



Theatres Trust funds vital accessibility and sustainability projects at 19 theatres

Theatres Trust, the national advisory body for theatres, is awarding more than £93,000 from its Small Grants Programme supported by The Linbury Trust to 19 theatres to help them to improve their sustainability, access and viability.

Addressing barriers to accessibility and supporting the diversification of its programmes, Rich Mix in the East End of London will install a new infrared hearing system in its Studio Theatre. Judith Kilvington, CEO of Rich Mix, comments, “It’s fantastic that the Theatres Trust has a small grants programme where you can apply for small pots of funding on a regular basis. At Rich Mix in East London, as we work to ensure everyone has access to theatre and the arts, it is so important for us to increase our access provision for D/deaf and hearing-impaired audiences and artists. Thank you so much to Theatres Trust and The Linbury Trust.”

Other accessibility-related projects funded by Theatres Trust include Beccles Public Hall and Questors Theatre, which will install accessibility equipment in their auditoria to better support their audiences. Marine Theatre Lyme Regis and The Chipping Norton Theatre will improve toilet and washroom facilities backstage for disabled performers, creatives and staff.

Sheringham Little Theatre is refitting its volunteer-run café with Theatres Trust funding. Over the past two years, the café has become a key support hub for the community in the face of social isolation and the cost-of-living crisis. This project will make the café more accessible and environmentally sustainable, enabling the theatre to provide a warm and safe space for local residents. Debbie Thompson, Theatre Director, Sheringham Little Theatre, comments, “We are so grateful to Theatres Trust, as this funding will allow us to develop the community activities in The Hub café; we know how

vital this space is for local people and how events there can act as a gateway to the theatre programme.”

Theatres Trust funding will also support a range of sustainability projects at Eden Court Theatre, Lemon Tree Aberdeen, Oxford Playhouse, Soho Theatre, and The Players Theatre in Thame aimed at reducing energy or water use. Taunton Brewhouse, Eastgate Theatre in Peebles, Exeter Phoenix, Royal Court Theatre Bacup, and National Youth Theatre’s Workshop Theatre in London will all use their grants to install LED lighting across various areas of their buildings.

The Small Grants Programme will benefit audience comfort at Shanklin Theatre where it will support essential improvements to front-of-house facilities and will safeguard operational viability at Wardrobe Theatre and Georgian Theatre Royal where refurbishment projects will support safety and security measures.

Jon Morgan, Director of Theatres Trust, comments, “We are delighted to support such a range of theatres across the UK, including a number of small scale, community and volunteer run theatres, to expand on the good work they are already doing to improve accessibility, sustainability and viability. We are pleased to have been able to offer more grants than in previous rounds thanks to the generous support of The Linbury Trust, Charles Michael Holloway Charitable Trust and the Mackintosh Foundation.”

Stuart Hobley, Director of The Linbury Trust, comments, “Theatres are amazing places; fun, engaging and emotive – often where special memories are created. The work funded here is not only vital to improving theatre buildings but essential in ensuring these much-loved spaces can both welcome their community and continue to share their powerful stories.”

The next round of the Small Grants Programme supported by The Linbury Trust is now open for applications with a deadline of 12 January 2024.

Notes to Editors

Website	www.theatrestrust.org.uk
Twitter	@TheatresTrust #TheatresAtRisk
Facebook	/theatres.trust
Instagram	@theatrestrust
Photo Credit	Rich Mix by Sharron Wallace

The Small Grants Programme was launched thanks to The Linbury Trust’s generous support and donations from Judy Craymer CBE and Charles Michael Holloway Charitable Trust.

In February 2022, The Linbury Trust committed to £300,000 to the scheme over three years; in autumn 2022 the Mackintosh Foundation committed to £150,000 over five years.

Small Grants Programme recipients

Beccles Public Hall and Theatre, £4,700

A 200-seat independently run community theatre that plays an integral part in bringing arts to a geographically excluded community. A grant from Theatres Trust will fund a replacement audio and speaker system with lower energy usage that will integrate with the theatre's hearing assistance system, supporting more audiences with auditory and sensory requirements.

Eastgate Theatre and Arts Centre, Peebles, £5,000

Eastgate Theatre opened in 2004 in a grade B-listed former nineteenth-century church building on Peebles high street. The theatre is undergoing a phased capital project to upgrade its facilities and a Theatres Trust grant will allow it to complete the transition to LED lighting within the main auditorium, a sustainability-focused project to save energy and reduce bills.

Eden Court Theatre, Inverness, £5,000

Purpose-built in 1976, Eden Court Theatre is a large theatre, cinema and arts venue in the Highlands. It is Grade A listed as one of the most significant post-war theatres in the UK. A grant from Theatres Trust will fund a sustainability project to migrate to new Building Management System software for better, more efficient energy usage across the building. This is one of a number of planned environmental upgrades.

Exeter Phoenix, £4,847

The Royal Albert Memorial College dating from 1909 was converted into the 270-seat Exeter Phoenix in 1999. A Theatres Trust grant will upgrade the auditorium lighting rig to LED, reducing energy consumption by 80%. This upgrade will also allow greater flexibility and functionality in programming for the theatre – which plans to start live streaming and digital recordings – and for its visiting companies and artists.

Georgian Theatre Royal, Richmond, £5,000

Built in 1788, The Georgian Theatre Royal in Richmond, North Yorkshire, is the oldest working theatre in Britain and is Grade I listed. It houses the country's oldest scenery in its exhibition centre. A Theatres Trust grant will replace the old fire alarm with a more

modern system to protect the fabric of this significant building and its irreplaceable historical materials.

