



WANSTEAD PLAYERS NEW MEMBERS WELCOME PACK

Last updated: SEPTEMBER 2018

This document should answer all of your initial questions about being a member of the Wanstead Players



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1. WELCOME TO THE WANSTEAD PLAYERS

1.1 Welcome!

Thank you for becoming a member of the Wanstead Players.

Hopefully you decide to stay with us for many years to come.

This pack has been put together to ensure that you have all the info that you need to get you started within the group. It isn't designed to be absolutely comprehensive, but should at least cover the main points. After reading through this document, if you have any further questions, please do get in touch with a member of the committee who will be happy to provide answers (and get the pack updated if we've missed out any key information).

Please note that this document provides **general guidelines** and will be superseded, per production, by any communications sent out by the Committee or the relevant Director or Production team.

1.2 Who are we?

We are the Wanstead Players! To read the full history of the group and find out about our past productions, please visit the [website](#), but the potted history is that we were founded in 1923 and have performed at various venues over the years, most recently (since 1976) at the Kenneth More Theatre, Ilford (both in the Main Theatre and the Cowan Studio).

1.3 Who's in the Committee?

The current committee is as follows:

Chairperson:	Janet Macpherson
Secretary:	Lindsey Sculfor
Treasurer:	Jonathan Meyer
Production Officer:	Phil Clarke
Technical Officer:	Brian Seaton
Publicity Officer:	Becky Brown
Communications:	Jenni Allen
General Officer:	Liz Wheatley

1.4 How do I get in touch with the Committee?

The easiest way is to email us: wanstead.players@gmail.com



1.5 Where do we perform?

Mainly at the Kenneth More Theatre, Ilford (both in the Main Theatre and the Cowan Studio) but we do perform at various venues and events (including local festivals and drama festivals).

1.6 How often do we perform?

We usually perform at the Kenneth More Theatre three times a year – in late January, May and October
The Waltham Forest Festival of Theatre (which celebrates one-act plays) happens in March.

1.7 Do I need to be a member to audition for a production?

The current process is that you do not need to be a member to audition, but you will need to be a member to perform on stage with us. (There are very few exceptions to this rule.)

1.8 What does it cost?

The current outlay is:

Annual Membership Fee: £40 (£25 unwaged/concession)

Show Participation Fee: £25 (minimum) (£12.50 unwaged/concession - minimum)

Non-Acting Membership: £10

If you join the company for the October production as a new (not returning) member, your membership will carry over into the following year. Please note that this only applies once and in this situation.

The Show Participation Fee stated is a minimum fee. The fee will depend on the show and its production requirements, which will change on a show-by-show basis.

This will be communicated to all at the auditions.

You need to be a fully paid-up member of the society to perform as a cast member of a production. (Crew are not normally asked to pay a participation fee.)

Please note, to hire the main Kenneth More Theatre stage costs thousands of pounds for the week, which can be challenging to cover. Other drama groups may have different pay structures, but this is usually reflective of the cost to hire the venues in which they perform.

Please transfer funds to: *Account Name:* Wanstead Players; *Sort Code:* 20-52-74; *Account No.:* 30917508

1.9 How do I keep up-to-date with what's going on?

Make sure that we have your current/active email address and mobile phone number.

Add wanstead.players@gmail.com to your contacts list to ensure our emails don't go into your spam folder.

We will invite you to the WhatsApp group.

Please also follow/like our Facebook page (and we will invite you to the private Facebook page).

We send out emails and newsletters as our main forms of communication, but do also utilise the other methods.



1.10 Can I be a member of other drama groups?

Of course, you can! The only thing to remember is that it's standard etiquette that once you are cast, you do not drop out of a show in order to perform in another show (or for any other foreseeable event).

If you want to perform in several shows with over-lapping rehearsal periods, if you feel you have time, then that is not an issue. However, if there is the possibility of rehearsal-clash or unavailability because of this, it is courteous to raise this with the Director before auditioning, and also to check with the Director, post-casting, if you wish to accept something else as well.

