

'A Weald Christmas Cracker' – Coming to your screens on Christmas Eve afternoon!!

On Christmas Eve we will be releasing our All-Age, Community Extravaganza '*A Weald Christmas Cracker*'. It is a programme of songs, sketches, stories, the primary school's nativity scene and a community singalong. It's been a challenge to make but we really want to share some joy and celebration during these difficult days, especially with the recent news of going into Tier 4. While we want everyone to tune in to watch it on Christmas Eve from our website www.stgeorgesweald.co.uk and social media, we also want to show how we have attempted to do everything to minimise Covid infection while making it.

Going into Tier 3 was difficult news to receive after planning four short films. Limiting the numbers in front and behind the camera was tricky and the change in tier meant considerably more challenges. We had to reconsider scripts, locations, and how we were going to shoot each of them. The short film '*The Stargazers Society*' was hastily re-written in order to be mainly on Zoom. '*On a Starry Night*' was originally planned to be in the relative shelter of a barn on private property. This had to be switched to public land in the open air. Our actors and crew went beyond the call of duty as they worked for hours exposed to 3 degrees cold. In this sketch some of the actors' rehearsed direction also had to change in order to create greater social distance. '*Angel Auditions*' was more fortunate as it was a sketch just for children and young people and came under the exception of '*supervised activities provided for children, groups and activities for under 18s*'. Those running the activity complied to all the safeguarding requirements and children worked within household groups, and child-care and school bubbles – all with parental consent. It also involved a structured children's activity with making craft reindeer. This production was staged in the church hall and after the filming, all surfaces and toilets were cleaned thoroughly with anti-bacterial products. Risk assessments were carried out to ensure we were covid-compliant. The fourth film '*No Room at the Inn*' was changed in order for it to be shot outside. The actors and crew had to contend with traffic and aircraft noise which complicated both filming and editing but this was deemed necessary to minimise the risks.

We used the APA Covid-19 Shooting Guidelines for the films – attached below. All cast and crew wore masks when not in their scenes. The scenes were shot side by side as recommended by the guidelines, with limited other positions only when absolutely necessary, and with some camera angles giving the impression of proximity to adjust to this. Covid-19 Health declaration forms for cast and crew were circulated for signing before the shoots.

I would like to express my deep gratitude to Roberta Briant as Director, and all the cast and crew for working with focus and commitment to provide these films in very difficult circumstances. We hope that they will bring a much-needed boost to our community at this time.

'A Weald Christmas Cracker' available on Christmas Eve from 3pm.

COVID-19 Shooting Guidelines

Version 1.6 – 6th July 2020

Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, all employers have a legal duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the health, safety and welfare of anyone who has contact with their business (employees, freelancers, contractors, members of the public etc). The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999 sit beneath this law and provide detail on what a safety management system should look like (e.g. how your business identifies and assesses its risks, takes steps to control them, trains relevant staff, and monitors/reviews its safety processes to ensure they are being carried out correctly and remain effective). The HSE has produced detailed guidance on this. Failure to comply with a business' health and safety duties is a criminal offence.

The purpose of this document is to assist production companies to assess and manage their COVID-19 risks on shoots and identify reasonable and practical steps to safeguard the health and safety of everyone attending a film shoot in relation to COVID-19.

Your business should therefore already have a safety management procedure in place, usually explained in your business' health and safety policy. COVID-19 will be a significant risk which should be controlled in accordance with your business' existing safety management procedure. This will ensure that your business is complying with the law. The latest government guidance on how businesses should control COVID-19 risks, as well as these Guidelines, should be considered (and relevant parts implemented) as you work through your business' safety management procedure, particularly when carrying out your COVID-19 risk assessment.

In addition, everyone working on the production and attending it has responsibilities in respect of COVID-19. They can meet them by working in accordance with these Guidelines.

This document will be updated regularly in response to feedback on how it works in practice, new Government law and regulation, and the potential availability of practical on-set COVID-19 testing. It is very important that you review Government updates in law and guidance so that your risk assessment and procedures are updated to reflect these changes.

If in doubt as to which is most up-to-date copy of this document, [Click Here](#) to view the latest version.

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