**MERMAIDS**



**PROPOSAL HOW TO GUIDE**

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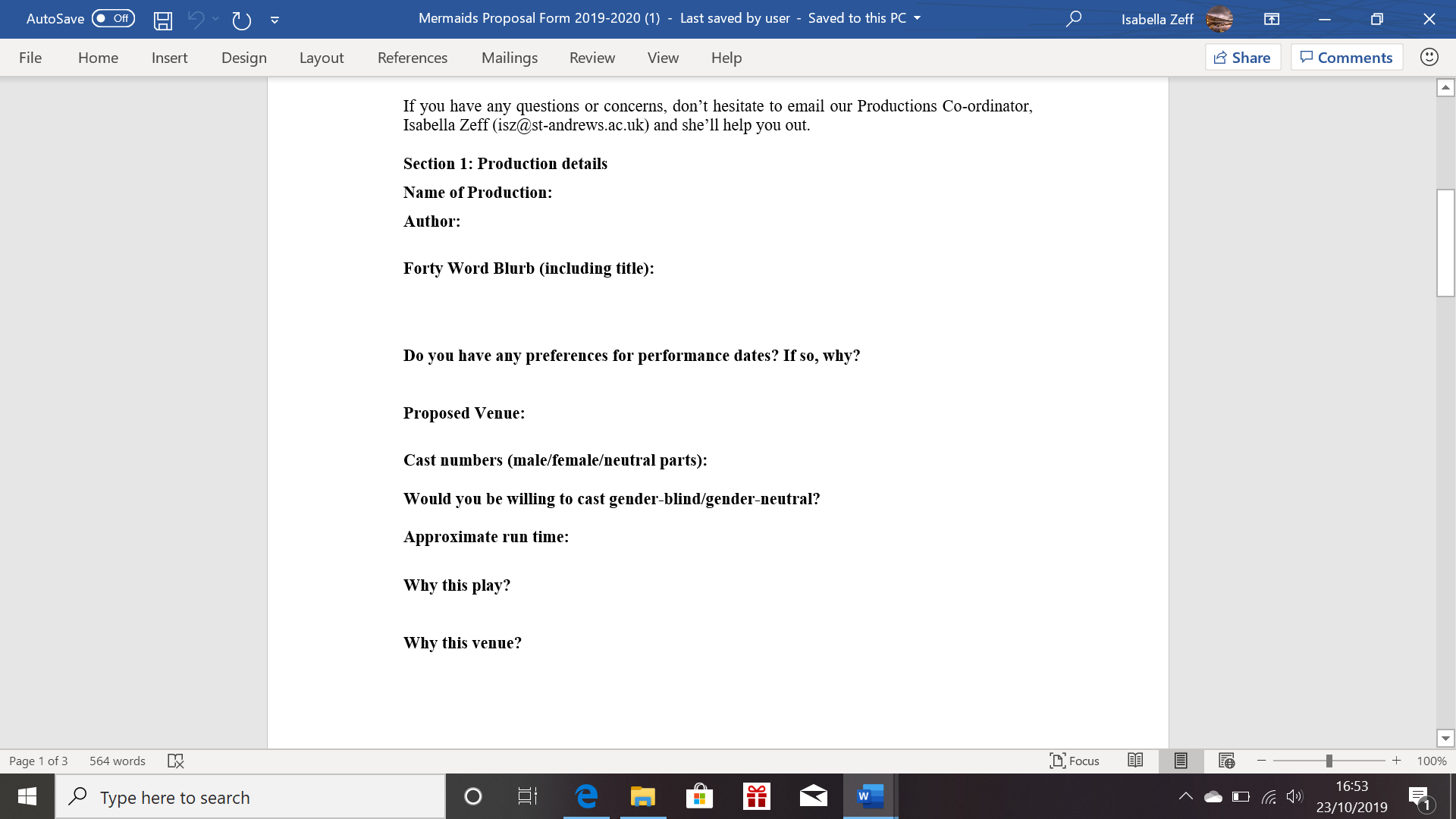
**OVERVIEW**

To propose a show, there are three forms you must fill out, which can be found on the Mermaids website (https://www.mermaidstheatre.com) under the ‘More’ tab in the ‘Downloads’ section (https://www.mermaidstheatre.com/downloads). These are the Proposal Form, Budget Form, and Risk Assessment, which must be submitted via email to the Productions Coordinator Isabella (isz@) by the specified deadline, usually midnight two days before the proposal meeting. This is a guide on how to fill out the forms, what happens once you’ve submitted them, and how to make your proposal the best it can be!

Some key information – as Mermaids is a funding body and not a society, we can’t pass shows based on creative merit. We judge proposals based on financial, logistical, and skills-based merit. I’ll go more into the finance side of things in the budget section, but in terms of logistics please consider the feasibility of your show – do we have the resources, time, and ability to put it on? Will you have access to enough potential actors and will they be able to safely fit and work in your proposed venue? Do we have access to the equipment you require? Are you able to (within reason) guarantee the health and safety of everyone in your cast and crew? Skills-based merit is especially often overlooked or forgotten about on proposals – Mermaids is dedicated to providing opportunities for students, so how many new people are on your production team? Are you planning on taking on any assistants or shadows for your team? Are you wanting to work with other student societies, local businesses, or academic departments? What is the gender split of your cast? You don’t have to be able to answer all of these questions, but it’s definitely something to think about with regards to how likely we are to pass your show!

