



## **Theatres Trust funds 10 Theatres at Risk on the road to reopening**

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

The 10 theatres to receive a share of the £74,835 fund are Amulet Theatre in Shepton Mallet, Derby Hippodrome, Doncaster Grand, Margate Theatre Royal, Mechanic's Institute in Swindon, Morecambe Winter Gardens, Oswaldtwistle Civic Centre and Theatre, Prince of Wales Theatre in Cannock, Salford Victoria and Theatr Ardudwy in Harlech. The theatres are all on the Theatres at Risk Register 2025, published by Theatres Trust in January, and are at various stages in their journey towards restoration and revitalisation.



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 community and heritage projects. Work funded in this round includes condition surveys, business planning, fundraising and audience development strategies, a viability study and a governance review.

**Joshua McTaggart**, CEO of Theatres Trust says, All the theatres on our Theatres at Risk Register are special buildings that have real potential to bring joy and opportunities to their communities. We are thrilled to support 10 of these fantastic theatres with essential strategic projects that will lay the foundations for their revival. We look forward to supporting them through this journey and seeing the progress they make.

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 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, says It's fantastic that the next round of theatres that will benefit from this important project by the Theatres Trust have been announced. Theatres are integral to our communities but have faced unprecedented challenges in recent years, with many at risk. Thanks to money raised by National Lottery players, they will have a chance to adapt and change for a thriving future, with the legacy of this project felt for many years to come.

**Sue Bowers**, Director of Pilgrim Trust says, We are delighted that this funding partnership continues to provide encouragement and support for these important



theatrical buildings at the heart of their communities, helping to chart their way forward to sustainable futures.

## Notes to Editors

Website	<a href="https://www.theatrust.org.uk">https://www.theatrust.org.uk</a>
Twitter / X	@TheatresTrust @HeritageFundUK @ThePilgrimTrust
BlueSky	@theatrust.bsky.social
Facebook	/theatres.trust HeritageFundUK
Instagram	@theatrust @HeritageFundUK
Photo Credit	Salford Victoria Theatre Trust

## 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 National Lottery Heritage Fund

Our vision is for heritage to be valued, cared for and sustained for everyone, now and in the future. That's why as the largest funder for the UK's heritage we are dedicated to supporting projects that connect people and communities to heritage, as set out in our strategic plan, Heritage 2033. Heritage can be anything from the past that people value and want to pass on to future generations. We believe in the power of heritage to ignite the imagination, offer joy and inspiration, and to build pride in place and connection to the past.

Over the next 10 years, we aim to invest £3.6billion raised for good causes by National Lottery players to make a decisive difference for people, places and communities. [heritagefund.org.uk](https://heritagefund.org.uk)



## **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/)

## **Swire Charitable Trust**

Swire Charitable Trust is a grant making charity. The Trust's Heritage Programme focuses on restoration, regeneration, and conservation, and on protecting and developing heritage skills. [www.swirecharitabletrust.org.uk/](http://www.swirecharitabletrust.org.uk/)

## **Resilient Theatres: Resilient Communities grants recipients**

### **Amulet Theatre, Shepton Mallet, £6,000**

A gift to Shepton Mallet by the local Babycham brewing family, the Amulet is an unusual Brutalist theatre with a retractable seating system, which may be the only one in existence in the UK. It is currently in private ownership and has been used as a gym, but could be easily reverted to live performance use. The Amulet Centre Limited, the local group formed to buy and reopen the building for the community, receives a grant for compliance and planning works including plans and specifications for building control, fire risk assessment and emergency exit specifications. These crucial first steps would allow 'meanwhile' community use activities to take place in the building, while plans are developed to fully restore it.



### **Derby Hippodrome, £8,750**

Derby Hippodrome is a rare survival from an early stage in the crossover period when buildings were being constructed for both live theatre and cinema. The building was substantially damaged in 2008 when repair works by the then-owner resulted in the partial demolition of the auditorium. This grant will fund Derbyshire Historic Buildings Trust, a local group working to see the building restored, to commission conservation architects to undertake a condition survey and develop RIBA Stage 1 /2 design proposals to show how the building can be developed in a way that is sensitive to its historic character and fabric.

