

PRESS RELEASE 14 February 2018

Theatres Trust announce new Theatre Improvement Scheme alongside final Urgent Repairs recipients in renewed Wolfson Foundation partnership

Theatres Trust, the national advisory public body for theatres, will be awarding four theatres a total of **£54,520** in the final funding round of the **Urgent Repairs Scheme**. This scheme, set up in partnership with the **Wolfson Foundation**, helps theatres in need of immediate repair and maintenance. The final round of the pilot scheme awards grants to: **Ayr Gaiety**, **Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff**, **Kings Theatre Portsmouth** and **Wilton's Music Hall in London**.

Following the success of the **Urgent Repairs Scheme** pilot, the first collaboration between the **Theatres Trust** and the **Wolfson Foundation**, the partnership continues with the launch of the new **Theatre Improvement Scheme**. This annually themed scheme will challenge arts organisations to implement innovative and pioneering improvements to act as best case examples for other theatres, whether front of house, or behind the scenes. The scheme will distribute £100,000 each year for the next three years with awards of up to £20,000 per project.

The theme for 2018 will be **Improving Accessibility**. Funding will be awarded to projects which make their theatre more accessible through changes to the building or its systems. The scheme will fund theatres and projects of all sizes that demonstrate excellence in the pursuit of becoming an accessible theatre.

Director of Theatres Trust, Jon Morgan says: "Many theatres, particularly those built some time ago, face challenges ensuring all audience members, companies, and crew can have an equally brilliant experience. Level changes, signage and seating are some of the areas that need addressing. We look forward to seeing theatres challenge the status quo and embark on valuable projects to make theatre going accessible for all."

Chief Executive of the Wolfson Foundation, Paul Ramsbottom, says: "Following on from a successful pilot programme, we are delighted to continue our partnership with the Theatres Trust to benefit theatres across the UK. The Foundation has an emphasis on accessibility across a number of our funding programmes, and we look forward to working with the Trust in this renewed partnership."

The deadline for the **Improving Accessibility** round of the **Theatre Improvement Scheme** will be **Thursday 13 September 2018**.

Further details on the scheme can be found: theatrestrust.org.uk/grants

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The National Advisory Public Body for Theatres

The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund co-operates with Theatres Trust, has the same Trustees and is registered as a charity under number 274697

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NOTES TO EDITORS

Images on request to Kate Carmichael.

URGENT REPAIRS SCHEME FINAL ROUND RECIPIENTS

Ayr Gaiety | £10,560

The Gaiety is a Category B listed theatre first built in 1902. This grant will support urgent repairs to the Gaiety's external signage. Repairs required to this iconic feature of the building were not included in the theatre's recent refurbishment, but are more serious than first suspected, and cannot be deferred. The grant will fund a full survey and repairs to the sign.

Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff | £13,960

Chapter is a multi-arts centre supporting emerging artists in Cardiff. The grant will address accessibility improvements for the two main performance spaces. This will help Chapter meet the demands of audiences and visiting companies. The works include the replacement of theatre flooring, installation of accessible showers and an emergency pull cord system.

Kings Theatre Portsmouth | £15,000

The Kings Theatre is a Frank Matcham designed Grade II* listed theatre built in 1907. The theatre was equipped with the then latest innovations in fire safety, including the safety curtain. Sadly, a safety curtain lined with asbestos. The grant will support the safe removal and disposal of the safety curtain, and its replacement. The safety curtain's heritage artwork will be recreated in the new curtain.

Wilton's Music Hall, London | £15,000

Wilton's Music Hall is a fine example of a restoration project respectful of the building's changing identity and is now a busy arts venue. This Victorian music hall was brought back from a state of disrepair into being a full time performance space, specialising in music and theatre. The grant will provide for an access hatch and bridges within the ceiling void to allow for inspection and maintenance and for a full survey of the ceiling's condition.

Previous recipients of the Urgent Repairs Scheme:

Royal Court Theatre Bacup, Saltburn Community Arts and Trinity Centre, Bristol.

Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. We believe that current and future generations should have access to good quality theatre buildings where they can be inspired by, and enjoy, live theatre. We champion the past, present and future of live theatre, by protecting the buildings and what goes on inside. We do this through providing advice on planning and development, supplying resources and advice to make theatres sustainable and offering financial assistance through grants. We help people discover more about theatres and campaign for theatres at risk.

theatretrust.org.uk

The Wolfson Foundation is an independent charity that aims to improve the civic health of society by supporting excellence in the fields of science, health, education and the arts and humanities. Founded in 1955, it has awarded over £800 million (£1.7 billion in real terms) to some 10,000 projects across the UK, all on the basis of expert peer review. The Foundation's existing funding programme for the performing arts aims to support and promote excellence in the sector.

Wolfson Foundation has long been providing capital funding to the cultural sector, supporting museums and galleries, historic sites, educational institutions and performing arts organisations. Since the beginning of the 2017 Theatres Trust has been working with the Foundation to develop a scheme focusing on smaller, regional theatres, complementing its existing funding programme and building on the knowledge and expertise of Theatres Trust. Our partnership continues with the **Theatres Improvement Scheme**.

wolfson.org.uk/funding/arts-and-humanities/performing-arts/