



# Front of House Manager's Guidance Notes

09 October 2012

## GUIDANCE FOR FRONT OF HOUSE MANAGERS

### ***When you are appointed FoH Manager we suggest that you:-***

Agree with the hiring society who will be doing the FoH Rota or find out whether appointing FoH staff is the responsibility of the Friends of the Barn. If you are responsible for the rota and general organisation then please refer to *Appendix A* at the rear of this document.

Check who is providing the FoH float and how it will be prepared and check on collection arrangements for money at the end of each evening (NB No cash may be left on the theatre premises overnight).

Agree with the hiring society (or FOBS) who will purchase the ice creams and ice and any other product which becomes in short supply.

Familiarise yourself with the theatre Terms and Conditions [www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk/terms.html](http://www.barntheatreoxted.co.uk/terms.html) .

Familiarise yourself with *Appendix B* relating to the sale of alcohol and raffle tickets

Read the Fire Safety documentation with particular reference to the FoH Manager's responsibilities – a summary of those duties is printed at the end of these notes. *Appendix C*

An important aspect of the Fire Safety regulations is to take a 'walkie-talkie' from the bar store on arriving at the theatre and to switch it on to the agreed frequency (usually channel 7) so that you are immediately in radio communication with the rest of the theatre staff – seek technical help with this from the Duty Manager/Stage Manager/Sound Operator/Lighting Operator if necessary.

#### NOTE:

It is the responsibility of the FoH Manager to ensure that all FoH staff are aware of the Fire Safety procedures, a copy of "BRIEFING FOR FRONT OF HOUSE STAFF" is supplied with this guidance for your use. *Appendix C*

(A megaphone and a large rechargeable torch are kept in the cloakroom cupboard for use as required.)

### **Once you arrive at the theatre for a performance:-**

Ensure that you have a small personal torch

If you did not unlock the front door yourself on arrival, check that it is unlocked from the outside or if you are the first to arrive at the theatre enter through the stage door at the rear.

Use entry lights to guide you to the stage and the Stage Manager's box located stage left through the dressing room.

Turn on the switches in the Stage Manager's box.

Ensure that switches numbered 1 to 7 are all in the 'on' position. (Some will be up and others down)

A Duty Manager is in attendance for all public performances and will give further guidance on matters relating to theatre management and safety.

Each hirer will have a single point of contact known as a Nominated Representative.

## A BEFORE THE AUDIENCE ARRIVES

1. At least 2 hours before 'curtain up' put out the parking barriers – no school parking is allowed after 5 o'clock. Close off access at entrance nearest school. Close off access to the front of the theatre on the driveway side apart from a car width to allow a car to enter, drop off passengers and exit on the school side **immediately**.  
No vehicles except recognised red cross vehicles or ambulances may park on the front forecourt during any production.
2. Put up the two SLOW signs - one hanging on the hook on the post near the 'school side' entrance and one on the hook near the front emergency exit door (*some experienced visiting companies may know this routine and carry it out themselves but newcomers almost certainly will not.*)
3. Remove the chain that is across the external stairs from the gallery.
4. Turn on all lights in the small brown box on the wall to the left of the entrance doors – use 'working' lights on the rocker switch when getting ready and 'rock' to wall lights ready for arrival of audience. You may also need to switch on the foyer a/c unit, if appropriate, which is in the cloaks cupboard behind the Box Office.
5. Check that the Box Office computer is turned on and the programme Ticketsource Toolkit selected. Also ensure that the ticket printer is switched on and has a supply of tickets positioned ready to print
6. Check that switch 7 is on in Stage Manager's box on stage (this switch is UP for on) then switch on all lights in the control room in the bar. If appropriate, switch on air conditioning units also in the control room. (settings for a/c during the performance are monitored and decided jointly by FOH Manager and Duty Manager, please see *Appendix D* at rear of this document) Check also that the closed circuit TVs in bar and foyer are on. (These show the stage performance, or prior to the show and during the interval, theatre programme ads– seek technical help if necessary)
7. Ensure that all the FoH staff are appropriately dressed (*Appendix E*) and familiar with the fire evacuation procedures.
8. Give each programme seller, raffle seller etc a money bag (black bum bags with theatre logo kept in the cloakroom cupboard) plastic dishes are no longer permitted.
9. Check all FoH staff understand their duties.
10. Keep an eye on the Box Office counter as if they are busy you may need to allocate another member of staff to deal with cloaks duty or assist box office staff....be flexible.
11. Display raffle prizes if appropriate.
12. When the car park attendants arrive – one hour before 'curtain up' – issue the reflective safety jackets and give briefing.