### **Doncaster Grand, £6,000**

Doncaster Grand is an ornate Grade II listed Victorian theatre with strong community support. Doncaster Culture & Leisure Trust, on behalf of a wider consortium of stakeholders including the building owner, receives funding to explore an appropriate organisational structure and governance framework for the future lead operator of the Grand Theatre, and outline work on a funding strategy and business planning.

### **Mechanics' Institute, Swindon, £10,000**

The Mechanics' Institute is a grand Grade II\* listed building that was built a social centre and a concert hall for staff of the Great Western Railway. The theatre closed in 1986 and has since been disused, falling into greater disrepair. A viability study in 2020 suggested that the building could be restored as a community hub. Swindon Heritage Preservation Trust will receive funding to update this to identify a way forward and the likely costs.

### **Margate Theatre Royal, £5,325**

Grade II\* listed Margate Theatre Royal is the last remaining theatre with its design intact by architect J.T. Robinson, employer and father-in-law of celebrated Victorian theatre architect Frank Matcham. Thanet District Council will receive funding for a specialist condition survey for the delicate ceiling plasterwork in the auditorium,



which is of historic significance as the only surviving example of Carton Pierre plasterwork by Pashley, Newton, Young & Co.

### **Morecambe Winter Gardens, £8,760**

Morecambe Winter Gardens is a Grade II\* listed large concert party hall, believed to be the only remaining building of its type. Morecambe Winter Gardens Preservation Trust Ltd is gradually restoring the theatre and has secured funding for a major capital project that will allow the venue to be fully reopened. This grant will fund an accessibility development strategy, reflecting the requirements of current capital project and future operational needs, alongside training for the staff, volunteers and trustees.

### **Oswaldtwistle Civic Arts Centre and Theatre, £10,000**

An important local building that has served its local community for more than 150 years, Oswaldtwistle Civic Arts Centre and Theatre is the only public theatre in the area. The theatre closed in July 2023 when its operator went into liquidation and the building is in need of urgent maintenance. Hyndburn Council is keen to find a way to reopen this vital cultural facility. It receives a grant to commission a thorough structural assessment of the theatre's roof timbers to identify any weaknesses, damage, or areas requiring urgent repair.

### **Prince of Wales Theatre, Cannock, £7,000**

Part of a town centre complex, The Prince of Wales Theatre was built in 1984 and is a valued cultural facility in Cannock. The local authority Cannock Chase Council has proposed permanently closing the theatre at the end of April 2025 to make budgetary savings. Cannock Chase Theatre Trust CIO, has formed from local arts groups and will receive funding for to create business planning, fundraising and audience development strategies to support them in their aim of taking over the building from the council.



### **Salford Victoria, £5,000**

Salford Victoria is an architecturally important theatre, designed by eminent theatre architect Bertie Crewe, with rare substage machinery believed to be the only complete surviving example of its kind in the UK. Salford Victoria Theatre Trust will receive support to develop action plan and draft outline business plan to identify priorities and improve group's readiness for its aim of taking over the building and undertaking a capital project.

### **Theatr Ardudwy, Harlech £8,000**

A striking example of Brutalist architecture, Grade II\* listed Theatr Ardudwy was the first post-war theatre in Wales to be listed. The building has been empty for a number of years, but the current owner is keen to bring it back into use. South Wales Building Preservation Trust will receive funding for a condition survey to assess the work required, and for design proposals to bring the theatre up to modern standards.

**All enquiries, high res images and further information:**

**Emma Wall, Chloé Nelkin Consulting**

**E: [e.wall@chloenelkinconsulting.com](mailto:e.wall@chloenelkinconsulting.com), T: 020 3627 2960**

**W: [www.chloenelkinconsulting.com](http://www.chloenelkinconsulting.com)**

