

# Annual Report 2024

Theatres  
Trust



April 2023–March 2024





# Theatres Trust 47<sup>th</sup> Annual Report

Period ended 31 March 2024

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**Theatres Trust**  
**The National Advisory Body for Theatres**  
**Protecting theatres for everyone**

Incorporating the Annual Report  
of The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund  
Registered Charity No: 274697

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# Chair & Director's report

**As the UK's theatres continued to recover from the pandemic and face new cost of living and funding challenges, Theatres Trust launched its new three-year strategy 2023-26, Theatres Fit for the Future, to ensure the organisation responds to the changing socio-economic context and continues to support theatres to thrive. The new strategy focuses on four key themes that underpin the health of our theatre network: resilience, inclusion, sustainability and placemaking.**

2023/24 saw us deliver the first year of the new strategy and, as well as embedding these themes into our advice and planning work, we have delivered a range of initiatives to help strengthen our work across all four themes.

## Resilience

Alongside advising theatres around business planning and fundraising, through our Small Grants Programme with the Linbury Trust, we helped twenty three theatres with urgent repairs to avoid closure, cost-saving sustainability improvements and enhanced digital capability.

We completed the first year of our Resilient Theatres: Resilient Communities programme which focuses on ensuring theatres on our At Risk list and others facing challenges have the skills and the guidance to navigate their difficulties and find a viable future, through training events, grants and access to a bank of specialist consultants for bespoke advice.

We also supported theatres dealing with structural issues due to the presence of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) panels, partnering with the Association of British Theatre Technicians to publish an advice note, working with individual theatres on surveying and mitigation measures, and regularly updating the Department of Culture, Media and Sport with the latest intelligence on how theatres are being affected.

## Sustainability

We led the work to develop a more secure governance structure for the innovative Theatre Green Book to ensure it can be developed further and to promote even wider uptake. As well as taking on the secretariat, Theatres Trust raised funds and employed a part-time Coordinator.

We also continued our multi-year partnership with the Wolfson Foundation offering grants for sustainability improvements to a further six theatres, as well as advising theatres and responding to planning proposals for sustainability improvements.

## Inclusion

We advised theatres on ways to improve access for people with disabilities, recommended access improvements in our planning responses and gave grants to fourteen theatres to make much needed upgraded accessibility provision.

We initiated a programme of work to ensure that our own organisation is inclusive, including training for all trustees and staff and establishing a team Equality, Diversity and Inclusion working group to review our policies and working practices. We participated for a second year in the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities funded Boardroom Apprentice scheme which aims to diversify the boards of public bodies, welcoming our new Apprentice in January 2024.

## Placemaking

We advocated for the placemaking value of theatres at both local authority and national government level. This included responding to fifty local planning policy consultations, four national planning policy consultations and speaking at local authority culture and planning events.

Understanding the complex diversity of the UK's theatre types, scales, management, funding models and building condition is vital in informing our advice work and our advocacy for the value of theatres in

communities across the country. We made significant progress this year in scoping the UK's first comprehensive database of theatres. We continue to explore costs and funding options to deliver the database.

## Supporters, Ambassadors, Trustees and staff

We remain extremely grateful to all our dedicated funders, donors, legacies, sponsors, Corporate Supporters, Patrons and Friends, including the many theatre producers and venues who supported our successful Christmas bucket campaign. We would also like to thank our Ambassadors who have been so helpful with fundraising and continue to lend their valuable voices in support of our work.

We are grateful to the Trustees who freely give up their valuable time to offer their expertise in support of the Trust's work. We would also like to express our thanks and gratitude to the staff team who have worked incredibly hard to deliver a strong programme of activity in support of theatres.

Sadly in 2024 we lost three very dear, committed and dedicated Theatres Trust colleagues, Rupert Rhymes (past Chair), John Earl (past Director) and Ruth Eastwood (past Vice Chair and Theatres Adviser). All of them were dedicated and knowledgeable experts who made a major contribution to the organisation and we want to mark our respect and gratitude for all they have done for Theatres Trust.

**Dave Moutrey OBE**  
Chair

**Jon Morgan**  
Director

# Our mission, purposes & activities and vision

## Our Mission

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.

## Our purposes & activities

The purposes of The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund are:

'To promote the advancement and improvement of general education in relation to all aspects of the dramatic arts and the development of public appreciation of such arts, particularly by promoting the maintenance, use and better protection of theatres and places of entertainment for the benefit of the nation by all charitable means.'

The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund (Registered Charity No: 27469) was established in 1977 to support and deliver the work of the Theatres Trust, which was established in 1976 by Act of Parliament. The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport appoints the 15 trustees of the Theatres Trust. Trustees sit on the councils of both the Theatres Trust and The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund and are responsible for governance of both organisations. They meet quarterly and guide the strategic direction of the Trust's work, which is delivered through its staff team.

## Our Vision

### Theatres Fit for the Future

We believe people should have access to theatres wherever they live across the UK, whether in small communities, towns or cities, so they can engage in creative activity and attend live performance.

Theatres have a positive role to play in placemaking, contributing to the local economy and to people's well-being, making our villages, towns and cities great places to live, work and visit.