**PROPOSAL FORM**

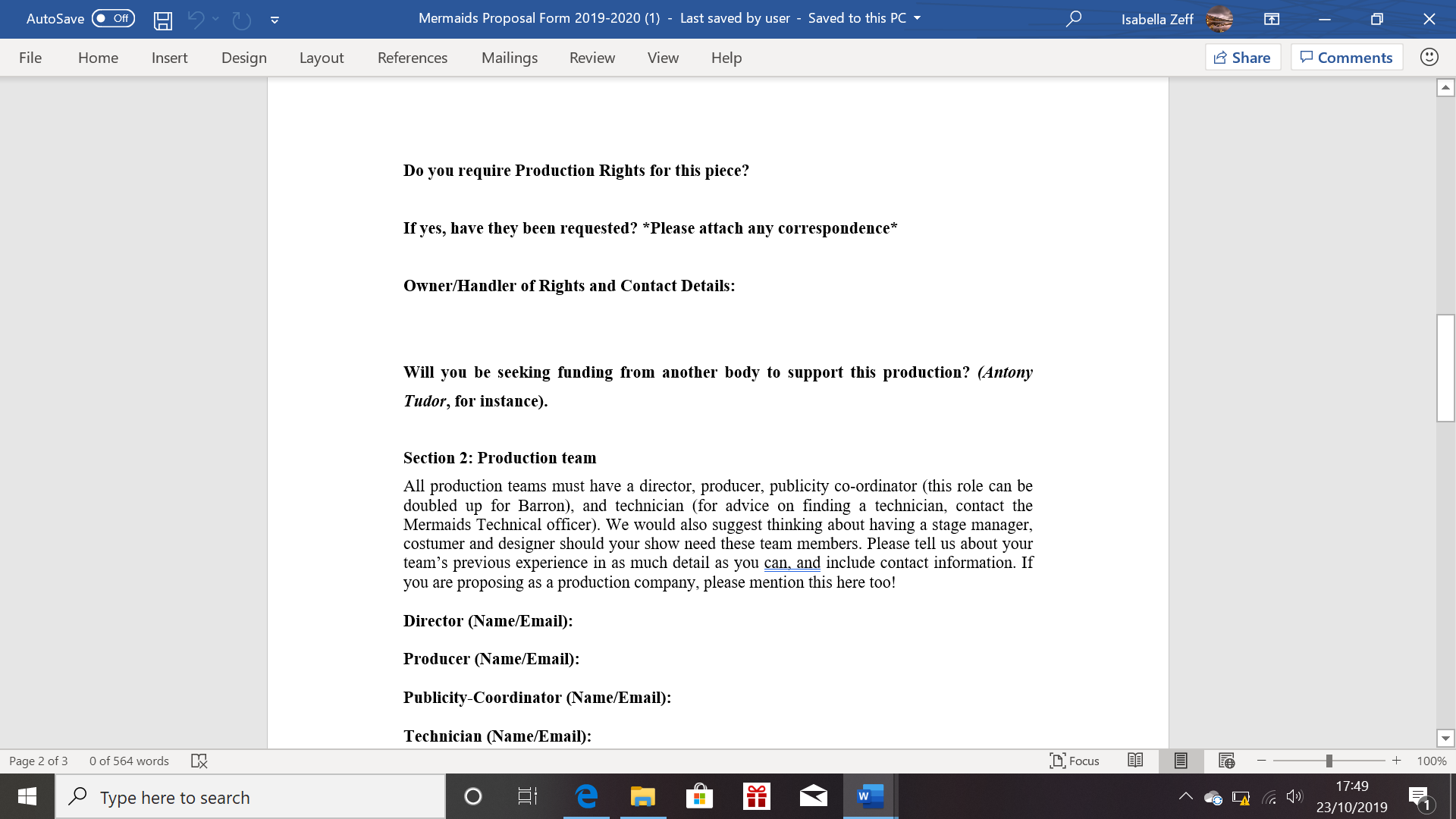
The main part of your proposal is the Proposal Form. This is a document split into a number of sections allowing you to describe your vision for the show in as much detail as possible.

**Section 1: Production Details**

This part of the proposal form is pretty self explanatory. If you have a different options for the number of cast members required, let us know! It’s also always a good idea to say why you’re willing/unwilling to cast gender-blind – if your play requires rights, please check what the rights company has to say about this.

Have a think here about why you want to put this play on – what excites you about it? Do you want to get other areas of the university or town involved? How will it appeal/ relate to the student body? If you’re planning on working with other societies and academic departments (whether this is seeking advice, collaborating on workshops or just looking for help with advertising) this is often a good place to write about this, and will contribute to your skills-based merit.

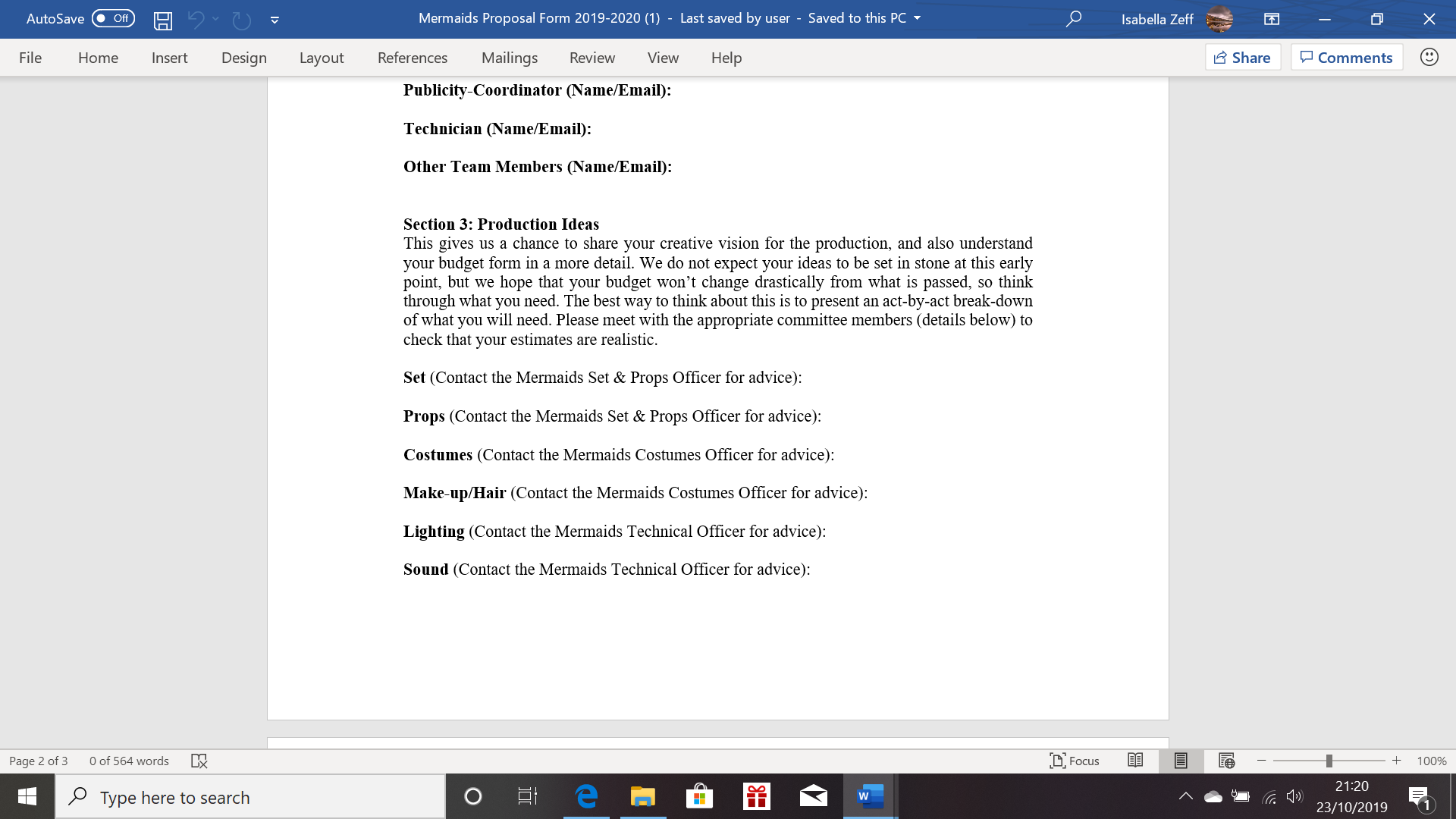
With regards to venue choice, have a think about financial and logistical viability in each venue – Barron shows will have less money to play with, and Byre shows will need to be assured that they can sell a large number of tickets and fill the stage. Think about the size of each venue and how it functions as a space – be creative with your staging! It’s also worth pointing out that whilst the vast majority of Mermaids shows take place in the Barron, the StAge, or the Byre, you can think outside the box with your venue choice – think about the rooms available around the town and university, we even had a show up in Aikman’s last year. Please note that you’ll have to solidly research the availability and logistics for alternative venues, and provide evidence that your proposed venue is possible to use.