One attendant stands at the drive entrance in order to direct drivers to the correct location.

- a) ALL PERSONNEL involved in the performance go to the car park behind the 'Little Barn'
- b) audience only go round to the school side of the theatre
- c) those dropping off performers or audience cross the front of the theatre, drop off passengers and leave immediately on the school side.

The other attendants are positioned one at the corner of the ‘Little Barn’ to separate participants from audience and one on the main car park to assist the audience with parking – ‘drive on/drive off ferry style’.

13. Prepare the bar and ensure all coolers are stocked.
14. Turn on switches for water heater, glass washer and emergency call for disabled toilet in the bar store (*the light in that toilet comes on when main switch 7 is on and then stays on. Should the alarm sound it must be deactivated in the bar store, often the alarm is activated by the person in the toilet in error! Access to this toilet in an emergency is enabled by using a blunt instrument to turn the slot in the front of engaged/vacant indicator.*) Follow instructions for preparing the glass washer for operation – allow at least half an hour for water to heat. Supply floats and ice to staff when they arrive.
15. **It is advisable to make use of the safe mounted in the cloakroom cupboard behind the box office for any money which is not in the immediate care of staff.** (instructions for use are on the top of the safe)
16. Prepare first jug of coffee – one sachet of coffee to a brim full jug of water. (*Experienced staff are often happy to prepare coffee when they arrive.*)
17. Prepare wine cooler with ice and open first bottles of wine. (*Experienced staff are often happy to do this too*)
18. Unlock sweet shop, check stock levels and replenish if required and provide float when staff arrive.
19. Ensure that there is room in the understairs cupboard for buggys and or wheelchairs etc.
20. Check that the blackout curtains are across the auditorium windows.
21. Check that all doors into the auditorium are closed and that the tapes are across the doors from the foyer and the bar to prevent the audience entering the auditorium before the Stage Manager has given the ‘all clear’ (remember the stairs to the gallery). The old entrance door from the foyer on the bar side is no longer in use and should be kept locked – except for an entrance by a performer, or a late arriving member of the audience at your discretion. Also check that the emergency door at the bottom of the gallery stairs is closed.
22. Check with the box office staff whether any wheelchairs are expected. Two spaces are permanently available at the school end of Row A and wheelchairs may be brought in at that side door from the car park. If Row A has been removed to accommodate an orchestra, then the 4 seats on the end of Row B should have been removed by the company to provide wheelchair space. Ensure that 4 plastic chairs are in the control room ready for use on busy evenings if there are no wheelchairs.

## **B PRIOR TO ‘CURTAIN UP’**

1. Check timing of performance with Stage Manager and set the indicator clocks in the bar – alert bar and foyer based staff to interval time. Agree with the Stage Manager what time to open the house.
2. At the appointed time, check with Stage Manager whether audience can be allowed into the auditorium – when given the ‘all clear’ open the doors and retract the tapes.
3. Ring the warning bell, located in store behind Box Office on the wall to left of door, after the loud speaker 2 minute and 1 minute announcements, with two and then one rings. Help to usher the

audience into the auditorium – check whether any patrons are outside on fine evenings! ON TIME STARTS EXPECTED. *If the bar is very crowded you may want to start ‘polite’ warning rings at about 4 minutes using one ring for each minute left, certainly no more.*

4. Ensure that no glasses or drinks (except bottles of water) are taken into the auditorium.
5. Inform the Stage Manager that FoH is clear.
6. Check that all doors into the auditorium are closed with curtains closed too. Remember the door into the gallery.
7. Turn CCTV to show performance and check volume in the bar is correct.

## **C DURING PERFORMANCE**

1. **Monitor noise levels of staff as it is easy to forget that a show is on!**
2. Pick up any litter and make sure that the bar and foyer areas are clean and tidy.
3. Check that the bar staff are preparing interval orders at the appropriate time.
4. Check toilets for cleanliness and supplies of toilet paper and paper towels etc.
5. Put the ice creams in the cooler box ready for sale and provide the ice creams float to the ice cream seller.
1. Be aware of ‘cue’ for end of performance and organise the opening of curtains and doors from the auditorium.

