



## Theatres Trust supports seven Theatres at Risk on the road to revival

Theatres Trust, the national advisory and advocacy body for theatres, has announced the second round of grants to be awarded through its Resilient Theatres: Resilient Communities programme.

The seven theatres to receive a share of the £57,850 fund are Amulet Theatre, Shepton Mallet; The Groundlings Theatre Trust, Portsmouth; Hulme Hippodrome, Manchester; Leith Theatre; Netherton Arts Centre, Dudley; Ramsbottom Co-op Hall; Spilsby Sessions House. The theatres are all on the Theatres at Risk Register 2024, published by Theatres Trust in January, and are at various stages in their journey to revival.

The grant programme aims to help the restoration, reopening or revitalising process for Theatres at Risk through funding expert support with focuses on increasing organisational resilience, improving skills and engaging more people with heritage projects. Work funded in this round includes fundraising and business planning strategies, community engagement and outreach, conditions surveys and an oral history project.

Jon Morgan, Director at Theatres Trust says, *Theatres Trust believes that every theatre on our Theatres at Risk Register has the potential to be brought back into use for its community with the right support. We are delighted to be able to award these grants, which will enable meaningful progress on the journey to resilience.*

Page | 1



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Funded thanks to a grant from The National Lottery Heritage Fund as well as funding from the Pilgrim Trust and Swire Charitable Trust, Resilient Theatres: Resilient Communities aims to reduce the threat to At Risk theatres and strengthen the theatre sector's resilience as it recovers from the pandemic and deals with the challenges of the cost-of-living crisis and difficult funding landscape.

Stuart McLeod, Director England – London & South at The National Lottery Heritage Fund, said: *It's fantastic that the second round of theatres that will benefit from this support has been announced. Our theatres are integral to our communities, but they've had to deal with unprecedented challenges in recent years. We want to support the UK's heritage to adapt and thrive with these challenges and this programme offers theatres a chance to do just that. The legacy of this will be felt for many years to come.*

Sue Bowers, Director of the Pilgrim Trust says, *The strength of community action to save these remarkable theatres at risk shines through these projects, and the Pilgrim Trust is delighted to support this vital support programme.*

## Notes to Editors

Website [www.theatretrust.org.uk](http://www.theatretrust.org.uk)  
Twitter @TheatresTrust #TheatresAtRisk  
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Instagram @theatretrust

Photo Credit Hulme Hippodrome, Ian Grundy, Theatres Trust

## Resilient Theatres: Resilient Communities grants recipients

### Amulet Theatre, Shepton Mallet, £6,700

A gift to Shepton Mallet by the local Babycham brewing family, the Amulet is an unusual Brutalist theatre with a unique retractable seating system which may be the only one in existence in the UK. It was added to the Theatres at Risk Register in 2022. It is currently in private ownership and had been threatened with redevelopment but there is widespread local support to see it returned to community and performance use. The campaign group trying to save the theatre, Shepton Mallet Community Enterprises CIC,

Page | 2



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has been awarded a grant to fund cladding investigation, as well fundraising and business planning support.

### **Groundlings Theatre, Portsmouth, £10,000**

The Groundlings Theatre is a Grade II\* listed Georgian building, originally built as a Beneficial School but with a public hall that was used for concerts, theatre and meetings. The grant will fund improvements to The Groundlings Theatre Trust's community outreach programme, including a review of the existing programme, creating a framework and tools for ongoing engagement and impact measurement and training for staff to develop their outreach and evaluation practice.

### **Leith Theatre, £7,000**

Previously threatened by residential development and empty between 1988 and 2017, the Leith Theatre complex is currently being restored and reopened to provide spaces for the creative industries and a variety of cultural performances, events and community programming. Since taking over the building, Leith Theatre Trust has undertaken an incremental approach to the development of the organisation and the refurbishment of the building. The organisation is undertaking an oral history project linked to its outreach programme and community engagement strategy. Having already secured funding for the technical equipment, this grant will cover the project development including upskilling staff and volunteers.