Theatres are central to the continued health and vibrancy of the theatre sector which depends on well designed and well-run theatres of all scales and styles across the country, nurturing talent, providing platforms and engaging with their diverse local communities.

In order to play this vital role in our communities and in the theatre sector, theatres need to be resilient, environmentally sustainable and inclusive.

## Review of 2023/24

We are reporting our work in 2023/24 against our three main aims, as follows:

### Advice & Planning

**To provide expert advice on the design and management of theatres as live performance spaces that are resilient, environmentally sustainable, inclusive and contribute to placemaking.**

### Campaigning

**To advocate and influence key stakeholders about the importance of theatres in placemaking and in the theatre ecology in order to secure the future of the UK's theatres.**

### Grant giving

**To provide strategic capital and other funding to theatres to help them become and remain resilient, environmentally sustainable, inclusive and to contribute to local placemaking.**

# Achievements and performance

## Advice & Planning

To provide expert advice on the design and management of theatres as live performance spaces that are resilient, environmentally sustainable, inclusive and contribute to placemaking.

### Advice

#### One-to-one expert advice

Over 2023/24, we provided advice to 132 theatres. Many of those theatres were provided advice on an ongoing basis throughout the year. This included a broad range of advice from business planning and fundraising advice, through to more technical advice on RAAC (reinforced autoclaved aerated concrete) and sustainability. We saw more requests for advice relating to fundraising and a significant emerging trend was from councils seeking advice on the outsourcing of theatre operations. Our advice to theatres also included support to 34 theatres / theatre groups on the Theatres at Risk Register 2023 and to the two theatres (Abbeylea Picture House and the Epstein Theatre) that were added to the 2024 Theatres at Risk Register.

#### Resilient Theatres: Resilient Communities

Funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Pilgrim Trust and Swire Charitable Trust, Resilient Theatres: Resilient Communities is our three-year pilot programme aiming to reduce the threat to at risk theatres and enrich the knowledge, skills and confidence of the theatre sector. We have completed the first full year of programme delivery, providing tailored support to groups working with At Risk theatres through an annual round of grants,

advice from a bank of 76 specialist consultants and a training programme focusing on governance for a cohort of eight Theatres at Risk. We also delivered a series of three webinars for the wider sector on heritage projects, fundraising for capital projects and governance, which were attended by a total of 203 people.

## The Forum, Northallerton

The Forum has a small staff team supported by many volunteers and like many theatres, it was being challenged by rising costs and the difficulty of maintaining and developing audiences post-Covid. Trustees had identified that this could have an impact on the theatre's potential viability, so contacted Theatres Trust for support to address this before it became a problem. They were particularly interested in support with audience development and fundraising. We identified a consultant with relevant skills to work with the group, who produced a report including bespoke recommendations for Trustees including strategies for volunteer engagement, audience development and fundraising advice, and an outline case for support. This will provide The Forum with a useful roadmap for the years ahead.

#### Sustainability and Theatre Green Book

Theatres Trust has taken on the role of secretariat for the Theatre Green Book UK and worked with partners to develop and chair a new governance and management structure along with the Association of British Theatre Technicians (ABTT), Buro Happold, Renew Culture, UK Theatre/Society of London Theatre and The National Theatre and National Theatre of Scotland. To support this new structure we were able to appoint a part time Coordinator thanks to support from ABTT, UK Theatre/SOLT and The Steel Charitable Trust. The ambition for Theatre Green Book UK is for all theatres in the UK to achieve Theatre Green Book baseline standards across buildings operations and productions by the end of 2026.



To support this, in 24/25 we will create a new version of the book along with a range of tools and trackers to help theatres progress on their journey to Net Zero by 2030 and we also plan to appoint a part-time Director for the Theatre Green Book UK. We are grateful to the Foyle Foundation, the Frederick Mulder Foundation and Unusual Rigging for their support for this further work.

## Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC)

Following news of the closure of the Brunton Theatre at the end of March 2023, Theatres Trust engaged with colleagues within the theatre sector and with structural engineers to understand more about the material and the scale of the issue. This early investigation allowed Theatres Trust in conjunction with the Association of British Theatre Technicians (ABTT) to publish a new advice note explaining the nature of the construction material and signposting to guidance on RAAC. We have since given advice to three theatres regarding RAAC ranging from advice on undertaking initial review and survey work to understand whether their theatres are affected through to discussions with theatres where RAAC has been discovered. We also reached out to venues that closed due to RAAC to understand mitigation measures that were being put in place to support the theatre and future operation. In addition to working with theatres, we also engaged with DCMS to ensure that the government was aware of the impact on the theatre sector.

## Planning

Through its role as a statutory consultee and through it wider planning advice, Theatres Trust safeguards theatre use and ensures theatre buildings are fit for purpose

We responded to 140 planning applications, 123 listed building consultations, 22 pre-applications and four planning appeals in 2023/24 across the UK. Of these consultations, 242 were from England, 25 from Scotland, 22 from Wales and 0 from Northern Ireland, and we achieved a 100% record of responses submitted within the agreed timeframes.