It's not fair to the cast or the group in general to drop out of a production in order to perform in another production. Please remember, the drama community is relatively close-knit and this sort of thing is remembered and may affect your chances in being cast in the future.

Similarly, please take into account the size of the role/s involved and how much time you have to commit. If you have any concerns, or if this sort of thing is a possibility, let the Director know at the auditions so that they can take on this risk, if they so choose.

However, please don't let any of the above worry you! It is really just to here to highlight a potential issue and we would be remiss if we didn't mention it.

We all know that there will be unexpected events where you may have to drop-out of a Production. That's just life. Please know that everyone is very understanding of each other's life events and you will have all the support you need. If this does happen to you, please let the Director know as soon as possible so that other arrangements can be made and so that you can get on with what you need to do.

1.11 Will I get cast in a lead role (any role) straight away?

It's possible, but similarly it's not necessarily likely. If you're completely unknown to anyone in the group and no-one's ever seen you perform, the Director may not feel comfortable taking the risk in giving you a large part. If this does happen, please don't let this put you off, but instead take the opportunity to show what you can do.

Similarly, if you don't get cast at all, please consider assisting with the production in some way: come along to rehearsals and get to know people. There are inevitably absentees at some rehearsals and you could assist by reading in and showing what you can do.



2. AUDITIONS

2.1 How do I find out about auditions?

You will receive at least one email from us announcing audition information. This usually follows directly after a previous show has closed (but not always).

Communications are also posted on our website, in our WhatsApp group and a Facebook Event is also created.

2.2 What is the audition process?

There is no standard audition process and it is up to the Director and the Production team as to how they wish to run their auditions, but these will be communicated to you per production.

It is most common to hold casting-readings, where we read through the play as a group, on a couple of nights, but some auditions include movement and/or set pieces.

If you are not able to make the listed audition dates, it is usually possible to arrange a separate audition, at the discretion of the Director and the Production team.

Once casting decisions have been made, the Director will communicate to all individually, both successful and unsuccessful. Casting decisions are usually made based not only on how well you read, but a number of other factors, including how your interpretation/voice/energy fits with the rest of the cast and how well you take direction (within the audition, if you are asked to do so).

If you aren't cast in an on-stage role there is still plenty to do in order to assist with the production and without people to prompt, stage-manage, design/make costumes, source props, operate lights/sound, volunteer front-of-house, the show won't go on. We hope that all in the group are happy to support back-stage so that Wanstead Players continues to be successful. (Training is provided, so please speak up if you'd like to shadow someone or learn their role.)

In rare cases where pre-casting has taken place, this will be communicated before the audition starts.



3. REHEARSALS

3.1 Where do we rehearse?

We generally rehearse at the Scout Hut of St. Barnabas Church, Woodford, Snakes Lane East, IG8 7HX

Some Directors also call extra rehearsals at their houses, or other locations (depending on the challenges of the play) and this is also agreed with and arranged around the cast.

3.2 How do I get there?

The Scout Hut is very near Woodford Station (on the Central Line) the 275 Bus Route (from St. James Street Station in Walthamstow to Barkingside).

There is also a car park at the back of the church which we are allowed to use, and usually has plenty of space, as well as further parking available on Snakes Lane East (which is not currently metered during rehearsal hours).

3.3 When do we rehearse?

Standard rehearsal nights are Monday and Thursday evenings. You may not be called for every rehearsal. This depends upon the rehearsal schedule as drawn-up by the Director.

A common format is to have the call time as 7:45pm for an 8pm prompt start.

During the 15 mins, the stage is set up, people make tea/coffee and have a catch-up and general notices are given.

Rehearsals then start at 8pm and run on till 10pm. The timings / formats of the rehearsals, including breaks etc. are at the discretion of the Director and the Production team.

(Sometimes rehearsals may over-run slightly.)

It is also usual to have some Sunday rehearsals in the run-up to show-week, including a dress-rehearsal on the preceding Sunday.

During show-week you will be called every evening, so make sure you are available for this before auditioning.

3.4 How long is the rehearsal period?

We usually start rehearsing for the next show once the previous one has finished.

So the May show starts rehearsing in February, the October show starts rehearsing in June and the January show starts rehearsing in November.