## **D. DURING THE INTERVAL**

1. Provide winning raffle numbers to the Sound Technician if appropriate.
2. At end of interval ring the bell after two minute and one minute loudspeaker announcements (*‘polite’ rings from about 4mins if bar still crowded*)- on fine evenings check on audience who may have gone outside. One ring of the bell for each minute left.
3. Check Ladies toilet queue and suggest use of disabled toilet
4. Ensure that no glasses or drinks (except bottles of water) are taken in to the auditorium.
5. Inform the Stage Manager when FoH is clear.
6. Check all auditorium doors are closed. (*Again, remember door to the gallery*)

## **E. DURING LAST ACT**

1. During last act bring the parking tapes / signs up to the front of the theatre with the exception of the “SLOW” sign by the exit to Bluehouse Lane which must remain until all audience cars have left.

2. During the last act *shut down the bar and, if it is to re-open after the show, keep it closed until the car park is clear. Only the Duty Manager can give the “all clear” for the bar to reopen. (The bar licence is held in the name of the Premises’ Manager, currently Bruce Reed. He will delegate to other licence holders amongst the trustees so that the Duty Manager, usually by agreement with the Front of House Manager, will decide closing time and thereby ‘last orders’ for the bar – failing agreement the Duty Manager’s decision is final.)*
3. If the theatre is fund raising then prepare RED buckets at strategic exit points and arrange for staff or cast to assist with retirement collection.

## **F AT END OF PERFORMANCE**

2. Be aware of ‘cue’ for end of performance and organise the opening of front exit doors and curtains and doors from auditorium.
3. Distribute raffle prizes ensuring that no person under 18 years is awarded a prize containing alcohol.
4. Make sure that all the audience members with cars in the car park are leaving.
5. Ensure that the Sound Technician provides a roving microphone to make announcements to assist in clearing the car park

## **G WHEN THE AUDIENCE HAS LEFT**

1. Check that the bar has been re-stocked ready for the next performance – making sure that stock is correctly rotated to avoid amassing ‘out of date’ stock e.g. at the back of the chillers.
2. Make sure that the bar and all stock storage areas are secure.
3. Follow instructions to switch off glass washer.
4. Turn off the air conditioning switches –remember the separate one for the foyer in the cloaks cupboard.
5. Turn off computer and ticket printer.
6. Turn the lights in the foyer to overhead working lights and switch off the spots and the store room light in the brown box in foyer.
7. Remove all money from safe ready for collection – **NO MONEY TO BE LEFT IN THE THEATRE.**
8. Ensure sweets cupboard is replenished and locked.
9. Check from **inside** that the emergency door at the front of the Theatre – (bottom of stairs to gallery) is closed as it cannot be closed from outside.
10. Replace the chain at the foot of the external stairs
11. Bring the car park signs and barriers into the front lobby.

## **H BEFORE NEXT PERFORMANCE**

1. Tidy bar store; remove bottles, cans and rubbish etc.
2. Check ice and ices.
3. Check enough supplies of tea towels, pens etc.
4. Check fliers in display units.
5. Water foyer flowers.
6. Ensure sufficient stock in bar.

## **I ON LEAVING**

You are free to leave once the audience has left and the tasks listed in E have been completed unless you have agreed to be responsible for securing the theatre overnight.

Lock the front door, and as you leave check from outside that the emergency exit door and the outside bar store door are also securely locked.

**The hiring company is responsible for the security of the theatre – if a company is new to the theatre it is good to check that they have organised this.**

**Tell the hirers Nominated Representative that you are leaving and remind him/her to check ALL outside doors by walking round the outside of the building and testing them before leaving.** (*Members of the company often use exit doors after you have left and leave them open!!*)

***NOTE:- Visiting companies do not have keys to the bar. It is therefore your responsibility to organise the clearance of empty bottles and cans and rubbish and to see that the bar area is clean and ready for the next users.***

## **FEW WEEKS BEFORE THE SHOW**

7 people required to cover bar, bar support, coffee, ices, programmes and sweets.

