



New Members Induction to Axstane Players

Dear New Member

Welcome to the Axstane Players! We are a relatively small, friendly, welcoming amateur dramatics company, based in Farningham (about 70 members). We try to ensure we include all new members in our conversation at refreshment breaks and answer any questions you may have so don't be shy – come along!

When you joined the Axstane Players you will have received a Welcome Pack for New Members, the Rules of Membership and the Child Protection Policy.

The Welcome Pack includes the following information: -

- a. Membership & Cost
- b. Your Committee
- c. Annual General Meeting
- d. Rehearsals and Productions
- e. Social
- f. Chaperoning
- g. Charities

The purpose of this Induction letter is to give further information about the logistical organisation of the Axstane Players and our productions. For example, the roles involved in a production, where to find things and how to go about organising something! It aims to help you get used to being part of Axstane Players.

2. Farningham Village Hall

All rehearsals, set building and productions take place in Farningham Village Hall, High Street, Farningham - unless otherwise specified by a producer. There is usually plenty of parking for Axstane Members both on a Sunday morning, at rehearsals and productions, but parking on productions can be tight for the audience.

Keys to the Village Hall are usually with the current director and the Village Hall Representative – Terry Payne and they will open the hall and lock up for all rehearsals, set builds and productions.

The first person into the building will usually turn on the lights, turn on heating and the hot water boiler so a cup of tea will be available later.

They will also unlock the Axstane cupboard which contains the keys to the other cupboards required and to the upstairs room where costumes and props are kept.

3. New Productions

The Welcome Pack mentioned that we tend to put on three productions every year - a pantomime in January/February followed by a play/musical revue in June and then generally a play in October.

As well as the on-stage cast, there is plenty of work for everyone in preparation for a production. Every production needs: -

- A producer/director – Axstane members can volunteer to become the producer/director for a future production. They should speak to the Production Rep – Delma. We also have a Production Handbook which gives step by step guidance on how to produce a show for Axstane Players.
- For musicals, there tends to be a music director. The production may be supported by a pianist, small band or by backing tracks.
- Stage Manager and stage crew – for all productions you need a stage manager to ensure set and props are available as required.
- Set-building - once the rehearsals have begun, we have set-building every Sunday in the run up to our productions from 10.00am until 1pm, where there is always plenty of help needed: –
 - painting e.g. sets, backdrop, props
 - set and prop building e.g. houses, fences, washing machines etc.
 - preparing lighting e.g. spot lighting, stage lighting

Please come forward to help out whatever your skills.

- Costumes - on a Sunday morning costumes are also made as necessary.
- Lighting and sound technicians
- Prompt

4. The Axstane Roles

Producer/Director

A Producer is the anchor to the production. He/she is responsible for all tasks being completed and targets being met, whether this is by delegating work to others or doing it themselves.

A Director does exactly what you may think. He/she directs the movement and speed of people on the stage. Everything the audience sees the Director will probably have choreographed at rehearsals.

At Axstane many Directors also take the producer's chair for a production.

Musical Director

The Musical Director is responsible for sourcing all the music which will be used during a performance and, in liaison with the director, responsible for rehearsing these musical items with the cast during rehearsals.

Stage Manager and Stage Crew

The Stage Manager is responsible for all stage activity and the running of the performances. They are responsible for evacuation of cast and backstage crew in event of an emergency.

There will usually be a stage crew who are tasked to move scenery under the Stage Manager's direction.

Set Building

The size of the set building task can vary depending on the production being put on e.g. building of houses, staircases, wallpapering, creation of fireplaces etc.

The director will always be on hand to provide clear guidance on how they want the set to look, taking into account restrictions of size and practicality of movement.

It is useful to have people who have skills in basic DIY or woodwork, carpentry, painting, electrical etc. – if you have these skills or are interested in learning them, please come along to help out. We can provide tools, but feel free to bring along if you'd prefer.

Costumes

There tends to be a lead for each production for costumes who confirms with the producer what costumes are required.

Axstanes has many costumes upstairs that have been used in previous productions so wherever possible these will be reused but may need alterations or repairs or costumes may need to be created from scratch.

There is a variety of sewing required from basic stitching – sewing tassels on a carpet, to making dresses from scratch for dames! All are welcome though, either sewing by hand or by machine. We can provide a sewing machine but feel free to bring your own!

Lighting and Sound Technicians

The lighting team are responsible for the design and rigging of lighting for the production and a lighting operator will operate the lights at performances.

There will also be a sound engineer who is responsible for setting up the sound effects and microphones and operating them during the production.

Prompt

The prompt will attend rehearsals and performances to assist the cast with any necessary reminders of their lines.

Treasurer

The Treasurer will work with the Director to discuss any potential costs and budgetary requirements for a production. He will then capture details of any expenditure on items bought specifically for the production e.g. material for costumes, paint for set-building, props etc.

Publicity Representative

The Publicity Representative will ensure that the production is promoted via social media on the website, twitter, Facebook and via fliers attached to emails to all Axstane Members and the Mailing List. We will also keep Members up to date via letter as well as not everyone has an email account!

We also visit local Rainbows and Brownies in our panto costumers to encourage sales of tickets.

Box Office

The Box Office works out how many tickets there are to sell based on the amount of space available in the hall – depending if there is a band or pianist or props in the hall that may take up seating space.

People are then able to purchase tickets via the Box Office’s dedicated mobile telephone and be allocated specific seats.

Front of House Manager

This role encompasses door management and entry management, showing people to seats, resolving queries about seating, ensuring hall lights are off for performances, liaising with stage manager and sound/lighting to advise when the audience is ready for play to start (or resume after interval). Also responsible for evacuation of the audience in the event of emergency.

5. **Summary**

We wrote this Induction pack as we’re conscious that many of Axstane Members have been with the Players for many years and so know how it all works, but there are also many of us who are fairly new and would like to understand more! Please speak to another member if there is anything you would like explained and speak to the Secretary if there is anything you would like added to this pack so we can help people to navigate their way around the Axstane Players smoothly!