3.5 Are there refreshments?

There are tea/coffee-making facilities as well as biscuits stored in a big plastic box in the Scout Hut.

Within the plastic box lives a small pink pig, in which you are asked to contribute monies in order to fund the purchasing of tea/coffee/milk/biscuits/etc. Please remember to put some money into the pig!

We also make sure that we wash-up and tidy everything away at the end of each rehearsal.

4. SHOW WEEK

4.1 When is the dress rehearsal?

The pre-get-in dress rehearsal will have taken place on the Sunday before show-week.

This is usually somewhere between 10am-2pm or even 12pm-4pm (at the discretion of the Director/Production team)

The theatre dress rehearsal is on the Wednesday evening, but you might wish to rehearse in costume on other nights too (assuming that the stage isn't wet or there aren't other considerations). It's a good idea to at least rehearse in your character's shoes or with any props or costume which might require practice.

Production photographs are often taken during the dress rehearsal and, depending on copyright, the production may be filmed. There are also sometimes audience members at the dress rehearsal.

As a member of the group, you will have agreed to the taking of publicity photos/filming in general, but you will be asked each time as a matter of courtesy.

4.2 When am I required during show week?

The cast and crew are required every night of show-week.

Monday of Show-week is the 'Get-in'. This is where the set is constructed, props/furniture organised and placed, and the stage is painted etc.

As many of the cast as possible (and others – it's usually an 'All hands' call) are called to the theatre at around 10am in order to help lift and shift, hold, sweep, carry, paint, sort, make tea, etc. If you are helping with this, bring gardening gloves – it makes things much easier.

For the rest of the week, the call is usually around 6.30pm on every day, except Saturday, where the call is around 2pm (as there is usually a matinee).



Monday evening is usually the technical rehearsal, which might be a full rehearsal or might be a cue-to-cue, depending on how much of the lighting / sound / etc. has been set during the day.

Tuesday evening is usually a full run in the space, sorting out any blocking issues and any other concerns

Wednesday evening is the dress rehearsal (with full makeup/wigs/costume/props as required) to check that everything is as it should be

The show is then performed on Thursday evening, Friday evening, Saturday afternoon and Saturday evening.

People tend to bring/buy dinner between the two Saturday performances.

There is sometimes a Friday-night meal and often a cast-party, which may take place on the Saturday night. This depends on the respective Director / Cast / Production team. If you want there to be a party then make sure it gets organised!

4.3 What are the standard Performance times?

Show times are usually 7:30pm for evening performances and 3pm for the Saturday Matinee.

4.4 How do I get into the Theatre during show week?

There is a stage door at the Kenneth More Theatre, opposite Ilford Library. Press the buzzer and someone should let you in. Make sure that you tick your name on the call-sheet so that the Stage Manager can check who has arrived.

4.5 How do I get to the Theatre?

You can take the train to Ilford station and walk, or there are multiple bus routes that run right to (and around) the theatre. However, you might prefer to drive or get a lift from one of your new-found Wanstead Players friends.

4.6 Is there anywhere to park at the Theatre?

The KMT does have a car park, but each cast is restricted to a maximum of 5 cars each evening. How this is allocated is up to the Director / Production team. It is also a challenge to find your way into the car park, so check this with someone before attempting it!

On the evenings of a show it is worth noting that the parking bays and single-yellow lines outside the theatre all become 'free' at 6.30pm, so if you time it right, you should have no problem.



However, there are several multi-storey car-parks around that are reasonable, and some also free, if you know where/when to go. If you have any questions about this, please talk to a member of the Committee or your fellow cast-members.

5. SOCIALS

5.1 What social events do the Wanstead Players hold?

Throughout the year there are some regularly held events which are:

- New Year Coffee Morning
- Summer Barbecue
- Fireworks Party

However, other occasional events are also arranged.

Other events include:

- Play-reading evenings
- Picnics
- Meals

If there's an event you'd like to arrange, please let the committee know and we will support you as best we can.

If there are any burning questions not covered in this document, please let us know and we will update it!

Once again, welcome to the Wanstead Players!