up the roof in particular. If you would like to set up a regular donation, let us know and we will give you the bank details you would require.

*6) Offer some time*

Most of our volunteers have started out working in the Box office or behind the bar, but inevitably life gets in the way and we're unable to offer any time for a while. Then sometimes you just drop out of the habit. If that's you and you haven't done a shift for a while or no longer get the texts asking you to volunteer – why not get in touch and get back into it. Even if you only do one shift a month – it would really help.

*7) Deliver some programmes*

The brochure is smaller than it used to be – but there still is one – and getting them out and through some letterboxes would be really really useful.

### **How to get in touch**

There are lots of ways to get in touch – you could ....

- 1) Message us on Facebook – this is often the quickest way to get a response
- 2) Email us at [info@theseagull.co.uk](mailto:info@theseagull.co.uk) - we check these messages most weekdays – but you might have to wait a day or so for a response
- 3) Phone and leave a message – 01502 589726 – again we will get back to you as soon as we can – but it may take a couple of days
- 4) Send us a letter – No one ever does this – but it's possible.

**Lastly.....**

# **THANK YOU**

**We can never say a big enough thank you for all the time and effort which is put into the Theatre by all the fantastic volunteers.**

**Without you there would be no Seagull !!**

**Sammy the Seagull**