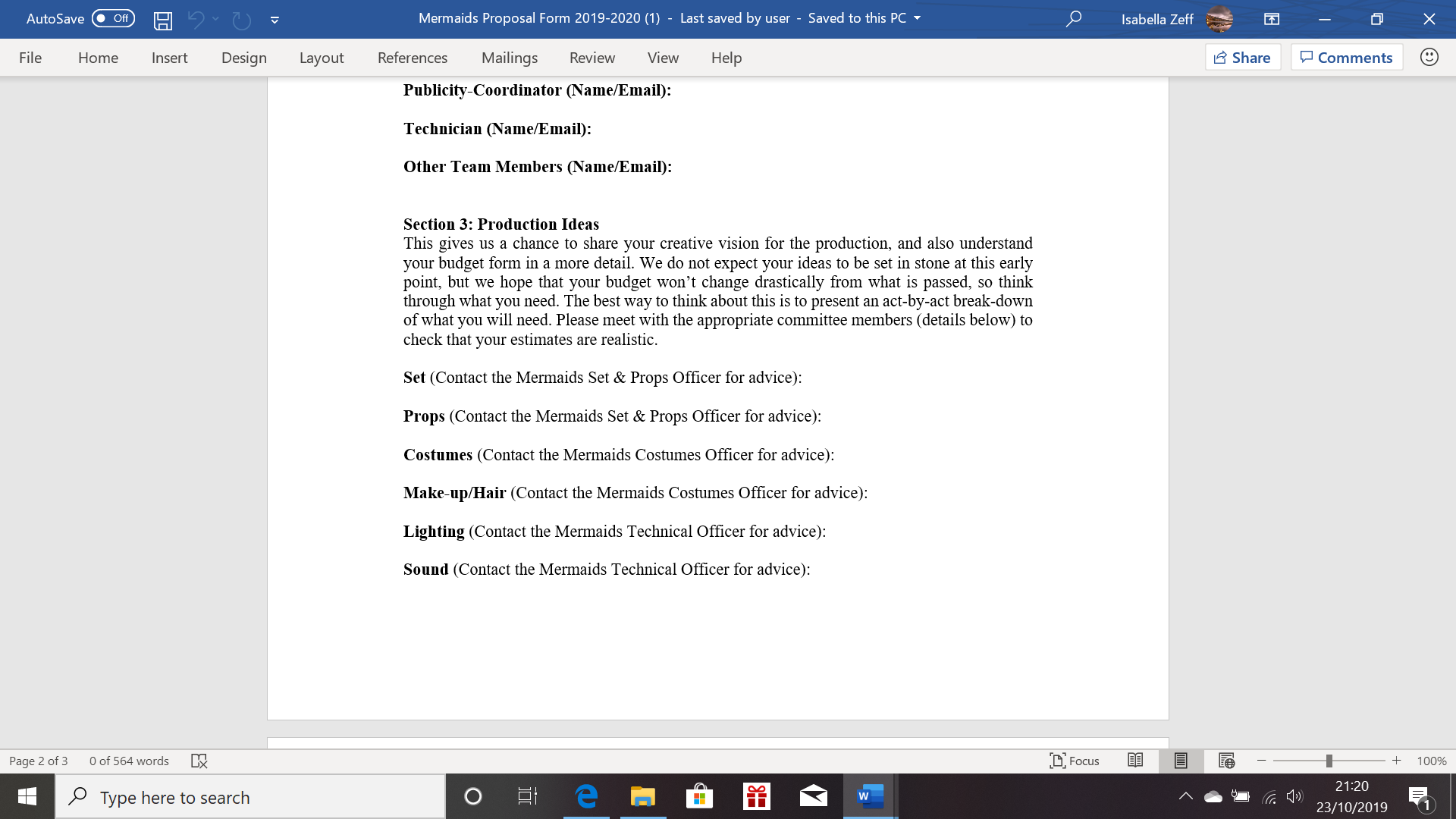
Make sure to research if your show requires performance rights to be paid. The main rights companies in the UK are Samuel French, Nick Hern, and Josef Weinberger, but have a look around as some playwrights have independent rights companies, and sometimes American companies also own the rights for shows in the UK. You should be able to find out by googling the name of the play along with ‘rights UK’, but if you’re struggling or need any help just get in touch with the Productions Coordinator Bella at isz@ and she’ll be able to help. Please request the rights for your show for some potential dates in the semester and attach evidence of this but DO NOT pay for them – once your show has been passed the productions coordinator will revise the dates and pay for the rights from the Mermaids account.

