



Theatres Trust awards grants over £115,000, with more than half a million available across the next three years to improve theatre sustainability

Through its partnership with the Wolfson Foundation, Theatres Trust is awarding £115,982 to six theatres to help them become more environmentally sustainable. These awards are made as the Wolfson Foundation announces the renewal of its funding for the Theatre Improvement Scheme, with a further £510,000 in total to be awarded over the next three years.

The latest round of the Theatre Improvement Scheme is funding six leading theatres with projects that will help them reduce energy consumption, operate more sustainably and reinvest savings in artists and community projects.

The UK's first purpose-built theatre-in-the-round, the New Vic in Newcastle-under-Lyme, receives funding to replace or renovate the original windows in the backstage areas, which date back to the theatre's inception in the 1980s. This simple change is estimated to reduce the building's CO2 emissions by 35%.

Storyhouse in Chester acts as a warm hub for the community in the winter months, so it is vitally important that its spaces can be heated efficiently. Its solar energy capacity will be trebled with the installation of additional solar panels. This will reduce carbon emissions, help the theatre generate more self-sustaining power, and make significant savings.

Battersea Arts Centre will undertake a major upgrade of its Building Management System (BMS), which will radically improve its ability to manage energy consumption, reduce its carbon footprint and enable effective monitoring across more of the building. Birmingham Rep has identified a problem with how the air in its main auditorium is heated, wasting energy and leading to audience discomfort. This will be resolved by the installation of new fans, funded through this grant scheme.

Switching to energy-efficient lighting is recognised as making a significant impact to theatres' sustainability with both Midlands Arts Centre (MAC) in Birmingham and Park

Theatre in London receiving funding to switch to LED lighting in this round of the scheme.

Jon Morgan, Director of Theatres Trust, comments, *Environmental sustainability is a cornerstone of Theatres Trust's work to support theatres to be fit for the future. We are therefore delighted to be able to support not only another six theatres in this round but more theatres over the next three years thanks to the generous ongoing support of the Wolfson Foundation.*

Paul Ramsbottom, chief executive of the Wolfson Foundation, said, *The projects we have funded with Theatres Trust highlight how practical changes can greatly improve an organisation's environmental and financial sustainability. At a time when the UK's performing arts sector is facing significant challenges, we are pleased to be able to renew our partnership with Theatres Trust for a further three years to continue support for imaginative and important responses to the climate crisis.*

Since Theatres Trust and the Wolfson Foundation started working together in 2017, grants totalling more than £750,000 have been awarded to help 46 theatres across the UK improve their buildings, including 32 grants to improve environmental sustainability. This latest partnership renewal takes the commitment to over £1.25m.

The next round of the Theatre Improvement Scheme will reopen for applications in late spring 2024. The deadline for applications will be Friday 6 September. Further details on the scheme can be found at <http://www.theatrust.org.uk/how-we-help/grants-funding/theatre-improvement-scheme>

Notes to Editors

Title	Theatres Trust
Website	www.theatrust.org.uk
Twitter	@TheatresTrust
Photo	Storyhouse, Chester, credit Mark Carline

Theatre Improvement Scheme grant recipients

Battersea Arts Centre, London – £18,620

Based in a late nineteenth-century town hall, Battersea Arts Centre was initially created as a community arts centre in 1974 and is celebrating its 50th birthday this year. The grant will fund Battersea Arts Centre to extend its Building Management System (BMS) to 90% of the building. At present it only operates to control the renovated Grand Hall which was re-opened in 2018. This upgrade will improve environmental conditions and

reduce unnecessary heat production, as well as enable the organisation to monitor energy usage more effectively.

Birmingham Rep, Birmingham – £20,000

Birmingham Repertory Theatre was designed by architect Graham Winteringham and officially opened in 1971. The main auditorium has a problem with stratification of the air, where it is hottest at the top of the theatre and decreases lower down, meaning that a lot of energy is used to heat the auditorium. The grant will fund the installation of new fans, which will solve this problem by moving the air and de-stratify the temperature gradient. The House accounts for 25% of The Rep's heat use overall. These works will reduce energy consumption by up to 30%. As well as reducing energy usage, it will also improve audience comfort in the auditorium.

Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham – £17,362

First opened in 1962, MAC is an arts charity located outside of Birmingham city centre in a diverse community. The project funded will upgrade front-of-house illumination to use LED fixtures. MAC estimates that this will save 31,672 KWh per year, with a financial saving of £4,000, which will be invested in new creative work and enable visiting artists and companies to use the facilities at a reduced cost. This significant improvement is part of MAC's long-term commitment to reduce their energy consumption and find more sustainable solutions for their venue and theatres.

New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme – £20,000

The New Vic was the first purpose-built theatre-in-the-round in Europe. The project part-funds a significant programme of replacing or renovating many of the windows in the backstage area, which should lead to a 35% reduction in CO₂ emissions.

Park Theatre, London – £20,000

The Park Theatre opened in May 2013, and is the first theatre in Finsbury Park since the Rainbow Theatre closed in 1982. The theatre is currently undertaking a major project to upgrade their entire theatre rig to LED units and this grant will provide 20% of the funds necessary to replace all of the lighting, with the project being undertaken incrementally as funding becomes available. Once the whole project is completed it, the theatre will use 7559kg less carbon and the improvements will also mean savings for visiting producers as they will not have to hire more specialised lighting.

Storyhouse, Chester – £20,000

Storyhouse is situated in a converted 1936 Odeon cinema. It was re-purposed as an arts centre and library, opening in 2017 and is the only arts venue in Chester. The project funded is part of a comprehensive plan to reduce emissions through extending the existing array of solar panels on the roof of the building, trebling its energy-

generating capacity. In winter months, Storyhouse is a warm hub, providing shelter from the cold to keep communities safe, well and warm over winter.

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.

The Wolfson Foundation

[The Wolfson Foundation](#) is an independent charity with a focus on research and education. Its aim is to support civil society by investing in excellent projects in science, health, heritage, humanities and arts.

Since it was established in 1955, some £1bn (£2bn in real terms) has been awarded to more than 12,000 projects throughout the UK, all on the basis of expert review.

Funding for the Theatre Improvement Scheme is part of a wider investment in the cultural sector, supporting museums and galleries, historic sites, educational institutions as well as performing arts organisations.

Twitter: [@wolfsonfdn](#)

All enquiries, high res images and further information:

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