2 people required as Ushers

2 people required if there is a raffle

3 people required for car park

1 person required for box office

If raffle, do prizes need to be bought or are they coming from cast? – buy tickets if none available  
Ascertain when winning tickets to be announced.

Find out cost of programmes.

Are flowers for foyer organised (spare artificial flowers in foyer cupboard)

## **JUST PRIOR TO SHOW**

Print out schedule of helpers for foyer bar store.

Send schedule to all helpers by email if possible, or post, with thank you giving time of their required arrival  
– remind black or black and white for ladies, DJs for gents (not bar support nor car parkers)

Get float from treasurer – extra may be required for box office

Make up floats for each station – separate bag for each with note of break down of float

Prepare schedule for takings from each station for each performance

Check for publicity for notice boards

Fill containers with fliers if necessary

Check price list for sweets

Tidy store cupboard behind box office – clear for coats, etc.

Get timings for interval and end of performance – alter clock

Stock sweet cupboard, shelves in bar, coolers etc., coffee, tidy shelves and under.

In bar store ensure black sacks, white bin liners, crates, tea towels, paper towel

Four chairs in control room in case needed in wheelchair spaces

Clear understair cupboard in foyer to accommodate wheelchairs or prams

## *APPENDIX B*

### **Alcohol Sales**

#### **Legal requirements**

- In order to work behind the bar, you must be authorised in writing to do so by the Premises Manager, currently Bruce Reed.
- No alcohol in any form or strength can be supplied to or for anyone under 18.
- No alcohol in any form or strength can be supplied to anyone who is already drunk.
- Alcohol sales must stop at 11pm except at a post-show party after a major production when the bar can stay open until midnight subject to the permission of the Premises Manager only.

#### **Barn policies**

- No alcohol may be taken into the auditorium.
- No alcohol can be supplied to be taken backstage if there are people under 18 in the cast or crew.

#### **Raffles**

- Prizes consisting of alcohol must not be awarded to anyone under 18.
- Multiple tickets must not be sold at discount, e.g. “one strip for £1, three strips for £2” is not permissible.

**Front of House Manager - Actions When The Alarm Has Been Activated**

The Duty Manager will take charge and issue all instructions necessary to implement the Emergency Evacuation Procedure

Liaise with the Duty Manager, Stage Manager and the Sound Operator. **This should be done using the wireless radios which should be worn by all except the Sound operator.**

Assist the Duty Manager in evacuating the Theatre and guiding people to the Oxted School Forecourt. Pay particular attention to the Auditorium, Foyer, Bar, Bar Store, Bar Cupboard, Toilets, Disabled Toilet, Car Park and area in front of the Theatre. Assign one member of team to assist patrons in wheelchairs

Notify the Duty Manager of completed evacuation for area of responsibility upon arrival in the Oxted School Forecourt

**BARN THEATRE - FIRE SAFETY**  
**BRIEFING FOR FRONT OF HOUSE STAFF**

The Duty Manager is the designated Fire Coordinator at all performances (responsible for Emergency Evacuation and working with Emergency Services when in attendance).

Fire Marshalls/Wardens are responsible for maintaining a safe environment and assisting in an Emergency Evacuation -

Barn Trustee/Directors at all times when they are present in the theatre for any reason and in any capacity.

Designated theatre staff at performances –  
Duty Manager  
Front of House Manager  
Stage Manager  
Lighting Operator  
Sound Operator

Designated Theatre staff, with the exception of the Sound operator must wear a wireless radio all the time that patrons are present.

Smoking is not permitted anywhere on the Theatre premises.

The fire detection system works automatically via smoke alarms in various locations or by break glass units located adjacent to the exit doors.

With the exception of the rear dressing room, the alarm is a silent system using flashing lights instead of bells.

**Location of Fire Exits** (all have push bar exits)

Front entrance

Door at bottom of internal steps to Gallery

Bar (door at stage end)

Band Room (newest dressing room)

Stage Door (back door)

East Door from Auditorium

East Door from Gallery

The door in the rear of the auditorium (bar side) is not a fire exit and must be kept locked during a performance except for the time when it is being used as a theatrical entrance/exit or to let in latecomers.

## **Emergency Evacuation Procedure**

### **Fire Assembly Point:**

#### **Oxted School Forecourt.**

Theatre staff, crew & cast should be strongly encouraged to go to the assembly point.

