Notes from Sterts Open Meeting Sunday March 3rd 3.00pm at Sterts Studio *(to accompany slide presentation)*

Attended by 80 people

Chair Richard Newton-Chance welcomed everyone. He paid tribute to previous Chair Nick Hart. We are happy that Nick is recovering from an illness which forced him to stand down.

He introduced in person the Trustees whose details are now available on the Sterts website and said that every effort is being made for the governance of Sterts to be transparent. It has been essential for Trustees to have been extremely hands-on during a very difficult time but that in best practice, the Trustees role would eventually be strategic and not operational.

Peter Woodward, Interim Centre Manager spoke briefly about Beast , the large scale Arts Council funded community production which will open the new theatre space and encouraged people to get involved.

Bernice Strickland took the opportunity to appeal for more volunteers expressed her gratitude for the huge voluntary contribution made by the community

The Chair then took questions from the floor:

*Will a dance floor be available?* Yes, a dance floor has been included in the technical specifications.

*Are there plans to extend the season to increase sustainability?* Yes, but the space is essentially open-air and remains unheated but it can be enclosed in bad weather.

*What new activities are planned?* Lots of ideas from the community are coming forward. It’s important to give the newly appointed staff headroom to develop their ideas too. Agreed that there is huge potential to develop Sterts as an educational resource.

*Does Sterts own the site?* Yes, Sterts charity owns the freehold of the four acre site.

*Will parking be improved?* We’ll do our best!

*Will accessibility be improved and will wheelchairs still have to be placed at the back of the auditorium?* There will be level access to rear of the auditorium and allocated spaces and seating. This includes access to the control boxes. There is also improved level access to the whole stage area, including the front of the seating. We will audit the disability access as part of the scheme.

*This is really positive and exciting. People must support! Can we improve publicity?* Yes, we know the current website is poor and we have budgeted for a new one which will improve our profile.

*Not everyone uses Facebook on which Sterts is heavily reliant. Print and poster distribution is very important too?* *Sterts used to print a what’s on guide which was very popular.* Yes, as part of the re-launch we are looking carefully at Sterts brand strategy and aim to make significant improvements.

*Is Sterts registered with South West Film Commission*? Good idea and yes, we are.

*It’s great that there are so many people here today. What about a forum every couple of months to gather ideas from the community?* If you’re a member you’re invited to an Annual general Meeting every year. Also , in line with Sterts’ charity constitution, members can call a meeting of members at any time.

*Where will costumes be stored?* A new costume storage area behind the theatre is planned.

*Are there plans to involve local schools?* Yes , local schools already benefit and the new facilities will increase the opportunities

*Have we consulted widely on the technical installation?* We have been working with Matt Hoyle, Head of Technical and Wardrobe at Plymouth theatre Royal who is giving his time to advise us and recommend the right installation for us. With respect, it’s important to stress that we have to spend the COF grant by the end of September so there is some urgency to get on with the job and we have not been able to consult with the community on every detail.

*Other points :*

*Wayne Strickland questioned paying to participate in Beast on top of a regular donation to Sterts*

*Anne Sturrock said that this is a really exciting achievement and all involved should be congratulated. It’s in line with the original vision for Sterts. Although we certainly need more toilets and to upgrade the café and kitchen we can think imaginatively how to achieve this. In the past , installing The Gallery enabled more toilets to also be provided!*

*Tracy Kerr offered to carry out a Bio-Diversity audit on the site.*

The Chair concluded the meeting with a quote from Cornwall Councillor Louis Gardner.

*“This well respected and much-admired*

*community theatre space will once again be able to*

*inspire our young people to get involved with creativity*

*and the arts within their own locality, making culture and*

*the connection to heritage more accessible to those who*

*may not otherwise have the opportunity to participate.”*