We advised on a wide range of planning applications including for substantial extensions to enhance facilities at the Alexandra Theatre in Bognor Regis, the Marina Theatre in Lowestoft, the Royal Court in Liverpool, the Todmorden Hippodrome, the Hexagon in Reading, the Yard in Hackney Wick, London and the Chesil Theatre in Winchester. At the Harlow Playhouse and Shanklin Theatre on Isle of Wight there are to be new facilities provided within separate buildings. We also commented on refurbishment plans and significant internal alterations at Stephen Joseph Theatre in Scarborough, the Pyramid Arts Centre in Warrington, the Cornerstone Theatre in Sutton-in-Ashfield and the Brook Theatre in Chatham.

We advised on a number of applications relating to buildings on our Theatres at Risk list. We made an initial objection to residential development with some proposed homes directly adjoining the rear of the auditorium of Borough Hall in Greenwich, London due to lack of acoustic assessment which

## Alexandra Theatre, Bognor Regis

With origins going back to an Edwardian entertainment complex, the Regis Centre in Bognor Regis houses the Alexandra Theatre, a well-regarded theatre that is in need of some upgrades and improvements to support the venue's viability. We supported plans which included an expanded café / bar which opens onto the public square, enhanced wheelchair accessibility and a Changing Places facility, creating two more studios and upgraded WC facilities. However, we also recommended further thought into the redevelopment of back-of-house areas and on how a theatre programme can be maintained within the local area to ensure that audiences are not lost while the works take place. The application was approved by Arun District Council.

was subsequently undertaken. We objected to plans to convert Conwy's Civic Hall to a food hall and holiday apartments due to loss of its theatre provision without replacement and no evidence it was surplus to requirements. Whilst we did not object to the principle of development at the Garrick in Southport which would see its auditorium utilised as an events venue with hotel and residential uses around it, we were unable to support the plans due to lack of information and justification as well as concern around the level of harm in heritage terms.

We also objected to a number of other developments that would have resulted in irreversible loss of working theatres or valuable theatre heritage. This included loss of the Open Stage Performing Arts in Northampton to residential use; it is in active use and no justification or evidence to support its loss had been provided. The application was subsequently refused. We initially objected to loss of historic cisterns at Leeds Grand Theatre & Opera House, following which an improved proposal came forward keeping one on display with a plaque to explain its significance. Similarly following an initial objection to works at the Dome in Worthing the applicant submitted additional plans. One of our appeal responses was concerning a neighbouring development to which we had objected due to harm to the setting of the Old Vic in Lambeth, London. We support the position of the local authority and wish to see the appeal dismissed.

We welcomed plans to create a new theatre space within a disused methodist chapel in Winchcombe, Gloucestershire to be called the Winchcombe Arts &

Community Hub. We also supported the change of use and internal alterations at the former Gaumont in Camden Town which after many years of bingo use will return to theatre use for an immersive theatre and cinema operator.

### Local Plans and Planning Policy

Theatres Trust received 367 local planning policy consultations over the year. We responded to 50 of these where they needed enhancing to include the protection and enhancement of cultural facilities in the local authority's planning policies. These included local plans, development management policies, area action plans, neighbourhood plans, supplementary planning documents, and community infrastructure levy consultations.

## Shanklin Theatre, Isle of Wight

Shanklin Theatre is a building that Theatres Trust has had a long history of supporting, helping local campaigners to set up Shanklin Theatre and Community Trust to take over running the venue when its future was under threat. More recently we have supported the theatre through planning advice about a proposed new performing arts centre. Due to the constraints of its statutory listing and there being a lack of space, there was no way to expand the existing theatre, therefore a neighbouring site was identified. The proposed works will provide a new 106-seat flexible auditorium, studios and a heritage centre. We met with the theatre to discuss its plans prior to submitting a planning application. We highlighted some points for further consideration and provided a letter of overall support. The planning permission has now been granted for the scheme.



# Campaigning

To advocate and influence key stakeholders about the importance of theatres in placemaking and in the theatre ecology in order to secure the future of the UK's theatres.

## Theatres Fit for the Future

We launched our refreshed vision and three-year business plan, under the tagline 'Theatres Fit for the Future' at the International Theatre Engineering and Architecture Conference (ITEAC) in September, where Theatres Trust co-hosted the reception. The vision and business plan are focused on four key principles of resilience, inclusivity, sustainability and placemaking. To promote our refreshed focus and our priority projects under four themes, we made a short video with the help of Ambassadors Samira Ahmed, Pippa Bennett-Warner, Simon Callow and Gary Kemp. This was screened for the first time at the ITEAC reception and subsequently used across our digital channels and at fundraising events.

## Advocating for support and investment in theatres

Theatres continued to face a challenging post-pandemic environment, adjusting to new audience patterns and continued cost of living pressures. In particular, rising energy costs threatened the viability of many theatres and escalating construction costs risked jeopardising much-needed theatre capital improvement projects. Theatres Trust worked with a wide range of stakeholders, and through articles and blogs, to put the case for support to help theatres weather these storms, as well as supporting theatres directly who were facing these issues.