Audience are permitted to go home if they wish but not if they need to remove their car from Theatre premises.

### **On Discovering a Fire**

Investigate source and cause of suspected fire.

Attempt to extinguish any small fire using the equipment provided but do not take any unnecessary risks.

If it is impossible or unsafe to extinguish the fire promptly, activate the alarm manually if the automatic system has not operated.

Unless you have specific Emergency Evacuation responsibilities leave the premises.

Dial 999 and notify the emergency services.

If it is a false alarm or the fire has been extinguished there is no need to activate the alarm, notify the emergency services nor evacuate the premises.

Any false alarm or successful extinguishing of a fire must be reported to the Duty Manager immediately.

### **Action When The Alarm Has Been Activated**

Immediately leave the premises and assemble at the Fire Assembly Point.

Evacuate the building even if the alarm stops.

Do not collect personal belongings.

Do not run, remain calm and bring others with you as you leave the premises.

Do not re-enter the building until instructed to do so by the Duty Manager.

No one is permitted to remove their car from the car park until instructed to do so by the Duty Manager.

## APPENDIX D

### Heating and air conditioning controls

There are a number of different power plants controlling the temperature in the Barn.

1. Central heating gas boiler located in the kitchen with a thermostatic control in the dressing room and another in the auditorium.
2. Air conditioning units providing both supplementary heating and cooling located in the auditorium and controlled from combination switches located in the control room at the end of the bar.
3. Air conditioning units providing both supplementary heating and cooling located in the bar and controlled from combination switches located in the control room at the end of the bar.
4. Air conditioning unit providing both supplementary heating and cooling located in the foyer and controlled from a combination switch located in the cloakroom cupboard behind the box office counter.
5. Electric door curtain heater located over entrance doors to foyer and controlled by adjacent high level switch.

❖ The Central heating boiler in the kitchen (1) provides heat from radiators around the entire premises and is regarded as the primary system. Operation is by the programmer located on the rear wall of the kitchen and is simple to adjust.

- Automatic programming is available with daily settings and this is preferable for long term occupation during the winter.
- The thermostat in the dressing room is adjustable to choice but 22 degrees is usual.
- The thermostat in the auditorium is only to be adjusted away from 22 degrees by a Duty Manager.
- All radiators have thermostatic valves and these should not be touched by any person.
- There is also a frost stat to protect the system during extra cold weather but this should not be touched by any person.

❖ Air conditioning systems (2) & (3) provide cooling and supplementary heating and operation to the bar and main auditorium and adjustment should be agreed between the Duty Manager and Front of House Manager before any adjustments are made.

- For cooling during hot summer days and evenings the preferred temperature is 20 degrees
- For heating the preferred temperature is 23 degrees
- For cooling a hot theatre during Spring and Autumn the preferred temperature is 23 degrees

Temperatures can be checked on the small thermostat screen in the control room and it is necessary to keep an eye on these temperatures particularly when the house is busy.



Sometimes it is only necessary to use the air conditioning unit serving the gallery and this is clearly labelled.

Operation of the air conditioning units in cooling mode whilst the main boiler is operating **must** be avoided.

- ❖ Air conditioning system (1) provides cooling and supplementary heating to the foyer and operation and adjustment should be agreed between the Barn Duty Manager and Front of House manager before any adjustments are made. Temperatures can be set similar to units 2 & 3 and personal comfort will confirm the correct settings.
- ❖ Front door air curtain (5) is an obsolete unit but still in working order. It should only be used for short periods of time when the weather is particularly cold. The air conditioning system (1) should be used in preference.

*APPENDIX E*

**Dress code for FoH staff and helpers**

**Car park personnel**

Casual dress with reflective jackets supplied by the theatre.

**Bar Support personnel**

Casual dress.

**FoH personnel**

**Gentlemen** to wear black trousers and jacket in the dress suit style with white long sleeved shirts and bow tie.

**Ladies** to wear smart Black and White ( No T shirts, sportswear or fleece jackets)

**Bar personnel**

**Gentlemen** to wear black trousers with white long sleeved shirts and bow tie  
(Jackets are optional but NO BRACES)

**Ladies** to wear smart Black and White ( No T shirts, sportswear or fleece jackets)