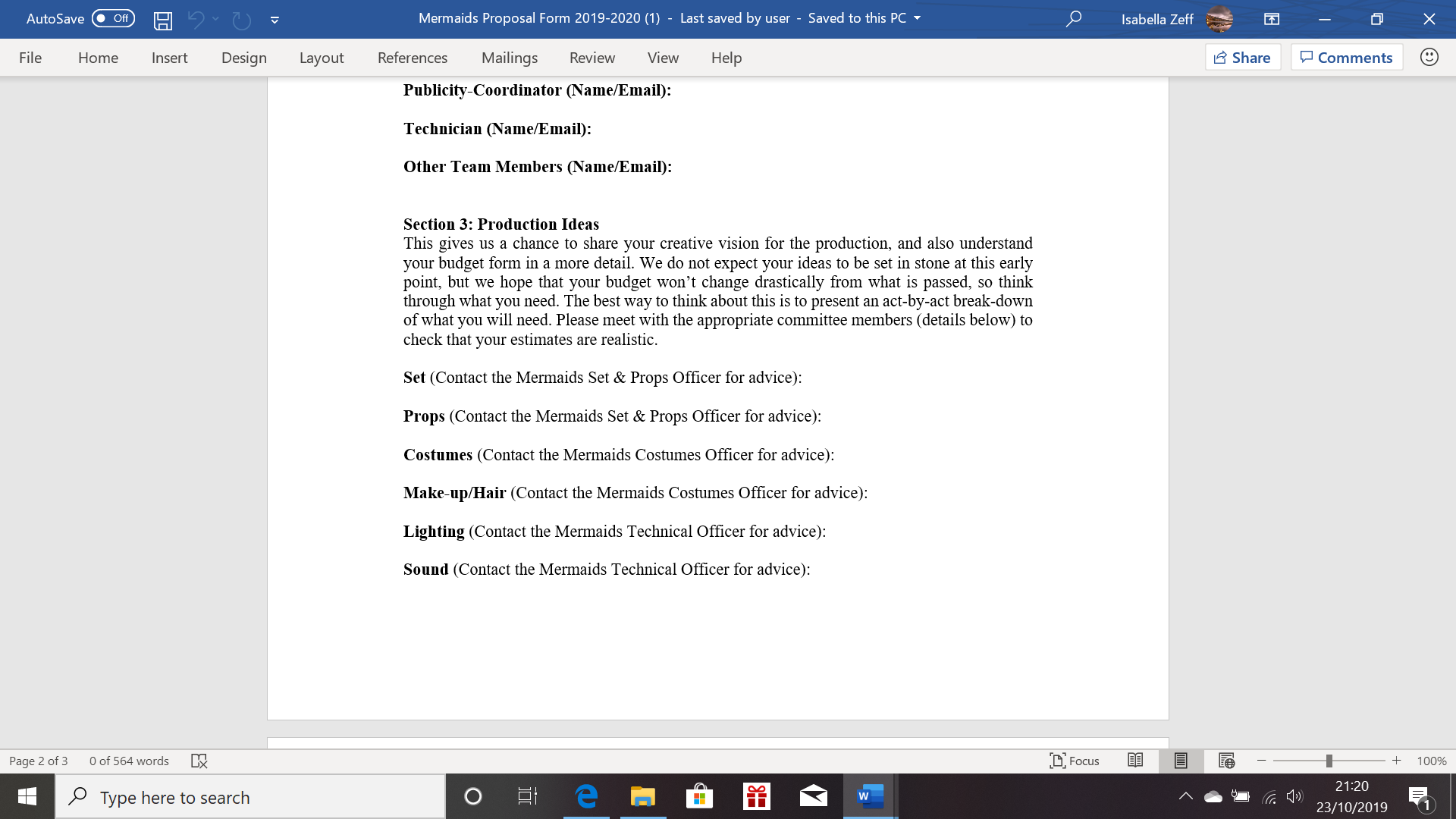
**Section 2: Production Team**

Again, this section is fairly self explanatory – to propose a show you need at least a director, producer, publicity coordinator and/or technician on your team, but other additional roles can include costumer, stage manager, set designer/builder etc. The role of publicity coordinator can be doubled up, especially for Barron shows, with the producer or any other production team role. If you’re interested in any of these roles or need additional people for your team, please get in touch with the Productions Coordinator at isz@ and she can try to help you out! In this section, please list any relevant experience your team has, but don’t worry if your experience is limited! We aim to offer opportunities to new people. You can also note here if you’d be interested in taking on more production team members after your show is passed – e.g. leaving assistant roles open to freshers or people who haven’t been involved in Mermaids before, especially if you’re proposing for a Semester 1 slot.

**Section 3: Production Ideas**

The key here is detail. Whilst you don’t need to have everything set in stone at this point and we are aware that your exact ideas may change, in order to make your budget form as accurate as possible and to ensure it doesn’t change too much from what is passed, it is a good idea to have a specific plan. Diagrams of your set plan are an excellent way of showing us your ideas, and it is good to list the exact set and props needed for your show, perhaps on a scene by scene basis, and whether they can be sourced from the Barron or need to be bought. If you have any questions about the set and props we have available in the Barron, get in contact with Ryan the Set & Props Officer at merprops@ and he can help out! Equally, if you are wanting to build your own set or props, this is the place to detail the materials you’re going to buy and how you’re planning on constructing your pieces. If you need any advice on how to go about this, again get in contact with Ryan.

As with props, it is a good idea to list the costumes you require character by character, and scene by scene if you have costume changes. It’s a good idea to include images or sketches of your ideas, especially if you are planning on making costumes, and get in touch with Noemie the Costumes Officer at njy3@ to find out about the costumes we have available. It is also an option to source costumes from your cast, but please be realistic about what people will actually own!

The detail you put into this section really depends on how tech heavy your show is. If your show has additional or complicated technical requirements, please detail the equipment you are planning on using and how you plan to use it here. It is a good idea to list scene by scene the sort of tech that you want. If you have any questions about tech, the equipment we have access to, and what is possible in which venue please get in contact with Adia the Technical Officer at af230@.

**Section 4: Marketing Plan**

Be creative! The marketing plan for most shows will involve Facebook cover photos and profile pictures, and some productions in recent years have started setting up their own Facebook pages and Instagram pages to share trailers and pictures from rehearsals throughout the time they spend working on the show. Other common forms of publicity include posters and flyers.

It’s a good idea to include graphics ideas here – draw up some ideas, they don’t have to be final yet and you can put multiple in the proposal if you’re still unsure of the direction you want to go in. You can also describe your ideas for profile pictures and even trailers (if you want to do them) here. It may also be a good idea to draw up a schedule of how long before your show you’d like to release different bits of promotional material. If you have any questions about marketing or would like any ideas get in contact with Martin the Marketing Officer at mc335@.