We engaged with government around the pressing need for additional capital investment in theatres, both to address historic under-investment and to help make income generating and cost saving improvements, including reduced energy usage. As a result of this work, towards the end of the year DCMS commissioned research into the capital and maintenance needs of theatres. Theatres Trust helped scope the tender document and subsequently worked with the appointed consultants to advise on sector research and case studies. The research is expected to conclude in spring 2024.

## Theatres at Risk

The Theatres at Risk Register lists theatre buildings across England, Scotland and Wales that are most at risk of being lost, but which the Theatres Trust believes have real potential for a sustainable future as a working performance space.

The 2024 Register consists of 39 theatres with two theatres being added to the list, Abbeydale Picture House in Sheffield and Epstein Theatre in Liverpool, and one theatre, Dudley Hippodrome, removed due to demolition. We held an online event, sponsored by Tysers Insurance, for key stakeholders to support the announcement of the new list, which was attended by around 220 people including councillors, funders, arts and heritage bodies, as well as Theatres Trust Friends and Corporate Supporters. Arts and Heritage Minister Lord Parkinson gave an introduction to the event with Theatres Trust Ambassador Siobhan Redmond speaking about her passion for theatres and their importance to artists and audiences. There was also a series of presentations from theatres receiving support through the Resilient Theatres: Resilient Communities programme.

The press release focused on the changes to the list: new additions to and removal from the list. The announcement achieved more than 320 pieces of media coverage, including Channel 5 news, BBC Look North, The Independent, Daily Mail, Evening Standard and The National and eight local BBC radio stations. It was supported on social media by Theatres Trust Ambassadors, helping the campaign reach a wider audience.

## Amulet Theatre, Shepton Mallet

We added the Amulet Theatre to our Theatres at Risk list in 2022 and in the past year the campaign to revive it has gathered momentum. A new group formed in 2023 bringing together local arts organisations we have been talking to and Shepton Mallet Town Council, in light of news that the building owner would be open to selling it. We have since provided early-stage capital works advice (building, design, viability and fundraising) and the group has subsequently been successful in its bid to the Architectural Heritage Fund and also had its Expression of Interest accepted for the Community Ownership Fund. We are continuing to provide support to the group and hope there will be more positive updates in the near future.



Beyond the launch event, we supported Theatres at Risk throughout the year with advice and by raising the profile of their individual causes. This has included support to campaign groups with capital works advice, advising groups in the initial stages of formation, business and strategic planning and working with local authorities and public funders to support these important community buildings.

A number of Theatres at Risk have made progress in securing funding this year to help them in their respective campaigns to save their theatres. Ramsbottom Co-op Hall successfully applied to the Community Ownership Fund, Hulme Hippodrome and The Amulet both received funding from the Architectural Heritage Fund for feasibility work, Burnley Empire has been supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Morecambe Winter Gardens raised money to complete the restoration of their historic mosaic floor. Leith Theatre has also taken a significant step forward when Edinburgh City Council agreed grant a new 50-year lease to Leith Theatre Trust.

## Theatres Database

Led by Theatres Trust, the aim of this project is to create a user-friendly and comprehensive database that is useful to theatre operators, producers, local authority planning and culture departments, heritage researchers, and cultural policy makers. It will ensure Theatres Trust has high quality up to date information on the health of the UK's theatres which will both

guide our strategic priorities and support our advocacy. We completed work on scoping and costing the database and developing the business model. While we continue to pursue funding options we are also exploring alternative models for delivering an equivalent resource more cost-effectively.

## Consultations

As part of our campaigning work on behalf of theatres we responded to national and regional consultations on issues impacting theatres. During this year we responded to four national planning policy consultations, all within England: technical consultation on the Infrastructure Levy; high street rental auctions; additional flexibilities to support housing delivery, the agricultural sector, businesses, high streets and open prisons, and Strengthening planning policy for brownfield development. In our responses we cautioned against relaxing planning restrictions where there may be conflicts and impacts on theatres, for example ensuring proposals for loss of theatre buildings and theatre use remain fully justified and evidenced, that acoustic impacts from neighbouring development are fully understood with sufficient mitigations in place, and that infrastructure contributions can be utilised to ensure cultural needs are met and that theatres receive the investment they require.

### Contribution to industry events

We worked with our partners to support theatres and contributed to the wider debate on theatres, culture, sustainability and placemaking:

International Theatre Engineering and Architecture Conference - Director Jon Morgan took part in two panel discussions, What's New in Architecture and Supporting Culture.

Kenyan Theatre Festival - Architecture Adviser Claire Appleby gave a presentation on the Theatre Green Book.

Pink Podcast - Jon Morgan was interviewed about environmental sustainability for the podcast hosted by Chloé Nelkin.

Planning and Culture round table - National Planning Adviser Tom Clarke gave a presentation to the Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers Association.

RAAC and the cultural sector - Justine Harvey, Marketing and Communications Manager represented Theatres Trust at the What Next? discussion about the situation with Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete in theatre buildings.

Town and City Regeneration - National Planning Adviser Tom Clarke spoke at the Royal Town Planning Institute event.

