



## **Theatres Trust awards grants of c£58,000 to help theatres survive and thrive, with £300,000 further funding available over the next three years**

Through its partnership with The Linbury Trust, Theatres Trust is awarding £58,060 split between 13 not-for-profit theatres in the second round of its Small Grants Programme. These awards are made as The Linbury Trust confirms the renewal of its funding for the Small Grants Programme, with a further £300,000 committed over the next three years to support the UK's beloved community venues.

Projects funded in this round of grants focus on improving theatres' accessibility and sustainability as well as urgent repairs and maintenance works that are essential to ongoing viability.

Glasgow's Citizens Theatre will install a Changing Places toilet as part of its major redevelopment programme, making the venue accessible to all for the first time in its history. Liverpool's Royal Court will purchase 35 devices to enable people with hearing and visual impairments and who do not have a smartphone access the assistive hearing systems or audio described performances, making productions in main house and studio theatre more accessible. Brookside Theatre in Romford and Seven Dials Playhouse in London will both make improvements to their box offices to be accessible and more welcoming to all audiences.

Omnibus Theatre in Clapham will upgrade its air conditioning and heating unit while Warminster Athenaeum will install a new ventilation system, both projects making the respective venues more comfortable for audiences and performers. Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds will replace its existing downlighters with LED alternatives that meet current safety standards. The Old Library Bodmin will install insulation on the roof its historic building. All of these projects will support the theatres to be more energy efficient and make vital cost savings.

The Garage in Norwich, Hackney Empire and The Robin Hood Theatre in Newark have all been awarded grants to carry out urgent repairs to their building's roof. Newport's Dolman Theatre will install WiFi across the whole building and improve its security system, while Sheppey Little Theatre has secured funding to repair its emergency lighting. These are all essential projects that enable the theatres to remain open and serving their local communities.

Jon Morgan, Director of Theatres Trust, comments, *After the pandemic there is a real desire across the theatre sector to 'build back better', to improve accessibility and sustainability and widen reach into communities. Theatres also need to recover from the serious impact of the pandemic on their own operations and support from grant schemes like this are vital in helping them on the road to recovery. Theatres Trust is hugely grateful to The Linbury Trust for committing to a further three years of funding, which will allow us to provide targeted support where it will have the biggest impact.*

Stuart Hopley, Director of The Linbury Trust, comments, *Congratulations to all the theatres across the UK who will be using these grants to make their spaces more accessible, sustainable and welcoming. We're thrilled to continue our partnership with Theatres Trust. Theatres play such an important role in local economies and, as we emerge from the long shadow of Covid, this funding will support vital improvements to help welcome back audiences, and for neighbourhood theatres to shine.*

The next round of the Small Grants Programme supported by The Linbury Trust is now open for applications with a deadline of Tuesday 3 May 2022.

## Notes to Editors

Title	Theatres Trust
Website	<a href="http://www.theatrestrust.org.uk/smallgrants">http://www.theatrestrust.org.uk/smallgrants</a>
Twitter	@TheatresTrust @TheLinburyTrust
Photograph	Citizens Theatre, Glasgow, credit Tommy Ga-Ken Wan

The first year of the Small Grants Programme has been made possible thanks to the generous support of The Linbury Trust, as well as donations from Judy Craymer CBE and Charles Michael Holloway Charitable Trust.

The Linbury Trust has committed to funding the scheme for a further three years, with funding totalling £300,000.

## Small Grants Programme recipients

Brookside Theatre, Romford, £4,782

An independent theatre based in a memorial hall, Brookside Theatre is run entirely by volunteers. The existing box office window is too high for wheelchair users and is very small. The remodelling project will lower the height to make it accessible to all users and increase the size to make it more welcoming.

Citizens Theatre, Glasgow, £5,000

Citizens Theatre is undergoing the first major redevelopment of its historic building since it opened as a theatre in 1878, a project that will see a new three-storey building constructed around the original Victorian auditorium. This grant will fund the installation of a Changing Places toilet, which provides extra space and equipment and is best practice in accessible design. The addition of this facility to the theatre's plans for improved accessibility to all areas of the redeveloped building means that for the first time since the theatre's inception, it will be welcoming to everyone.

Omnibus Theatre, London, £5,000

Omnibus Theatre is a 110-seat multi award-winning independent theatre in Clapham, South London. The project is to install an air conditioning and heating unit in the upstairs studio, to make the space more comfortable for audiences and visiting companies. The new system will make the venue more energy efficient and save money.