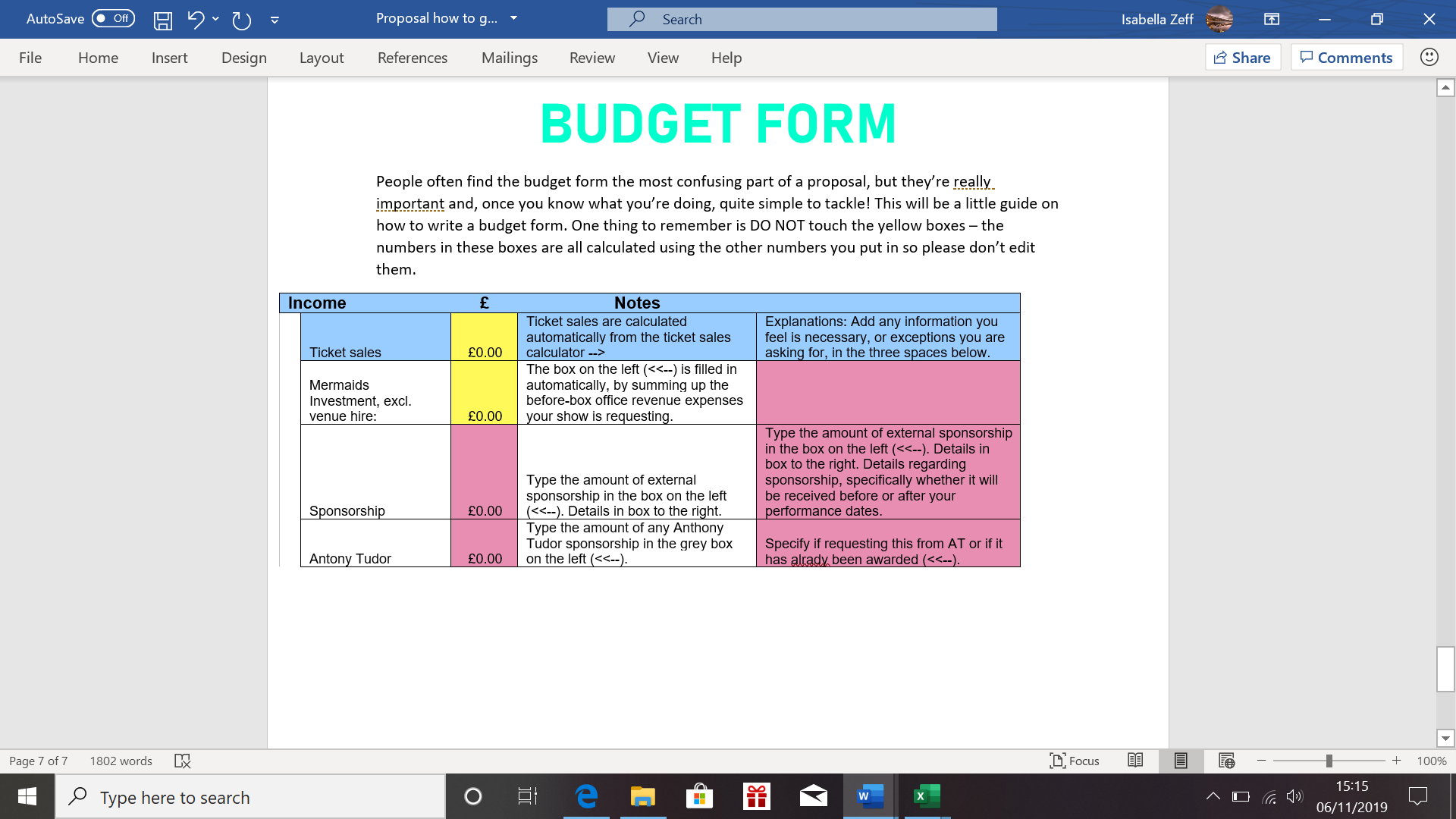
**Section 5: Committee Correspondence**

If you’ve been in contact with anyone on committee for help with your proposal, whether that be asking specific questions about set and props or just getting someone to have a look over the whole thing, list us here! All of the committee’s contact details can be found at the bottom of the proposal document, and we are all more than happy to help with any questions you have.

