

EGMs 1 and 2

Ruth Saxton, Chair of NATD

Following our former chair, Paul Gibbins' call for a dialogue about the direction of our Association, in February the members of NATD held an Extraordinary General Meeting to address our future, as well as some outstanding issues from October's AGM.

We were a small but determined group that met and I think we were all surprised by just how much we covered. It definitely is a time for change and everyone was incredibly open and brave in discussion.

Firstly, Liam Harris shared his succinct Treasurer's report. This showed members what a fantastic job he has already done in organising our finances, which was noted and he was formally thanked for all the work he has done.

After recognising the importance of the next generation of NATD, last year we recruited many new student members. However, this has since caused some problems with the quorum at meetings. So, following a discussion about voting rights for students, it has been agreed that they are too important to remove that privilege, so we are amending the membership category and proposing a rewording of the constitution to take this into account.

We also discussed possible new trustees and the drawing up a document of their duties. In contrast to previous years, these people will be separate from the NEC in order to avoid any potential conflict of interests.

For the main part of the meeting, our Secretary, Gemma (who kindly hosted the event at Hazelwick School), successfully facilitated discussion with a mini-mantle based around an enterprise that was archiving our resources and advising a development agency that wanted to set up a resource centre and support other countries with creative teaching. We therefore had to decide which documents from our history we felt were still relevant and which could be filed. This was a major learning experience for the newer members, as the more experienced members filled in the historic holes in our knowledge and the relevance of past key figures.

Following that, we also looked at just how much members got for their membership fee and whether we could support them more in other ways – a key concept in defining the Association today.

By the end of the meeting, it was obvious that we needed another day of discussion. There had been some significant proposals, including a possible name change for NATD (to the National Association of Learning Through Drama), to reflect the change in direction and desire to attract more non-drama specialists.

It was also clear that there was still some distance to cover in how best we could carry on Dorothy's legacy. Through a developing relationship with Luke Abbott, we are now hoping to officially work more closely with mantleoftheexpert.com and support each other's activities, 'hand in hand'.

The next meeting was held on April 21st. We continued from where we had left off in Sussex and plunged straight back into the meat of the debate. Liam Harris, our Treasurer, constructed a timeline from the inception of NATD to a point in the future, on to which we placed artefacts/documents/notes, where we thought they belonged. Others could then move them as they saw fit. Again this was a fantastic insight into the history of the Association and all the wonderful experiences and support it has offered teachers in the past.

We then looked into the future and explored what was important for NATD and how we can achieve these goals.

Again, by the end of the day, there was plenty of food for thought, as you will see from the notes (which you can find in a linked document in Galleries). We are now looking into how to address the points raised and start to develop NATD into the Association that was envisaged during the session.