### Supporter and stakeholder engagement events

Our many funders, donors, Corporate Supporters, Friends and Patrons of Theatres Trust are extremely important to our work, giving their time and valuable support. We held a number of events to engage them across the year including a tour of the Shaftesbury Theatre; two 'Gary Kemp in conversation' events at the Ivy Club with Tim Rice and with Don Black, and online talks about Sheffield Crucible by Tedd George and Modern Theatres by David Staples.



# Achievements and performance

## Grant giving

To provide strategic capital and other funding to theatres to help them become and remain resilient, environmentally sustainable, inclusive and to contribute to local placemaking.

We awarded 50 grants totalling £345,248 across three schemes. Our grants funded projects that improve business resilience, accessibility and environmental sustainability of theatres and help Theatres at Risk take the next strategic steps towards saving their local theatre.

### Pitlochry Festival Theatre

Pitlochry Festival Theatre opened in 1951, moving to its current purpose-built building in 1981 where it produces large-scale plays and musicals and hosts a summer season across its auditorium, studio and amphitheatre. The theatre had previously hired captioning equipment, limiting the number of captioned performances it could host. A £5,000 award from the Small Grants Programme has funded one of the two caption displays it has installed, which will increase its accessible performances and reduce costs and environmental impact.

### Small Grants Programme supported by The Linbury Trust

The Small Grants Programme was launched thanks to the generous support of The Linbury Trust. In autumn 2022, the Mackintosh Foundation committed funding over five years to the scheme. Charles Michael Holloway Charitable Trust also kindly made a further donation to the scheme in 2023. Over two rounds, we awarded grants totalling £169,266 to 37 theatres:

Aberystwyth Arts Centre; Alexandra Palace Theatre, London; Almedia Theatre, London; The Barn, Banbury, Oxfordshire; Barn Theatre, Welwyn Garden City; Blackpool Grand Theatre; Bristol Old Vic; Cambridge Junction; Celyn Collieries Institute and Memorial Hall; Colchester Arts Centre; The Courtyard, Hereford; Duchess Theatre & Chatsworth Arts Centre, Long Eaton; The Gateway Theatre, Seaton; Hackney Empire, London; Hope Mill Theatre, Manchester; Horse + Bamboo, Rossendale; Leeds Playhouse; Lichfield Garrick Theatre; Lighthouse, Poole; Little Theatre, Gateshead; Lyric Theatre Hammersmith, London; The MAC Belfast; The Market Theatre, Ladbroke; The Mowlem Theatre, Swanage; Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond, London; Pitlochry Festival Theatre, Scotland; Sherborne Studio Theatre, Dorset; Southwold Arts Centre; Studio 1A Theatre, Bangor, Northern Ireland; Theatre Royal Stratford East, London; Tolman Centre, Constantine, Cornwall; Torch Theatre, Milford Haven; Trestle Arts Base, St Albans; Tyne Theatre and Opera House, Newcastle; Watermill Theatre, Newbury; The Welfare Ystradgynlais, Swansea; The Woodshed Theatre, Oxford.





## The MAC Belfast

Purpose-built in 2012, the MAC is one of Belfast's leading arts spaces. A grant of £4,932.61 from the Small Grants Programme, has funded the MAC to replace its existing foyer announcement system with an enhanced system that is adjustable, adaptable, and fit for purpose. The system will facilitate audible announcements across 10 zones within the venue, catering to the diverse requirements of the audience, including those with hearing impairments and additional needs, ensuring that shows start on time and providing a consistent warm welcome for all customers. The system is more energy efficient, contributing to the MAC's ongoing sustainability commitment.

## The Welfare Ystradgynlais, Swansea

One of the aims of the Small Grants Programme is to fund works which make theatre buildings digital-ready, so we were delighted to support four theatres with projects of this kind in the latest round of the scheme, including The Welfare Ystradgynlais. The Welfare Ystradgynlais has a long history as a community and cultural venue, having continuously operated as a cultural centre and social hub for its community since it was built in 1934. A £4,000 grant from the Small Grants Programme funded the venue to install a mesh Wi-Fi system, which will provide reliable building-wide Wi-Fi. This will support the installation of a new phone system and improve the appeal of the building to hirers, visitors and performers.

## Theatre Improvement Scheme with the Wolfson Foundation

The Wolfson Foundation continued its generous support for the Theatre Improvement Scheme, funding theatres to improve their environmental sustainability. In 2023/24, we awarded six grants totalling £115,982:

Battersea Arts Centre, London; Birmingham Repertory Theatre; Midlands Arts Centre (MAC), Birmingham; New Vic Theatre, Newcastle-under-Lyme; Park Theatre, London; Storyhouse, Chester.

### Storyhouse, Chester

Situated in converted 1936 Odeon cinema, Storyhouse was repurposed as an arts centre and library in 2017. During the winter months, it acts as a warm hub for the community, so it is vitally important that its spaces can be heated efficiently. Partly funded by a £20,000 grant from the Theatre Improvement Scheme in association with The Wolfson Foundation, 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.