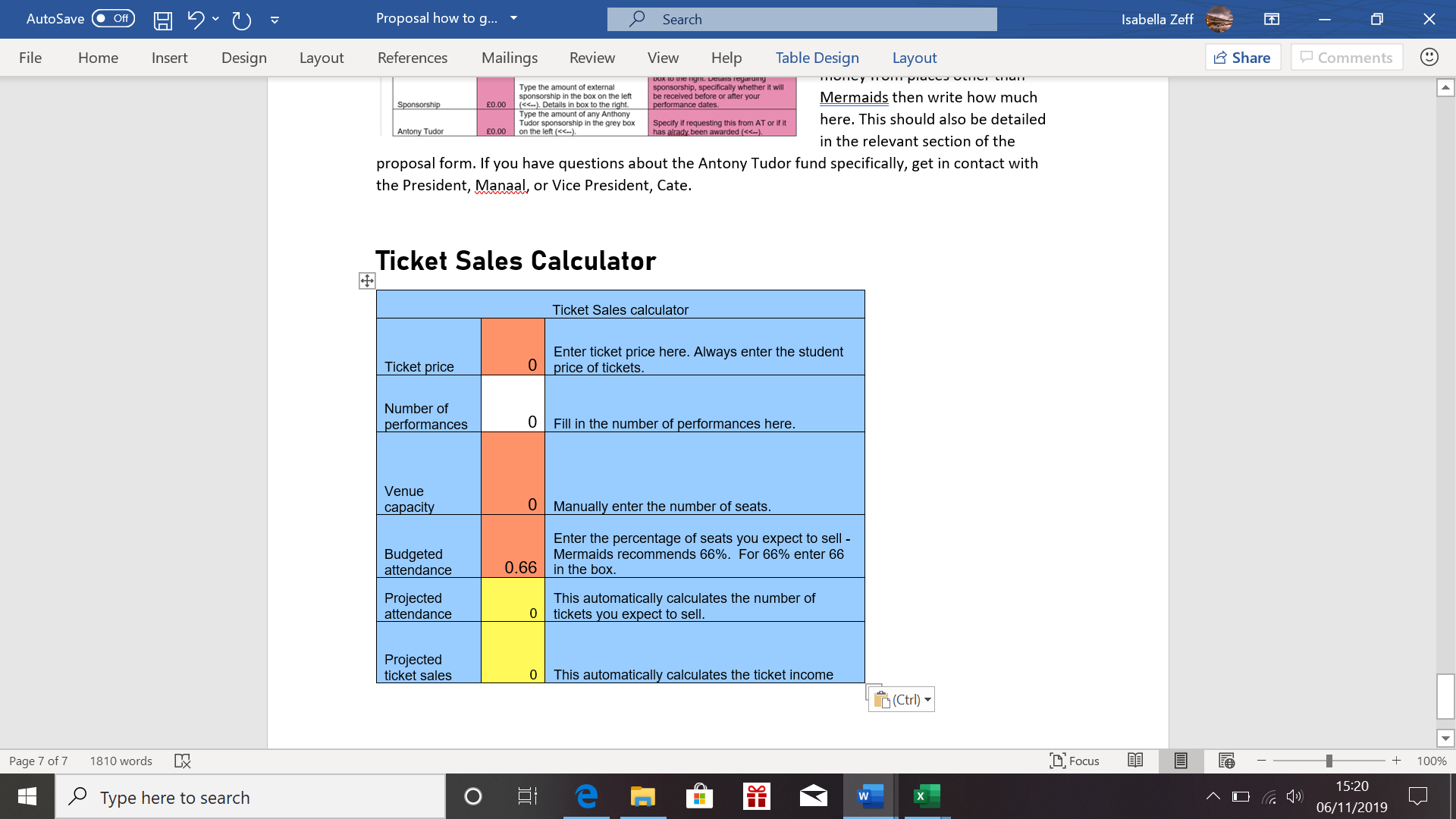
**BUDGET FORM**

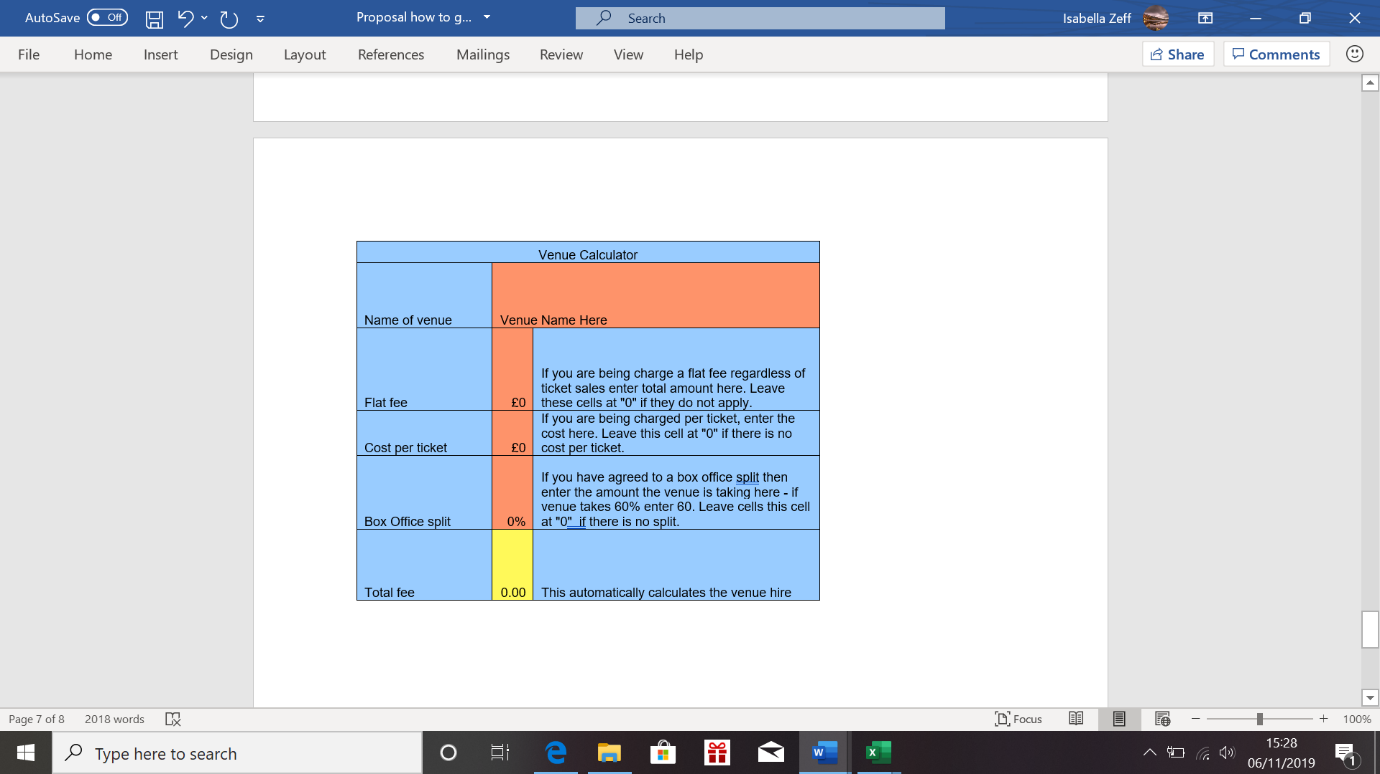
People often find the budget form the most confusing part of a proposal, but it is really important and, once you know what you’re doing, quite simple to tackle! This will be a little guide on how to fill out a budget form. A couple of things to remember - DO NOT touch the yellow boxes – the numbers in these boxes are all calculated using the other numbers you put in so please don’t edit them. Also, all numbers in the budget form should be positive.

**Income**

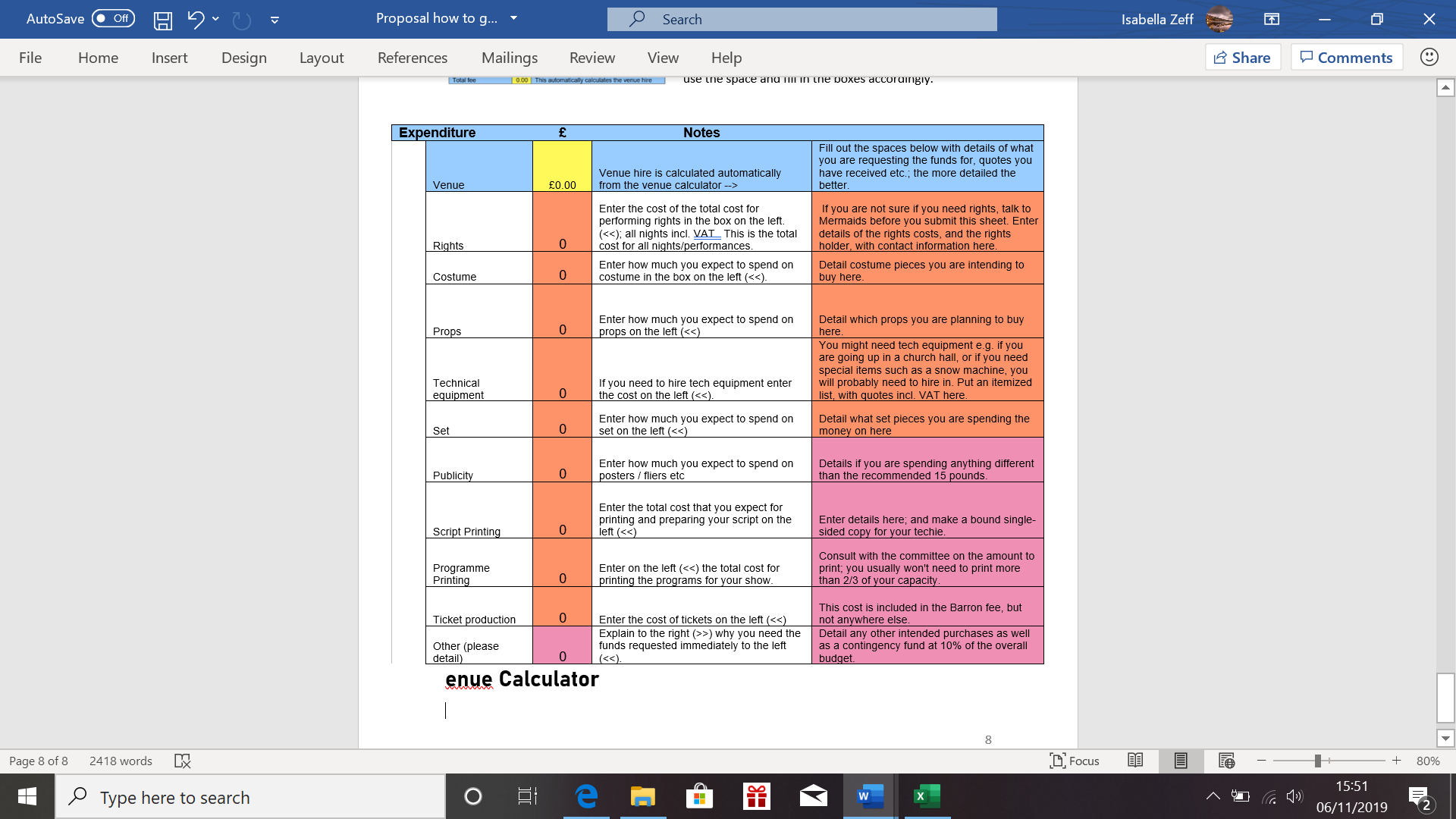
The most important parts of this section are calculated for you in the budget sheet. If you are requesting/have been granted money from places other than Mermaids then write how much here. This should also be detailed in the relevant section of the proposal form. If you have questions about the Antony Tudor fund specifically, get in contact with the President, Manaal, or Vice President, Cate.