Dolman Theatre, Newport, £4,000

Owned and run by Newport Playgoers Society, the Dolman Theatre was purpose-built in 1967 and is located next to a shopping centre. With more empty units in the shopping centre, the theatre has been subject to an increase in vandalism and anti-social behaviour. The grant will enable a whole networking infrastructure to be installed in the building, providing additional security and free WiFi in all areas of the building, bringing it into line with modern visitor expectations.

The Garage, Norwich, £5,000

Based in a modern conversion of a 1930s coachworks, The Garage has been a theatre and performing arts hub since 2003. Urgent repairs of the flat roof are needed to prevent further water ingress to the stage area, an essential project for the future viability of the venue.

Hackney Empire, London, £5,000

Designed by renowned theatre architect Frank Matcham for the Stoll Moss Group, Hackney Empire opened in 1901 and is now a Grade II\* modern variety theatre at the heart of one of London's most diverse boroughs. Now in its 120<sup>th</sup> year, urgent roof repairs are needed to prevent water ingress and buddleia will be removed, which if left to grow could cause structural damage. This remedial

work is required before solar panels can be installed, which will make the building more environmentally sustainable and make substantial savings in energy costs.

#### Liverpool's Royal Court, £5,000

Art-Deco Grade II Royal Court Theatre has been at the heart of the Liverpool's culture for nearly 200 years and is the largest producing theatre in the city region, with a focus on engaging non-traditional theatre audiences. The funding will provide 35 devices to enable people with hearing and visual impairments to access main house and studio theatre productions. 12% of the theatre's audience identify as disabled and this will ensure those without smartphones can access the assistive hearing systems. These enhanced facilities will provide the ability to reach out to more support groups across Liverpool City region and encourage them to visit the theatre.

#### The Old Library Bodmin, £4,155

The Old Library Bodmin is located in a library and institute building dating back to 1897, but which became a performance space and community hub in 2018. With a prominent high street location, the Old Library plays an important role in supporting the revitalisation of the town. Funding is required to carry out roof insulation, which is often the most environmentally impactful course of action in heritage buildings like this.

#### Robin Hood Theatre, Newark, £3,039

Located in the grounds of Averham Rectory near Sherwood Forest, the Robin Hood Theatre was designed by a local rector in 1913 and became a public theatre in 1961. The grant will fund essential repairs to the flat roof over the rehearsal space, a key space used for their youth theatre and for hires.

#### Seven Dials Playhouse, London, £5,000

A 100-seater venue, Seven Dials Playhouse is the West End's home for the development of professional theatre and artists. The grant will fund a programme of work to improve the accessibility of the building, which was developed in the 1990s when accessibility was often an afterthought in building design. These include installing a new front door, a dropped box office and bar and creating level access to the theatre, which will remove barriers to access and participation.

#### Sheppey Little Theatre, £2,084

Opened in 1975, Sheppey Little Theatre is an active amateur theatre located in a converted Congregational Sunday School. The venue's emergency lighting needs to be replaced to ensure the building can be operated safely.

#### Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds, £5,000

Built in 1819, Theatre Royal Bury St Edmunds is Grade I listed and the last working Regency playhouse in the country. It is essential that the theatre replaces its existing lights with LED

alternatives, which will meet current fire regulations and have a big impact on environmental sustainability. This grant will specifically fund the new downlighters.

Warminster Athenaeum, £5,000

This community arts centre based in a Grade II listed building will update its ventilation system, to make the venue more Covid-safe and comfortable for audiences. The project requires the installation of six extraction units in the foyer, gallery and dressing rooms, four of which will be funded by this grant. The ventilation system will be cheaper to run than the current system, reducing electricity costs and carbon footprint.

## **Theatres Trust**

Theatres Trust is the national advisory public body for theatres. They believe that current and future generations should have access to good quality theatre buildings where they can be inspired by, and enjoy, live performance. They champion the future of live performance by protecting and supporting excellent theatre buildings which meet the needs of their communities. They 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.

During the pandemic Theatres Trust has supported theatres with advice on building maintenance, funding applications and business planning, as well as organising free webinars. Its previous grant scheme, the Theatre Reopening Fund, awarded more than £300k to 75 theatres to help prepare for reopening.

## **The Linbury Trust**

The Linbury Trust is an independent grant-making Trust established by Lord Sainsbury and his wife Anya, Lady Sainsbury CBE. The Trust funds compelling projects in the areas of culture, environment, social and community welfare; the Trust also funds work benefiting young people, older people and overseas humanitarian aid. [www.linburytrust.org.uk](http://www.linburytrust.org.uk)

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