## Resilient Theatres: Resilient Communities grants programme

Funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, the Pilgrim Trust and Swire Charitable Trust, the grants aim to help progress the restoration, reopening or revitalising of At Risk theatres by funding expert support. In this first year of the programme, we funded seven theatres with grants totalling £60,000.

Burnley Empire; Derby Hippodrome; Doncaster Grand; Margate Theatre Royal; Morecambe Winter Gardens; Salford Victoria; Tameside Hippodrome

### Derby Hippodrome

Derby Hippodrome, which has been on our Theatres at Risk Register since it began in 2006, is a rare survival from an early stage in the crossover period when buildings were being constructed for both live theatre and cinema. Derby Hippodrome Restoration Trust, working with Derbyshire Historical Buildings Trust, received a grant of £10,000 to build on a previous viability report and create a vision for a revitalised arts venue that breathes new life into the venue. Work includes governance and operational planning but also stakeholder engagement with a Music Industry Workshop and the formation of a music panel to link the restoration of the Hippodrome and the strategic development of music in Derby.



# Financial review

Income for the year across both The Theatres Trust and The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund (Registered charity No. 274697) was £68,748 higher for the year ended 31 March 2024 than in the previous year. This was due to higher Theatre Rent & Proprietary Seats income of £27,296, higher Grants & Donations income of £54,768, higher Advertising & Publications income of £52,471, and higher investment income of £2,181. However, Conference & Events income is lower by £63,314. Also, other income is lower by £4,654. Conference & Events income is lower than in the previous year as we elected

not to stage our annual conference this year. Other income is lower than in the previous year as we had received an additional insurance pay out of £4,654 in 2022-2023 for loss of Proprietary Seat income during the lockdown.

Resources expended in the year were £184,742 higher than in 2022-2023. This was largely due to higher Staff & Support costs of £157,252, and higher Theatre Protection Grants of £69,709. However, Conference & Events expenditure is lower by £53,828.

## The Theatres Trust

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
<b>Income</b>		
Theatre Rents Receivable	488	457
Sale of Proprietary seats	124	127
Conferences and events	1	64
Other income	-	4
<b>Total income</b>	<b>613</b>	<b>652</b>
<b>Less Expenditure</b>		
Administrative expenses	167	135
Conferences and events	5	59
Other expenditure	13	18
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>212</b>
<b>Surplus of income over expenditure</b>	<b>428</b>	<b>440</b>
Less covenanted payment to The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund	-428	-440
Less Taxation	-	-
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
Funds brought forward	217	217
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>217</b>
<b>Funds</b>		
Accumulated fund	67	67
Capital Provision fund	150	150
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>217</b>	<b>217</b>

The value of The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund's investment portfolio increased during the year such that the market value of the portfolio on 31 March 2024 was £1,058,772. The relative performance of the portfolio was closely aligned to the general market trend. The Trustees regularly review portfolio performance in accordance with the guidance provided by the Charities Commission.

In 2022-2023 the Trustees reviewed the requirement for free reserves i.e., those unrestricted funds not invested in tangible fixed assets, designated for specific purposes, or otherwise committed. Based on anticipated increased

turnover for the next 3-Year plan period and taking account of the level of General Funds held by the Theatres Trust, the Trustees consider that, given the nature of the Charitable Fund's work, the level of free reserves should be approximately £348,847 equivalent to 6 months' annual expenditure on unrestricted funds, including provisions for staff redundancy and similar costs. Funds totalling £744,012 have been designated, or set aside, by the Trustees to fund additional theatre protection measures such as viability studies for Theatres at Risk and for further organisational capacity and resource building, including further database and web development.

## The Theatres Trust Charitable Fund

	2024	2023
	£'000	£'000
<b>Income</b>		
Covenanted payment from The Theatres Trust	428	440
Administration charge paid by The Theatres Trust	167	135
Historic England Grant	16	15
Other grants and donations received	568	514
Other income	126	72
<b>Total income</b>	<b>1,305</b>	<b>1,176</b>
<b>Less expenditure</b>		
Direct Charitable Expenditure	1,250	1,012
Costs of generating funds	105	98
<b>Total expenditure</b>	<b>1,355</b>	<b>1,110</b>
<b>Surplus of income over expenditure</b>	<b>-50</b>	<b>66</b>
Net gains/(losses) from investments	72	-147
<b>Net movement in funds</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>-81</b>
Funds brought forward	1,106	1,187
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>1,128</b>	<b>1,106</b>
<b>Funds</b>		
General Fund	349	356
Theatres Protection Fund	3	2
Other Restricted Funds	32	65
Organisational Development & Transition Fund	300	177
Match Funding Fund	344	406
Capital Provision Fund	100	100
<b>Total Funds</b>	<b>1,128</b>	<b>1,106</b>

# John Earl, Rupert Rhymes and Ruth Eastwood: An Appreciation

Sadly in 2024 we lost three very dear, committed and dedicated Theatres Trust colleagues, all of whom made major contributions to the organisation.