**Ticket Sales Calculator**

How you fill in this section will depend on the venue you are proposing for. Normally, shows will have 2 performances regardless of venue. Ticket prices are normally £5 for Barron, £6 for StAge, and £8 for Byre – if you’re proposing for an alternate venue have a think about ticket prices, they shouldn’t be too expensive, and talk to Ed, the Productions Treasurer, if you need advice. Venue capacity is 56 for the Barron with seating rack (plus chairs at the front), 110 for StAge with just the seating rack or 136 for seating rack plus two rows of chairs, and 216 for the Byre. If you are using an alternate venue, please do relevant research on capacity, and if you are wishing to use the Barron or the Stage without the seating rack (e.g. in the round) be realistic about the number of chairs that can be fit in and talk to relevant people about what this capacity might be. If you have questions about how seating can work in the Barron talk to Aya the Barron Manager.

**Venue Calculator**

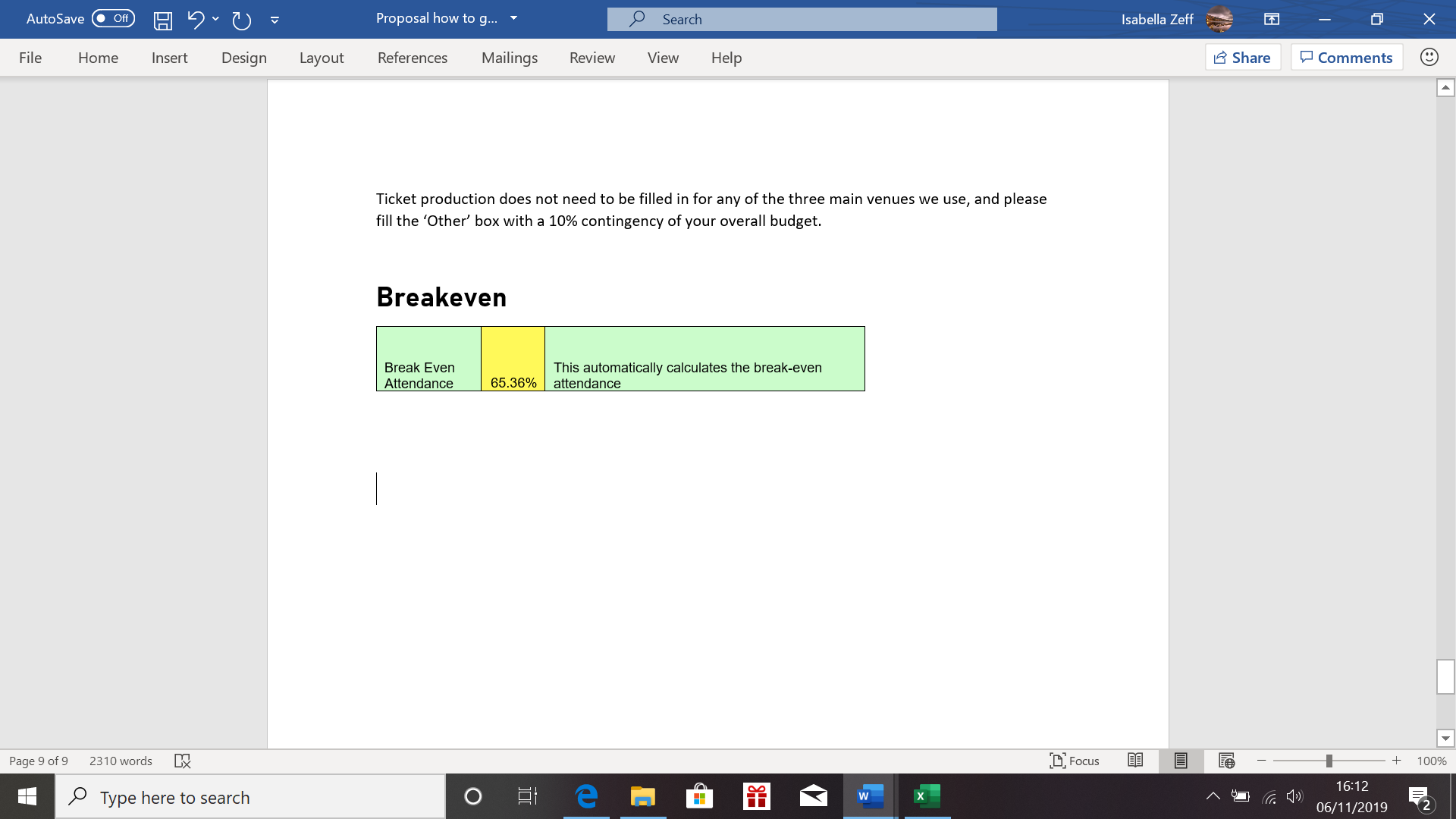
For the Barron there is no flat fee or box office split – the only cost is £1 per ticket. The StAge charges £100 per night, and the Byre charges £300 per night plus £300 for get in day. The flat fee section should be filled in for the whole run – e.g. for a StAge show running for 2 nights write £200, and for a Byre show running for 2 nights write £900. No box office split needs to be put in for any of these venues. If you are proposing for an alternate venue please research how much they will charge you to use the space and fill in the boxes accordingly.

**Expenditure**

Total for venue hire is filled in automatically. Rights should be filled in across all nights of performance plus VAT – if the rights company says the cost of the show is £75 per night and you are planning on two performances, the total cost of rights to be filled in here would be £180 (2x75 + 20% VAT). This box is very commonly filled in incorrectly – if you have any questions about rights please contact the Productions Coordinator at isz@. For every other section please fill the boxes in as accurately as you can – it is a good idea to list what you plan to spend the money on in the description boxes on the right and note how much each item will cost (you can even include links to the items you might buy that you have found online and the websites you plan on buying from). Please detail what the money will be spent on for every section – even publicity (the ‘recommended £15’ is misleading - we would still like to know how you plan on spending this).

