

Lympstone Players' NEWSLETTER

DECEMBER 2025

www.lympstoneplayers.co.uk
lympstoneplayers@gmail.com

Our Mission:

*To entertain local audiences with a variety of quality theatrical productions
by sharing our skills, passions and knowledge and working together
in a friendly, supportive and fun environment*

Our Core Values:

Respect – Integrity – Community - Excellence

Puss in Boots



What a performance! And we mean that in a good way. We had a great time presenting four sellout shows of Puss in Boots to very appreciative audiences.

Here's a review from Lisa Riggs and former Dame and Prince Charming (though not at the same time; even he isn't that good) Joel Teague.

The Lympstone panto has a wonderful history, and once again it's kicked off the village's festive season in enchanting, uplifting style. It indulged the child in all of us while sniping impishly at current issues – local and global. Not bad for a story going back several centuries!

The closing of the Lympstone Mill in face of competition from the newly opened 'hypermill' was a relatable basis for a story that included everything from hilariously dim doormen and entitled royals to talking cats and – of course – love at first sight across the social divide. Purveyors of magic from either end of the moral spectrum joined hilariously with a fantastic dame, two captivating versions of the titular feline, a charismatic jack-of-all-trades, and an array of wonderfully portrayed characters that somehow made a story about a talking cat gel perfectly.

Younger cast members were as entertaining as food-pilfering goblins as they were as cat-chasing dogs. Seasoned players delivered wonderful performances that had us all laughing and singing along. New and upcoming talent took the opportunities of major parts and made them unforgettable. Songs were strongly delivered with skill and charm to the backing of John Billington's excellent musicianship. The audience were willingly conscripted as part of it all, with singing, clapping and set-piece responses all woven into the performance in the true spirit of pantomime.

The story of the production itself had its own twist, with the usual challenges of an ambitious production accompanied by the mother of all curveballs halfway through the run of shows. After two excellent performances, the news landed just hours ahead of the third, that a major cast member had been taken ill. This prompted an extraordinary and highly effective example of a group coming together to adapt, improvise and ultimately turn a potential disaster into a triumph. The strength of the Lympstone Players family has never been more evident. Particular praise has to go to those who rose to these last-minute challenges so willingly and skilfully. The show did indeed go on, and it was just a different flavour of brilliance.

As always, the professionalism, creativity and sheer hard work of those behind the production allowed the cast to give their outstanding performances. Bruce Ellis's triumphant panto-directing debut was backed by the extraordinary experience and skills of those delivering wonderful scenery, sound, lighting, stage management, costumes and make-up.

Puss in Boots was the perfect tribute to two of the Players' true greats, Clive and Harland, who will be so sorely missed. Their legacy clearly lives on, with a production that left everyone in the best of seasonal spirits.

Joel Teague and Lisa Riggs

Thoughts from a debutante

Just coming up to my first production with the Players. What an experience. To be repeated? We will see after the performances. This is the first time I will have been on stage for 50 years.

"Oh no" I hear you say. "She can't be that old!" Oh yes she is!

So, five months ago Alison asks if I would be interested in singing with the chorus for the pantomime. I thought, well I have never done anything like that before. Why not! So here I am about to go on stage with the opening number. Hope I don't fluff my one line! Everyone has been so enthusiastic and puts you right at ease. I am not sure what I expected. The children have kept me in line. They are so confident and have such energy. Not sure I can jump at the end of the number... Until I became involved in it, I really had no idea about what it actually takes to put on a production. The amount of talent in the village is amazing, from the actors, of all ages, to the people organising props and painting scenery, the costume makers, the sound and lighting, make-up, and our director. The effort to learn all the lines as well as making time for rehearsals shows the great involvement of people in the village. But also those selling tickets, advertising the show, keeping the whole thing running. There is something for people with so many different talents to get involved with. A great way to meet people and to experience the joy of working together. Everyone is made to feel welcome.

Thank you to everyone for a great experience.

Karen Ball

Joy of performing taster session

One of the participants in this session, which was led by Sharon Wayland, writes:

I didn't expect to spend my Monday evening sitting on the floor pretending to eat bamboo shoots and sleeping. I hope the lovely group of people I was with understood I was being a panda bear!

I enjoyed the challenge of making up a scenario with another participant where we were wedding crashers eating and drinking the bride and groom's celebratory dinner ... It makes me smile thinking about it.

I joined a group of strangers who shared a special experience and had a giggle and a fun time together. Sharon was a great facilitator – thank you for a memorable evening.

Sandi Hartrick

Laughter yoga session

Come along to a fun session to shake off the winter blues! Led by Jenny Moon, this Laughter Yoga – not the kind where mats and leotards are required - will comprise active, quick-fire activities (like fun party games!) followed by quiet time and a breathing exercise. It's a joyful mix of deep breathing and playful, intentional giggles that often turn into real belly laughs. No experience required.

This session will take place on **Thursday 15 January 2026 from 7.30-8.30pm**

at Lympstone Village Hall Community Room. There is a charge of £3 per person to cover room hire. Please contact us to book a place: lympstoneplayers@gmail.com

Save the date

We plan to have a themed get-together to mark Burns Night on Sunday 25 January in the Community Room at the Village Hall, 4-6pm (yes, we know that strictly speaking that isn't nighttime!). Please let us know if you have any ideas for activities or contributions, and meanwhile, do put the date in your diary.

Two very sad farewells



Clive Wilson (left) and Harland Walshaw in Cinderella in 2011

Within a very short space of time we recently lost two of the Lympstone Players' greatest luminaries, Clive Wilson and Harland Walshaw. Both Clive and Harland had been involved with the Players for more than two decades. They were marvellous actors and wonderful directors. They had been Players committee members, and

Clive was also a longtime chairman. We will offer a full tribute to each of them in the new year. If you would like to contribute your memories, please contact us: lympstoneplayers@gmail.com

Contact and follow us

Do let us know if you have ideas for future workshops or social activities. Should you wish to contact your committee on these or any other matters, please email us at: lympstoneplayers@gmail.com. We review the inbox regularly.

We are on Facebook and on Instagram: @lympstoneplayers – do follow us and maybe even give us a few likes.