**John Earl was the Theatres Trust's first paid Director from 1986 to 1996.**

He took over at a key point, building the Trust's influence and profile on modest resources and enabling the Trust to establish itself as an important source of advice and advocacy for the nation's network of theatres.

John was the principal author of what would become the 1982 publication *Curtains!!!* (or a New Life for Old Theatres). Eighteen years later, in 2000, its successor, the *Guide to British Theatres 1750-1850 A Gazetteer*, was published, edited by John Earl and Michael Sell.

John was also responsible for establishing the Theatre Protection Fund, the umbrella term for Theatres Trust's various grant schemes that continue to this day to provide financial support directly to theatres.

John's passion for theatre buildings, infinite wisdom and guiding hand in supporting subsequent Theatres Trust Directors was invaluable.

**Rupert Rhymes served as Chair of the Theatres Trust from 2002 to 2009.**

A true man of the theatre Rupert's working life was devoted to the theatre industry and his passion for theatre architecture and performance was recognised in 2002 when he received an OBE for services to

theatre and a special Laurence Olivier Award.

In a career spanning many decades he managed or was a trustee of many of the UK's leading theatres, including the Old Vic Theatre, Sadler's Well's Opera The Oxford Stage Company and Bristol Old Vic.

Rupert uniquely served as both President of The Society of West End Theatre and as Chief Executive of the Society of London Theatre and the Theatrical Management Association (now UK Theatre) and in these roles was responsible for many initiatives that not only reformed the organisations themselves but also led to major improvements across the industry.

**Ruth Eastwood served on the Theatres Trust Board for nine years from 2011 to 2020 and was Vice Chair for her last six.**

Ruth's knowledge of theatres and theatre management, including serving as CEO of major theatres such as Blackpool Grand, Curve Leicester and Lighthouse Poole, was an invaluable asset in supporting Theatres Trust's advice work and overall governance. She also drew on her organisational development and coaching skills to support the staff and trustees at key moments of organisational development.

Such was her commitment to Theatres Trust she then joined as Theatres Adviser in February 2024, a role which she hugely enjoyed and in which her colleagues and the theatres she supported valued and respected her considerable expertise and wisdom.

Ruth's passion for the work of Theatres Trust and her knowledge and expertise provided the Trust with vital guidance and support over almost fourteen years.

# Our Ambassadors

**Samira Ahmed**  
Journalist, broadcaster and documentary maker

**Gemma Arterton**  
Actress

**Alan Ayckbourn**  
Playwright and theatre director

**Michael Ball**  
Musical theatre star, recording artist and radio and TV presenter

**Pippa Bennett-Warner**  
Actress

**Matthew Bourne**  
Choreographer and director

**Jo Brand**  
Comedian

**Dara Ó Briain**  
Comedian and television presenter

**Alexandra Burke**  
Singer, songwriter and actress

**Simon Callow**  
Actor, author and director

**Jack Dee**  
Comedian, actor and writer

**Mel Giedroyc**  
Television presenter and actress

**David Hare**  
Playwright and film-maker

**Miranda Hart**  
Comedy writer and actress

**Lenny Henry**  
Comedian, actor and writer

**Cassidy Janson**  
Actress and singer

**Gary Kemp**  
Musician and actor

**Beverley Knight**  
Actress and singer

**Kwame Kwei-Armah**  
Actor, playwright, director and broadcaster

**Jude Law**  
Actor

**Cameron Mackintosh**  
Producer and theatre owner

**David Morrissey**  
Actor and director

**Bill Nighy**  
Actor

**Elaine Paige**  
Actress, singer, producer and radio presenter

**Siobhan Redmond**  
Actress

**Tim Rice**  
Author and lyricist

**John Simm**  
Actor, director and musician

**Meera Syal**  
Actress and writer

**Andrew Lloyd Webber**  
Composer, producer and theatre owner

# Our supporters

The Trust would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who have given their support during 2023/23.

## Major donations & funders

Association of British Theatre Technicians  
Basil Samuel Charitable Trust  
Charles Michael Holloway Charitable Trust  
Dominic Lowe  
The Foyle Foundation  
Frederick Mulder Foundation  
Historic England  
The Ivy Members Club and funds raised at events  
The Linbury Trust  
The Mackintosh Foundation  
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The Steel Charitable Trust  
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Theatre Royal Haymarket  
The Tolkien Trust  
UK Theatre / Society of London Theatre  
Unusual Rigging  
Wolfson Foundation

## Legacies

Estate of Celia Jane Leatt  
Estate of Gerald Smith

## Christmas bucket campaigns

We would like to thank the producers, cast, crew and all of the staff at:  
Adelphi Theatre - Back To The Future  
Ambassadors Theatre - The Enfield Haunting  
Apollo Victoria Theatre - Wicked  
Criterion Theatre - Unbelievable