Lemon Tree, Aberdeen, £4,120

The Lemon Tree opened in 1992 in the former St Katherine's Club, built in the 1930s. Its two performance spaces provide intimate opportunities to see an array of small-scale performing arts within the northeast of Scotland. A grant from Theatres Trust will purchase equipment to introduce a machine-driven cleaning process for its performance and public spaces. This is a sustainability project that will reduce water used for the cleaning of floors by 95%. There are operational benefits; it is a faster process than manual cleaning and provides a more hygienic clean.

Marine Theatre, Lyme Regis, £5,000

The Marine Theatre, a cultural and community hub, opened in 1894. With a Theatres Trust grant it will install a disabled toilet facility in its backstage area, removing barriers to access for performers, creatives and others at the theatre. The project is one in a suite of works undertaken to improve the accessibility and sustainability of the venue.

Oxford Playhouse, £5,000

Built as a repertory theatre in 1938 and now Grade II* listed. A grant from Theatres Trust will fund air curtains across its main foyer doors, which are currently poor insulators. This sustainability project is part of a wider viability project to improve the facilities for hire within the building and to attract more visitors.

Questors Theatre, London, £5,000

Questors is a well-established community theatre based in Ealing, West London. A Theatres Trust grant will install a Stagertext captioning system in the main auditorium to improve access to audiences from the D/deaf and hearing-impaired community, as well as from communities for whom English is not the first language.

Rich Mix, London, £4,906

Located near Brick Lane in Shoreditch, Rich Mix is community arts centre and independent cinema that opened in 2006 in a converted leather factory. A Theatres Trust grant will allow the venue to purchase and install a new infrared hearing system in the Studio Theatre, where most of the theatre and dance performances take place. This accessibility project will increase the range of art forms D/deaf and hearing-impaired audiences can enjoy.

Royal Court Theatre, Bacup, £5,000

The 500-seat Royal Court Theatre, in theatre use since 1893, is an active community theatre serving a deprived area in Lancashire. A Theatres Trust grant will allow the theatre to replace its theatre and stage lighting with LEDs, as part of a longer-term plan to install energy-efficient lighting across the venue to improve its sustainability and reduce its overheads.

Shanklin Theatre, Isle of Wight, £5,000

The Grade II listed, 615-seat Shanklin Theatre is volunteer-led and operated. Built as Shanklin Institute in 1879, theatre use began in 1934. A grant from Theatres Trust will complete phase one of the theatre's project to expand the provision of female toilet facilities in the foyer bar. This project will significantly increase the number of women's toilets, cutting queue times and providing a better audience experience.

Sheringham Little Theatre, £5,000

The 160-seat Little Theatre was built in 1897 as a meeting hall for social events. The grant from Theatres Trust will contribute to works to make the volunteer-led café more environmentally sustainable through improvements to insulation, heating, and lighting systems. An improved café environment will enable the theatre to provide a more flexible and accessible community hub for local residents.

Soho Theatre, London, £5,000

Soho Theatre was opened in 2000 and has established itself as London's most vibrant producer for new theatre, cabaret and comedy. A Theatres Trust grant will allow the theatre to replace and upgrade its existing hot water boilers supplying the building. This sustainability project will also improve the theatre's viability by reducing heating and maintenance costs.

Taunton Brewhouse, £5,000

The Brewhouse, the only venue in Taunton, was purpose built in 1975 by public demand. A Theatres Trust grant will upgrade the flooring and install energy-saving LED lighting in the studio space. Improving its studio facilities for hires will allow the Brewhouse to generate more income, supporting the theatre's overall viability.

The Players Theatre, Thame, £5,000

The 128-seat theatre opened in a former church hall in 1997. It is Thame's only live performance venue. A grant from Theatres Trust will help replace the theatre's outdated and inefficient air conditioning unit with a much more energy-efficient and

environmentally friendly system. This project is part of a wider set of sustainability improvements planned to help the theatre on its journey to becoming carbon neutral.

The Theatre Chipping Norton, £4,538

The 200-seat theatre opened in 1975 in a converted Salvation Army Citadel. A Theatres Trust grant will help turn a backstage toilet into a fully accessible wetroom and toilet. This accessibility project removes barriers to access and will allow the theatre to confidently include more disability-focused work in its programme as it continues its journey to be more inclusive.

Wardrobe Theatre, Bristol, £4,919

The Wardrobe Theatre is a fringe studio venue and arts hub in Bristol. It will use its Theatres Trust grant to replace the aging and almost obsolete fire exit doors with new push-release fire doors that adhere to modern safety standards. The project will ensure the safety, security, and viability of the theatre, and improve disabled and wheelchair access backstage.

Workshop Theatre, London, £5,000

The National Youth Theatre built its first on-site theatre space Workshop Theatre in 2021 where it develops performance and technical skills of young people aged 14-25. A grant from Theatres Trust will support replacement lighting equipment in the theatre, as the current equipment (purchased second-hand) is now failing. The new equipment will ensure the quality of its technical experience for its own productions and visiting companies.

Theatres Trust

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

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The Linbury Trust

The Linbury Trust is an independent grant-making Trust established by Lord Sainsbury and his wife Anya, Lady Sainsbury CBE. It funds compelling projects in the area of

culture, environment, social and community welfare; and also funds work benefiting young people, older people and overseas humanitarian aid.

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