

EQUITY

LONDON SOUTH

Minutes of Equity London South Branch Meeting

13th January 2025

7-9 p.m. • Brixton House

londonsouthbranch@equity.org.uk

<https://www.equity.org.uk/get-involved/find-your-branch/london-south-branch?tab=documents>

Attendance (from RSVPs): Alasdair Hankinson, Amanda Grace, Benjamin Clarke, Dickon Thompson, Fiona Whitelaw, Sule Thelwell (2), Brian Harty, Jenny Bolt (2), Belle Fin, Linda Mathis, Mark Stevenson, Matthew Heywood, Cranks Crankshaw, Neil Kelly, Maria Tyminski, Sarah Finigan, Nicholas Barnes, Tal Profs, Valerie Ebuwa (2)

Zoom Attendance: Su Gilroy, Allan Collins, Christopher Poke, Tony de Souza, West Central Management, Lauren, Vanessa Nitsche

Guest Speakers: Natalie Barker & Hannah Plant (via Zoom)

Apologies:

Updates

- **Palestine Solidarity Demonstration**
 - This Saturday, 18th January, meeting from 11.30 a.m. at W1G 0LD (corner of Margaret St. and Cavendish Square)
 - Equity has been invited to speak as part of a trade union bloc in support of ceasefire & liberation
 - Pop an e-mail to the Branch if you want to march with us!
- **Directing Workshop With Nicole Charles**
 - Saturday, 25th January, 12-3 p.m. at Brixton House
 - £40 subsidised rate for Members
 - 5 spaces left!
 - e-mail Branch to RSVP your spot

Guest Speaker: Hannah Plant – Industrial Officer, Live Theatre, West End & London

- Hannah provided Members with insight into the negotiation process for Equity contracts in her patch
 - every 3-4 years for West End
 - every year for NT & Globe
 - last year's negotiations were supported by the Stand up for 17 campaign, which was largely successful – we may have opportunities to support a campaign this year as a branch
 - **consultations in negotiation periods are open to anyone who has worked on an Equity contract in the relevant venue in the last year**
 - agreements tend to expire in April, so consultations lead to discussion with SOLT, which leads to either a finalised agreement or further campaigning

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- Donmar & Hampstead have moved away from subsidized to bespoke agreements that actually see performers receiving more than their government-subsidised rates!
- **surveys will be going out soon**
- contact Hannah for any questions about Equity contracts for London & West End live engagements: hplant@equity.org.uk
- Members raised concerns including a performance at the Globe where audiences were offered refunds for a show where understudies went on, and the Globe's contracting of educators as storytellers under what may need to be Equity-negotiated contracts.

Natalie Barker – Equity

- Natalie shared information about sending Motions to London AGM, Representing the Branch at Conference, and general union updates.
 - **Please send any motions to the Branch by 5th February to be voted on at our 19th February meeting!**
 - **Please self-nominate as a Representative to Conference by 8th March.**
 - Information about writing Motions and attending Conference was shared by Natalie, and both guides have been uploaded to our Branch website at equity.org.uk !
 - If you have an idea for a fringe event at Conference, Natalie asks that you e-mail her at nbarker@equity.org.uk
- Natalie also shared the primary goals for the union in 2025, including ongoing screen negotiations revolving around Members' rights relating to the use of AI and the July high court dates for Equity's lawsuit against Spotlight.

Discussions on Motions for London AGM

- Ideas floated for Motions included specific support for supporting artists and the need for a specific reporting avenue for harassment and assault at work within Equity staff.
- Members were encouraged to get in touch with any Motion ideas; if the format or submission process is inaccessible to you, we're here to help fit your ideas to standing orders so they can be heard!

Campaigns Report (Maria Tyminski, Campaigns Officer)

- Maria reported on the closure of Applecart Arts, and ongoing movements to save Bethan Green Working Men's Club as a performance space; currently, an open letter is being circulated to ask Tower Hamlets Council to purchase the venue on behalf of council residents.
- Actor at the Centre has reported the sale of Seven Dials Playhouse amidst difficulties getting Trustees to consent to a meeting with Equity Members & the General Secretary.
 - Amanda noted that a recent update included information that the sale went to a performer of considerable reputation who has asked to remain anonymous within the sale.
- We also asked that any members who were on Christmas tours of schools / care homes, or are still awaiting payment for last year's Edinburgh Fringe from Summerhall, to get in touch; Equity is pursuing both of these in the latest mailout from HQ.

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- Also raised was the ongoing campaign to scrap the self-employment penalty; Members shared this penalty means self-employed Equity members under a certain income level cannot access Universal Income because their career is considered a ‘hobby’, while those over the income threshold cannot access UI because they earn ‘too much’.
 - A link to sign this petition is in the Follow-Up e-mail and on the Equity website!

Variety Report (Belle Fin, Variety Officer)

- Belle shared a Variety Report (available in full on our website) that covered several sub-committees of Variety workers including the Storytellers’ Network, the Puppeteers Network, a Childrens’ Entertainers Meeting, and a Variety, Circus, and Entertianers’ Committee Meeting, where priorities are:
 - a working party for cruise open auditions
 - a reporting system for venues at risk
 - abolishing payments required of burlesque performers at auditions
- Belle is working to organize a comedy writing workshop later this year! If you want to get in touch with Belle, you can e-mail laughingcustard@outlook.com

Council Report (Fiona Whitelaw, Chair)

- Fiona shared some highlights from the most recent Council meeting, including:
 - The **co-opting of Jay’s motion to support the Campaign for Democratic and Workers’ Rights in Nigeria**, which has been passed on to the International Solidarity Committee for input
 - Her request that **Equity affiliate publicly with an anti-racist organization or movement** in line with other trade unions
 - The upcoming elections for the General Secretary; Paul Fleming is standing as Council’s nominee, but any Member can stand for election with 50 nominations from Equity Members. Forms are available on the Equity website.
- Fiona’s full Council Report is—you guessed it!—available for download on our London South webpage.

Event Pitches (Amanda Grace, Secretary)

- **Type & Gripe**
 - a monthly, relaxed co-working space for Members to connect in community outside union business
 - will be free or donations-based, always in South London
 - bring anything you want to work on!
 - in the history of ‘Stitch and Bitch’, a hallmark of the feminist movement’s organizing history
- **Global Talent Workshop**
 - bi-annual, facilitated by Amanda & Kenzie
 - for Members & other migrant artists to connect ahead of the process of applying for Global Talent endorsement from the Arts Council

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- *not immigration advice; simply peer support on the Arts Council's endorsement guide*
- donations from Members & pay-what-you-can sliding-scale admission from non-Members will go to Migrants Organise; held at Housmans Bookshop

Member Updates

- **Jay Coward** is appearing in [Hedda Gabler](#) at the **Golden Goose Theatre** from 21st January until the 1st February! This is a queering of the original story, looking at misogyny through the lens of a gay couple.
- **Nicholas Barnes** is Co-Chair of Equity's **Deaf, Disabled & Neurodiverse Committee**. If you'd like to be involved in the work they're doing, or feed into potential Equity policy surrounding working conditions for Deaf, Disabled and Neurodiverse Members, you can e-mail ddmcommittee@equity.org.uk.
- **Amanda Grace** has updated the offerings of the [Little Theatre Library](#), a free-to-use resource based in Southwark.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, February 19th from 7-9 p.m. at Brixton House.