Dominion Theatre - Elf the Musical  
Duchess Theatre - Play That Goes Wrong  
Gielgud Theatre - Stephen Sondheim's Old Friends  
Gillian Lynne - Crazy For You  
His Majesty's Theatre - Phantom of the Opera  
Lyceum Theatre - The Lion King  
Lyric Theatre - Peter Pan Goes Wrong  
Piccadilly Theatre - Moulin Rouge  
Playhouse Theatre - Cabaret  
Prince Edward Theatre - Dear England  
Prince of Wales - Book of Mormon  
Shaftesbury Theatre - Mrs Doubtfire  
Sondheim Theatre - Les Misérables  
Theatre Royal Drury Lane - Frozen  
Theatre Royal Haymarket  
Trafalgar Theatre - Jersey Boys  
Vaudeville Theatre - Six  
Victoria Palace Theatre – Hamilton

## Patrons

Lord Archer  
Fatma Charlwood  
Ken and Lin Craig  
Simon Fraser  
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Friends of the Royal Hippodrome Theatre, Eastbourne  
The Garrick Club

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Mike Sell  
David Staples  
Victoria Westall

## Life Friends

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Alan Ayckbourn CBE  
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Peter Baldwin  
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Matthew Blampey  
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Alec Botten  
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David Baxter  
Christopher Bear  
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Dr. Ruth Bender  
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John Whitton  
Pamela Whitton  
Colin Winslow  
Alex Wood  
Steve Woolley  
David Wright  
Richard York

**We remember those Friends who  
have sadly passed away:**  
Andrzej Blonski  
Ruth Eastwood (Theatres Adviser  
and former Trustee)  
John Earl (former Theatres Trust  
Director)  
Mike Kilburn  
Rupert Rhymes OBE (former  
Theatres Trust Chair)  
Alic K Robertson

# Trustees

## Dave Moutrey OBE

### Chair

Director of Culture for Manchester City Council and former CEO of HOME, Manchester

## Katie Town

### Vice Chair

Executive Director of Theatre Royal Wakefield

## Vicky Browning OBE (from 1 April 2024)

Charity sector leader

## Paul Cartwright (until December 2023)

Chartered accountant and private equity professional

## Anna Collins (from 29 April 2024)

Culture capital project consultant

## James Dacre

Freelance Director and former Artistic Director of Royal & Derngate Theatres in Northampton

## Suba Das

Freelance Director and former Creative Director Liverpool Everyman and Playhouse Theatres

## Liam Evans-Ford (from 1 April 2024)

Executive Director and CEO of Theatr Clwyd

## Stephanie Hall

Barrister specialising in town and country planning at Kings Chambers

## Annie Hampson

Former Chief Planning Officer at the City of London

## Richard Johnston (until December 2023)

Former Chief Executive of Delfont Mackintosh Theatres

## Gary Kemp (until December 2023)

Musician and actor

## Tracy Ann Oberman (from 1 April 2024)

Actress, writer and theatre creator

## Lucy Osborne

Set and costume designer and co-founder of studio three sixty

## Saratha Rajeswaran (from 1 April 2024)

Chief of Staff to the Group CEO at Aviva plc

## Jane Spiers (until December 2023)

Former Chief Executive of Aberdeen Performing Arts

## Truda Spruyt

Founder of communications consultancy Collective Wisdom and former Managing Director Culture at Four Culture

## Michèle Taylor MBE (from 1 April 2024)

Director for Change at Ramps on the Moon

### Boardroom Apprentices

## Manpreet Gill (until December 2023)

## Dave Lamb (from January 2024)

# Staff

## Jon Morgan Director

## Claire Appleby Architecture Adviser

## Kate Bierman Development Director

## Kate Carmichael Communications Coordinator (until August 2023)

## Tom Clarke National Planning Adviser

## Siân Eagar Theatres at Risk Adviser (maternity cover)

## Ruth Eastwood Theatres Adviser (from February 2024)

## Justine Harvey Marketing & Communications Manager

## Devina Kumar Resilient Theatres: Resilient Communities Training Producer

## Janina McBride Theatres at Risk Adviser (on maternity leave)

## Lucy Mason Theatres Adviser (until October 2023)

## Rebecca Morland Interim Theatres Adviser (November 2023 to February 2024)

## Sofia Oliva Administrator

## Laura Pollock Communications Coordinator (from January 2024)

## Ashish Shah Finance Manager

## Laura Wootten General Manager

### Consultants

## Mark Price Heritage Consultant

## Nicky Rowland Sponsorship and Advertising Consultant

### Volunteers

## Ian Grundy

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Page 12: *Ambassadors Tim Rice and Gary Kemp at The Ivy Club*.

Page 13: *Pitlochry Festival Theatre*. Courtesy of the theatre

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Page 24: *Theatres Trust staff and trustees at Liverpool's Royal Court Theatre*

Page 26: *Sheffield Crucible and Lyceum; KitKat Club at The Playhouse, London; King's Theatre, Southsea and West Walls Theatre, Carlisle*. Photo credits Ian Grundy



# Theatres Fit for the **Future**



In 2023/24

## Advice

# 132

We provided specialist, tailored advice to 132 theatre organisations



## Planning

# 339

We commented on 289 planning and listed building applications and 50 local planning documents

## Grants

# £345k

Our Theatres Protection Fund has awarded more than £345,000 to 50 theatres across the UK



## Advocacy

# 575

We were a strong public voice for theatres with 575 press and media mentions