



Rules for Directors

Notes

Except where context makes it clear that another interpretation should be used:

“The Players” means Chichester Players.

“The Board” means the Board of Directors and Trustees of the company and charity that is Chichester Players.

“Officer” means the Chairman, Secretary, or Treasurer of Chichester Players.

“Member” means a paid up or honorary full adult member of Chichester Players in good standing.

“Director” in the singular means a person appointed by the Board to direct a play for Chichester Players.

“Producer” means a member of the Board who is appointed to oversee a production for Chichester Players and take non-artistic business decisions out of the hands of the Director.

These rules are produced for all directors, long established members and newcomers alike, who wish to direct a play for the Players, and are the result of careful consideration by the Board of what we have done well, and what we can improve on, from previous plays.

The rules are not absolutely set in stone, and are there to help, not to stifle, and the Board is therefore willing to consider any request to do something different, if the director in question gives a good reason. However, unless and until the Board has given approval, we expect these rules to be followed.

1. Choice of Play

- 1.1 All members are welcome to suggest plays for production. They should do so in the first instance by completing Form CP1, available from the Play Selection Committee or the Secretary.
- 1.2 No play will be chosen without a play reading taking place first. The Social Secretary will arrange for a reading.
- 1.3 Plays normally take place before Easter, at the end of June, and at the end of November, with the possibility of a further production at the end of August/start of September. No play will be chosen unless the ‘time slot’ has been advertised to all members for their suggestions.
- 1.4 New members are welcome to put forward plays for production, but we encourage them to get experience of the group first if possible, for example as an actor or assistant director.
- 1.5 Inexperienced potential Directors will be expected to have an experienced and willing assistant director in place by this stage.

2. Producer

- 2.1 The Director will appoint a Producer who will be a member of the Board.
- 2.2 The Producer will take any business, rather than strictly artistic, decisions; matters which are of a combined artistic and business nature will be decided by the Director and Producer together.
- 2.3 Where the Director and Producer are unable to reach an agreement, they should contact an Officer for adjudication.

3. Plays Still in Copyright

- 3.1 The Director will comply with all terms and conditions of any licence issued by the publishers or author's agent of any plays which are still in copyright, for instance any prohibition of unauthorised changes to the script.
- 3.2 The Director should not distribute copyright scripts in any form other than that which is published; these may be library play sets or specially purchased copies, but where the cast might be expected to pay, this should be made clear at the audition stage, to all those attending.
- 3.3 Where the Director considers that s/he has a valid reason for acting other than in accordance with either 3.1 or 3.2 above, the Producer should be informed immediately, in order that the rest of the Board can discuss the matter fully; the Director should attend any meetings on that subject. The decision of the Board must be followed.

4. Auditions

- 4.1 All auditions should be completely open, with no pre-casting of any part.
- 4.2 Auditions should be conducted with all other people auditioning able to watch/listen in the same room – we believe this format is most effective and enjoyable.
- 4.3 As well as the Director, there will be an audition panel of at least two other people, one of whom should be the Producer. The rest of the panel cannot overrule the Director, but are there both to ensure impartiality, and to provide experience and different points of view.
- 4.4 Where an assistant director is appointed, for instance for an inexperienced Director, that assistant director should also sit on the audition panel.
- 4.5 No member of the audition panel should audition for any role in the play. If, after auditions have been completed, all members of the panel feel that no person has been seen who is suitable for a particular role, and that a member of the panel is the best person to play that part, an Officer of Chichester Players, who is not a member of the panel, should be contacted to give approval; this approval will not be automatic.

5. Production Team

- 5.1 Before starting rehearsals, the Director should appoint a 'production team', consisting of at least the Director, Producer, Stage Manager, set designer, and heads of the props, wardrobe, sound and light departments.
- 5.2 The production team should hold meetings at least once per month, called by the Producer, and inviting any Officers to attend those meetings if they wish. The front of house manager, poster designer, programme designer and publicity officer should also be invited once they have been appointed.

6. Budgets

- 6.1 Whilst making the submission to the Play Selection Committee, the Director will agree a budget with the Treasurer; the Director should be aware that the submission Form CP1 requires a signature acknowledging that unauthorised expenditure may be charged to him.
- 6.2 Ticket prices, including concessionary rates, if any, are to be set by the board. Likewise, no commitment to any other charities should be made without the prior and explicit consent of the board.
- 6.3 In conjunction with the Producer, the Director will ensure that all members of the production team are aware of the limits of their budgets, and that the Producer is familiar with the full budget in detail.

- 6.4 If the Director becomes aware that any aspect of the production is likely to exceed its budget, he will contact the Producer and try to find money from other areas which are anticipated, or can be made, to be under budget.

7. Board Meetings

- 7.1 If at all possible, the Director should attend (for 15-30 minutes) the board meetings, which take place on the second Wednesday of each month, to provide a brief update on progress. The board are there to help, and add experience/ideas to every play, and need information to be able to do so.
- 7.2 The Director should also provide a 'wrap-up report' for the Board after each production, detailing what was done well, and what we could improve on as a group in future.

8. Rehearsals

- 8.1 The first rehearsal should ideally be a read-through, at which the actors introduce themselves. Whilst this is not essential with a small cast play, it is highly recommended for larger productions, or those involving new members. Any crew who can attend and make themselves known should also be encouraged to do so.
- 8.2 While we appreciate that late changes are sometimes necessary, a rehearsal timetable should be produced and sent to all involved at least a week in advance of each rehearsal. Actors should not be required to attend rehearsals 'on spec' on the basis that they might/might not be needed.
- 8.3 The Director should emphasise the importance of line-learning from the start of the production, fix a deadline for books to be put down, and, if necessary, replace actors who fail to make an effort to learn lines. Any prompt chosen should be asked to attend rehearsals from at least the 'books down' point, both to help the actors and to practice prompting.
- 8.4 For rehearsals, the Studio key should be collected from the Cinema Box Office and returned to it. On Mondays when rehearsals take place on stage, and during the run, the Director should collect the rear bar door key from the Cinema Box Office and ensure that after the rehearsal/performance the NPC is cleared and locked, that the alarm is activated using the code on the key tag and that the key is then returned through the Box Office letterbox.

9. Cast Illness

- 9.1 In the event that a member of the cast becomes ill (barring minor colds!) at any point within two weeks of the production date, the director should appoint an understudy and ask him/her to attend rehearsals – if necessary, an Officer should be able to suggest somebody suitable. Hope for the best, but plan for the worst!

10. Production Week

- 10.1 The 'get in' usually takes place on the Saturday before production week. To make this as smooth as possible, co-ordination with all those involved (particularly the stage manager and sound/lighting team) is essential in advance.
- 10.2 To ensure proper practice for everyone – allowing actors, stage management and lighting teams to get used to each other – there must be at least two full run-throughs on Sunday/Monday/Tuesday prior to the first night, in addition to any 'cue-to-cue' technical run.
- 10.3 The normal practice is for the first show to be on Wednesday night, with the last show at Saturday night. Anyone wanting to extend/reduce the standard run should discuss this with the Board.

10.4 The 'get out' has to be completed by lunchtime on the Sunday following the last performance, to fit in with New Park Cinema. Again, co-ordination of jobs and people attending in advance is essential.

11. Personal Contacts

11.1 Where the Director relies on personal contacts for any aspect of the production, full details of these must be shared with at least the Producer and Stage Manager, to prevent problems should the Director become incapacitated.