

THE NEW QUORNDON SHAKESPEARE SOCIETY

FRONT OF HOUSE

Guidance and rules

A Front of House Steward is a 'front line' representative of the Society and is therefore expected to meet and greet the public in a manner that reflects the Society's high standards. Stewards should wear an NQSC badge to identify their position and dress appropriately. (Preferably in black and with an NQSC T-shirt.)

Ideally there should be a Front of House Manager (ie someone 'in charge') and two assistants each night. ('Front of House Stewards' or 'Staff'.) Their main function is to ensure the safety of the audience, cast and helpers at a public production, and also to enable the audience to enjoy their experience. Any unauthorised NQSC members in the Hall should be asked to purchase a ticket. There should also be a Ticket Seller who ensures that each member of the audience has a ticket, deals with tickets in envelopes and takes money at the door. The Front of House Manager should check that his/her Staff know their duties and that the following 'rules' are covered.

Before the production begins:

1. The Front of House Staff should be at the Hall at least one hour before curtain up, in order to complete all preparations. The auditorium seats must be put out in the manner required by the Director, together with tables etc if appropriate. All aisles and gangways must be kept clear.
2. The Ticket Seller or cast should advise FOH Staff in advance if any audience member will be using a wheelchair, and a suitable space should be allocated. Seats may not normally be reserved except where tables are used or where there are disabled or very elderly people, press or distinguished 'guests'. In the latter case, 'reserved' notices may be placed on selected seats. (Note: these should be properly printed and not scruffily hand-made.) The Ticket Seller should arrange for a small table to be placed at the entrance of the Hall, with the necessary cash box, float and reserved tickets. Any cash should be secured during and after a performance.
3. The temperature of the Hall should be assessed and the heating adjusted if necessary. (The Village Hall controls are in the kitchen.)
4. Programmes should be placed on every other seat before the audience enters the Hall, unless they are to be sold on the night by FOH staff.
5. According to Health and Safety Regulations, no more than 100 people in total should occupy the Village Hall premises. (This includes all NQSC personnel as well as the audience.) Sharon will advise on numbers for Rawlins. No extra people at the door should exceed this number.
6. Stewards should familiarise themselves with the location of the fire extinguishers and their use, and read the safety instructions displayed in the kitchen.

7. Ensure you know where the First Aid Kit is stored/available and that you can identify an appropriate person with knowledge of first aid. (There are several qualified members of the Society.) Check that the toilets are clean and that there is toilet paper.
8. The use of a mobile phone is advisable, in case it becomes necessary to contact the relevant Emergency Services. The Stage Manager may wish to liaise with you by intercom, in which case you should know how it works. A torch is also useful in case of emergency.
9. See that the curtains on the stage are closed and all cast and crew are backstage before the audience is admitted, unless advised to the contrary.

Members of the audience are normally allowed into the venue half an hour before curtain up – this should be agreed with the Director/Stage Manager.

Two or three minutes before curtain up -

10. Encourage the audience to take their seats quickly. Only the Front of House Stewards should normally be allowed to stand in the auditorium during a production. Members of the audience who arrive late should be shown to a seat at a suitable point in the performance, and transactions such as payment for tickets should be dealt with during the interval.
11. The Front of House Manager or Stage Manager will give an announcement along these lines: *'Tonight's performance will begin in three minutes. Please ensure that all mobile phones and pagers are turned off and that you are familiar with the fire exits. Please remember that photography is not allowed in the Hall. Thank you.'* You may also be given a separate warning, (usually by inter-com) when it is almost time to start the performance. All Stewards should then sit by the main entrance and the side (fire) doors.
12. In the case of an emergency evacuation, the Front of House Staff must direct the audience out of the building in an orderly fashion using the safest possible route, offering assistance where necessary. The stage curtains should be closed in the case of fire.

The Front of House Staff should remain in the Hall at all times when the audience is present.

At the end of the performance: -

13. As the audience is leaving, stand by the main exit offering 'thanks' and pleasantries.
14. When the audience has vacated the Hall, the chairs/tables have to be put away in the appropriate places. The chairs may be left in place for the next performance only if the Hall is not being used the following day.
15. The main floor of the Hall should be swept clean each night and all rubbish removed from the premises in the bin bags provided. All FOH areas should be completely cleared at 'Get Out'. Check that the kitchen is left clean and tidy.
16. Check who will lock up before you leave.