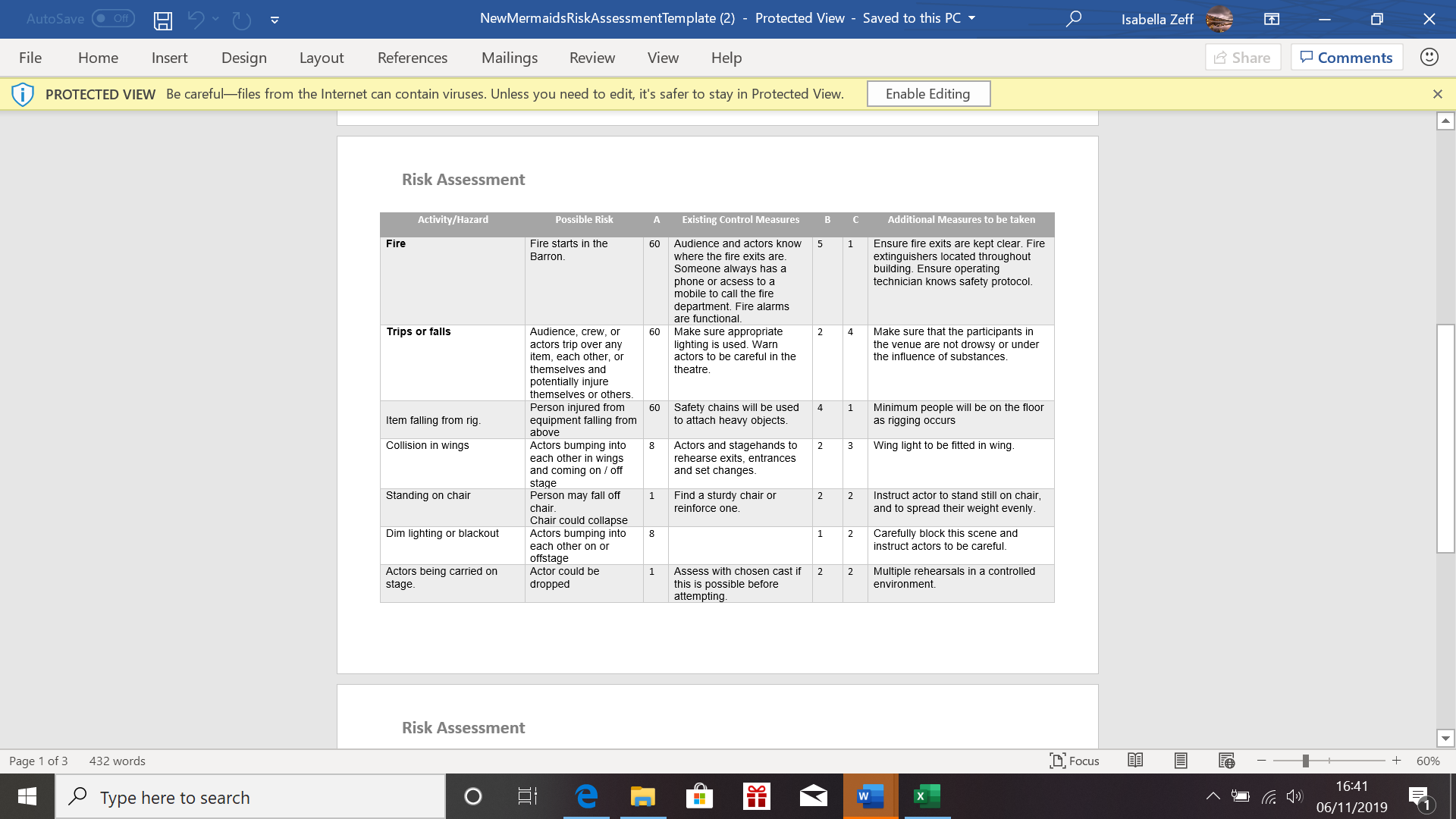
Posters, flyers, and programmes can either be ordered from an online company or printed on the university printers, and scripts will probably be printed on university printers (though it is possible to ask cast to print their own scripts. Uniprint prices can be found at <https://www.st-andrews.ac.uk/students/uniprint/printingprices/> , and please detail the numbers you are planning to print and how you have reached the number you write in.

Ticket production does not need to be filled in for any of the three main venues we use, and please fill the ‘Other’ box with a 10% contingency of your overall budget.

**Breakeven**

This box is calculated in automatically using the numbers you put in, and you should keep an eye on it while you are working on your budget. We aim for a break even of around 66% - being well under this is fine but maybe check through your budget to ensure you’ve filled it in correctly and are happy with how much money you are proposing to spend and where. Please ensure that you don’t go too much over 66% though – this will make your show harder for us to pass.

**RISK ASSESSMENT**

\*\*Please note that the Mermaids risk assessment form has recently been updated. The new form is now in the downloads section of the website, but if you have been working on your proposal for a while, your risk assessment form may be out of date. Please use the current risk assessment, which you can find at <https://www.mermaidstheatre.com/downloads>.

Please be detailed here and evaluate all possible risks you can think of – there are some examples already in the form. The risk assessment form itself has a clear guide on how to fill it in. Please be detailed – especially if you are using equipment that may be dangerous. If you have any questions about the risk assessment get in touch with the Technical Officer at af230@.

**PROPOSAL MEETING**

Well done! You’ve finished your proposal! Please email your proposal form, budget, and risk assessment (along with anything else you feel is necessary) to the Productions Coordinator at isz@ by 23:59pm on the specified deadline, which will be 2 days before the meeting. She will get in contact with you the next day to invite you to our proposal meeting and give you your time slot. The meeting will only last 5 minutes – you will have 2 minutes to pitch your show to us and the committee will then have 3 minutes to ask you any questions we may have about your proposal. Bring as many members of your production team as you’d like! Please arrive 5 minutes or so before your slot to ensure we are able to start each slot on time, and be aware that you will be proposing your show in front of around 15 people – this can seem scary but we are all there to support you! Feel free to bring things to the proposal meeting with you, such as sketches or models of your set or pinterest boards to show us – this isn’t necessary but may be a good idea if you have any complicated plans and think that some additional explanation could help. You will hear back about our decision on your proposal that evening.

That’s it! If you have any questions please get in contact with Bella, the Productions Coordinator, or any other relevant members of committee. Have a look on our website for each committee member’s office hours that you can drop into, and keep an eye out on Facebook for any help sessions we might host.

**Good Luck!**