



Membership Secretary Report AGM 2026

Membership Secretary's Report

I'm delighted to report that membership of The Bancroft Players continues to go from strength to strength.

Over the last year our membership has grown from **184 to 255 members**—an increase of **71 members**, or almost **39%**. That is a tremendous achievement and reflects the continued enthusiasm for what we do as a society.

Our membership now stands at:

- **Full Members:** 165
- **Big Spirit:** 26
- **Juniors:** 38
- **Friends of The QMT:** 26

A significant contributor to that growth continues to be our **New Members Open Evenings**, with around **70% of attendees choosing to join** the society. That's an excellent conversion rate and demonstrates that when people come through our doors, they see something they want to be part of. We've also welcomed a healthy number of new members through our audition process, alongside many returning members renewing their subscriptions, which is equally encouraging.

One initiative we've introduced this year has been to run **Front of House training alongside our New Members Open Evenings**. Hosted by **Jackie and Paula**, these sessions give both new and existing members the opportunity to learn—or simply refresh—the various Front of House roles that are so vital to the smooth running of our theatre. I'd like to extend my sincere thanks to Jackie and Paula for giving their time and expertise, and I'd encourage any member who would like a refresher to come along to a future session.

Of course, attracting new members is only one part of the story. Retaining them is just as important. During the year, **105 members chose not to renew**. Some of those were youth and junior members naturally moving on, but the majority were adult members.

I carried out a small survey of former members. Whilst the response rate was very low and certainly not statistically significant, the most common reason people gave for leaving was simply that there wasn't a show they wanted to be involved in at that time. That perhaps raises a broader question for us as a society: how do we continue to build a community where membership is about more than just appearing on stage? Whether people perform, volunteer Front of House, work backstage, help behind the scenes,



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support our fundraising, or simply enjoy being part of our theatre family, we want everyone to feel there is always a place for them at The QMT.

Creating opportunities for members to come together outside of productions is an important part of that. Although membership socials haven't happened quite as regularly this season, largely due to the time and effort required elsewhere, the events we did hold were a huge success. Our **80th Anniversary Summer Party**, brilliantly organised by **Claudia and her team**, the **Christmas Quiz**, the **Big Spirit Fundraiser**, and our **New Season Launch Night** all attracted fantastic attendance. The Launch Night was particularly encouraging, as for the first time we promoted it beyond our existing membership, drawing a great crowd of both familiar and completely new faces. These events are an important reminder that our society is built on friendship, shared experiences and a love of theatre, not just the productions themselves.

We also continued our involvement with **Hitchin Creative**, helping to showcase The Bancroft Players right in the heart of our town. It's a fantastic opportunity to engage with the local community, raise awareness of everything we do, and keep The QMT firmly in the minds of potential audiences, volunteers and future members. My thanks go to **Lewis** for flying the flag for the society and representing us so brilliantly throughout the event.

Looking ahead, we're already planning another exciting programme of social activities. We're delighted to welcome back **Pint Sized Plays** under the leadership of **Martin Hancock**, and we're also looking forward to a **Line Dancing Evening** hosted by **Evie O'Connell**, which promises to be something a little different and a lot of fun.

Finally, I'd like to thank everyone who has joined, renewed their membership, welcomed new faces, volunteered their time, or encouraged others to get involved over the past year. Membership is about so much more than a name on a list—it's about creating a thriving, welcoming community that keeps this wonderful theatre alive.

If we all continue to make people feel welcome, encourage them to get involved in whatever way they can, and celebrate everything that makes this society special, I'm confident we'll continue to grow not just our membership, but our theatre family for many years to come.