



Theatres Trust awards £25,000 in grants to improve theatre accessibility

Theatres Trust, the national advisory body for theatres in the UK, is awarding £25,000 in grants to six theatres through the Accessible Theatres Scheme to make their buildings more inclusive. Theatres Trust works to ensure theatres in the UK meet the needs of their communities and improving the accessibility of theatres is a vital part of their remit. Thanks to funding from the Theatre Development Trust, the grants have been awarded to improve the accessibility of professional theatre buildings for audiences, performers and staff, with projects split between building works and the installation of assistive technology.

Seating will be reconfigured to create more flexible wheelchair user spaces in the dress circle of Grade I Bristol Old Vic, the UK's oldest continuously working theatre. A comprehensive external project will create level access to all areas of The Spire in Brighton, housed in Grade II listed St Mark's Chapel. Funding will allow The Barn in Banchory, Aberdeenshire, to move its technical control booth so it is accessible to all its staff and volunteers.

Theatres Trust funding will contribute to the accessibility element of the 50th anniversary capital project at Newcastle's Live Theatre, which will include installing a new assistive listening system and hand-held captioning equipment in its main theatre, and power-assisted doors in its auditoria, rehearsal, backstage areas and offices. As part of a larger project at the Mercury Theatre, Colchester, hearing loops will be installed across the building including in rehearsal spaces, meeting rooms and box offices. Yvonne Arnaud Theatre in Guildford will upgrade its assistive audience system, which will significantly improve access to its programme.

Theatres Trust Director Jon Morgan comments, *Responding to the pandemic has been at the forefront of everyone's minds this year, but it is important that theatres continue on the journey to being truly inclusive spaces and that accessibility does not fall by the wayside. We are therefore*

delighted to be able to support six theatres with projects that will improve accessibility, whether it is for their staff and performers or the local communities they serve.

Notes to Editors

Title	Theatres Trust
Website	www.theatrestrust.org.uk
Twitter	@TheatresTrust
Photo	Bristol Old Vic

Accessible Theatres Scheme

The Barn, Banchory, £4,800

The Barn in Banchory is the largest multi-arts space in Aberdeenshire, created from an abandoned farmstead. Theatres Trust funding will enable The Barn to make its technical control centre accessible to all its staff and volunteers. The control is currently housed in a booth within a confined space raised above ground floor level, but it will be relocated to ground floor level, making it more accessible and enabling the organisation to train more volunteers in technical theatre skills.

Bristol Old Vic, Bristol, £4,000

Bristol Old Vic is the UK's longest continuously working theatre and a nationally significant producing house. Theatres Trust funding will support the project to streamline access to the Dress Circle in the main theatre of the Grade I listed building by reconfiguring existing seats, creating flexible capacity for wheelchair user spaces, companions and carers.

Live Theatre, Newcastle, £1,200

Live Theatre, housed in a Grade II listed Quayside warehouse, will be celebrating its 50th anniversary with a capital project looking at enhancing physical accessibility, as well as its environmental sustainability and financial resilience. Theatres Trust funding will help the venue with the accessibility element of the scheme: a new assistive listening system and hand-held captioning equipment will be installed in its main theatre, and power-assisted doors will be fitted in its auditoria, rehearsal and backstage areas and offices.

Mercury Theatre, Colchester, £5,000

Mercury Theatre is undergoing a major capital project, Mercury Rising, to increase the influential theatre's arts education and participation, support emerging creative talent and provide an improved and more inclusive civic space for its local community to enjoy. Theatres Trust funding

will enable hearing loops to be installed to support audiences and hirers, staff and artists in all public areas of the Mercury Theatre, including rehearsal spaces, meeting rooms and box offices. The technology provides a subtle way for those who use hearing devices to benefit from a better quality of sound and a better overall experience.

Spire Arts Centre, Brighton, £5,000

The Spire is a creative space for theatre, dance and circus housed in the Grade II listed St Mark's Chapel. Theatres Trust will fund a comprehensive project, which includes levelling the existing entrance, removing the step up into the building, resurfacing the car park and main route into the building, creating two designated disabled bays, and providing clear signage to improve access around the car park into the theatre, ensuring complete level access to all areas.

Yvonne Arnaud Theatre, Guildford, £5,000

Yvonne Arnaud Theatre is a Grade II listed, purpose-built theatre, which presents more 600 drama performances a year in its main house, a combination of received and home-produced professional theatre productions. Theatres Trust is the sole funder of the project to upgrade the theatre's assistive audio system, which will significantly improve access to its programme.

Theatres Trust

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 performance. We champion the future of live performance by protecting and supporting excellent theatre buildings which meet the needs of their communities. We do this by providing advice on the design, planning, development and sustainability of theatres, campaigning on behalf of theatres old and new and offering financial assistance through grants.

Theatre Development Trust

Theatre Development Trust is the Society of London Theatre's affiliated registered charity. It offers grants to support its aim of championing a wide variety of initiatives that strengthen the future of the industry, thereby promoting and advancing the dramatic and other performing arts, for the benefit of the public.

All enquiries, high res images and further information:

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