### **Hulme Hippodrome, Manchester, £7,500**

A music hall with a spectacular auditorium with gilded Rococo plasterwork and a Floral Hall, an Edwardian atrium and waiting area for theatre patrons. An iconic building of social, historical, and architectural significance, Hulme Hippodrome is currently in private ownership and a state of poor repair. Local campaign group Save Hulme Hippodrome will receive funding to work with consultants to lead a series of community conversations with a focus on the future use of the building, in particular talking to groups that have not been engaged with much so far including families with children, young adults and community groups, as well as key stakeholders.

### **Netherton Arts Centre, Dudley, £7,100**

Netherton Arts Centre is an important locally listed Victorian building, which has provided community and entertainment space for residents since its opening in 1883 until 2021. It was added to the Theatres at Risk list in 2022. Primrose Hill Community



Church will receive funding for a mixed range of activity to support the building reopening, including a survey condition of doors and windows, expert support for writing funding applications and the initial phase of a feasibility study.

### **Ramsbottom Co-op Hall, £11,050**

Built as an integral part of an extension to the Ramsbottom Industrial and Provident Society's estate; the theatre is a rare surviving example from the Co-operative movement. Ramsbottom Co-op Hall was added to the Theatres at Risk Register in 2021 and around the same time, Theatres Trust successfully applied to have the building listed at Grade II. Ramsbottom Co-op Hall Heritage Trust will receive funding for community engagement, updating its business, operational and activity plans and developing a fundraising and income strategy. This will involve training and support to increase the skills, knowledge and expertise of the Board and volunteers.

### **Spilsby Sessions House, £8,500**

Spilsby Sessions House became a theatre in 1984, converted from a former sessions house and gaol built in 1827. It is the only venue for dedicated arts and community activity in Spilsby. Added to the Theatres at Risk Register in 2016 due the main auditorium being closed due to an unsafe ceiling, Spilsby Sessions House has since made great progress towards achieving its ambition to save this important local theatre, including purchasing the building from its previous owner in 2023. This grant will enable the organisation to work with experienced consultants to develop and implement a fundraising strategy for both its capital works programme and essential future revenue costs and to develop a strategic road map detailing the necessary steps required for the venue to be fully operational.

## **Theatres Trust**

Theatres Trust is the national advice and advocacy body for the UK's theatres supporting all forms of theatres, whether old or new, commercial, subsidised or community-run.

We protect theatres and champion the future of live performance by advising and supporting our nation's theatres to develop best practice in design and management following the four principles of resilience, environmental sustainability, inclusivity and placemaking.



## National Lottery Heritage Fund

Using money raised by the National Lottery, we **inspire, lead** and **resource** the UK's heritage to create **positive and lasting change** for people and communities, now and in the future. Each week, National Lottery players raise £30million for good causes across the UK. Since The National Lottery began in 1994, National Lottery players have raised over £43billion for projects and more than 635,000 grants have been awarded across the UK.

[www.heritagefund.org.uk](http://www.heritagefund.org.uk) | Follow @HeritageFundUK on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) and use #NationalLotteryHeritageFund

## Pilgrim Trust

Pilgrim Trust is an independent charitable trust that was set up in 1930 by Edward Harkness to support the urgent and future needs of the UK. Over the decades, we have supported a wide range of causes, adapting to the changing circumstances and needs in the UK. We give around £3million in grants each year to charities and other public bodies that focus on preserving the UK's heritage or bringing about social change. Our aims are to improve the life chances of the most vulnerable and preserve the best of our past for the public to enjoy. [www.thepilgrimtrust.org.uk/](http://www.thepilgrimtrust.org.uk/) | @ThePilgrimTrust

## Swire Charitable Trust

Swire Charitable Trust is an independent UK grant making trust. Since 1975 it has supported a wide range of charities that share its commitment to delivering positive and lasting change to UK society.

[www.swirecharitabletrust.org.uk/](http://www.swirecharitabletrust.org.uk/) | @Swire\_CT

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