

# THEATRES TRUST

## Improving theatres through our small grants schemes

**Eleven theatres have received a total of £53,300 in small grants through our UK and London schemes for projects that will help them address urgent repairs, address accessibility and operate more sustainably.**

Thanks to the generosity of the Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation and Soho Estates for the UK Small Grants Scheme; and the Mackintosh Foundation and Charles Michael Holloway Foundation for the London Small Theatres scheme, we have been able to support 122 theatres over the past eight years.

In this round of the UK Theatres Small Grants Scheme we supported five theatres capital projects for urgent repairs and improvements.

The **Montgomery Theatre and Arts Centre**, a vital part of the cultural offer in Sheffield's city centre is a leading programmer of children and family shows and the home of community theatre in the region. It will use Theatres Trust funding for urgent repairs to the external brickwork and guttering to address water leaks in the main auditorium and in an audience stairwell. Currently the water damage is easily rectified, however without action significant damage is likely to occur.

Situated at the heart of one of London's most diverse and economically challenged boroughs, the Grade II\* listed **Hackney Empire** has water supply problems. The local area's low water-pressure knocks sinks and toilets out of operation, a particular issue during high-use periods such as at evening performance intervals. Funding from the Theatres Trust will support the theatre to install a new water pump to ensure all facilities across the theatre have a consistent water supply – an improvement for audiences, artists and staff.

**Bognor Regis' Alexandra Theatre** opened in 1979 and is the one purpose-built theatre on the coast between Worthing and Portsmouth. Funding will allow it to upgrade the power supply in its main auditorium to three phase electrical supply. Having a dedicated three phase supply will mean that larger and more complex productions can be accommodated in the main space, improving its operational viability.

A vibrant community theatre with a reputation for innovative programming, audiences and artists performing at the **The Acorn, Penzance**, a former Methodist chapel, will benefit from improved sound quality inside the auditorium with the installation of triple glazing to all windows thanks to Theatres Trust funding. Other benefits include better energy efficiency, a reduced level of external noise transfer and a greater lifespan for the existing window frames.

Since the public opening of The Story Museum in Oxford in April 2014 there has been great demand for live performance, particularly for early years' audiences. The new **Woodshed Theatre**, part of a larger redevelopment of the museum, will provide it with space to support this. Theatres Trust funding will install an audio frequency induction loop system for the theatre and museum foyer – an essential for hearing-impaired visitors and artists.

Sarah Miller, Director at Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation, said: "At this time of significant need, I am delighted that Andrew Lloyd Webber Foundation funding, under the guidance of Theatres Trust, is being used to support and protect a number of UK regional theatres – vital cornerstones of our industry, and for local communities."

The London Small Grants Scheme supported six theatres capital projects for improvements related to access and environmental efficiencies.

Local Croydon community arts space **Stanley Halls** was originally built for the benefit of local residents, influenced by the Victorian and Edwardian philosophy that the arts could lead to cultural enlightenment. With an award from the Trust the venue will refurbish and make significant access improvements to its main theatre toilets, including making them flat-floored, and installing grip-rails. The works are part of a package of capital improvements at the venue to provide modern facilities for hiring organisations and audiences.

Barnes' **Old Sorting Office Arts Centre** opened in 2000 to provide an arts and cultural venue for the local community and the theatre is about to embark on a large project to improve the building's accessibility. Our grant will automate the main entrance doors and access ramp, to enhance access for those with mobility issues.

Originally built as a wood store in the 1880s, **Pleasance London** was converted into a theatre in 1995 and is a development ground for its Edinburgh Festival Fringe shows, as well as a small to medium scale receiving house. The roof has been identified as the main area of heat loss, and our grant will allow the venue to install high performance rigid installation between the roof rafters. This will make the building warmer for staff and audiences, and improve its environmental efficiency and sustainability. The works complement other environmental Improvements at the venue to reduce its carbon footprint.

**Camden People's Theatre**, a small-scale presenting theatre in a former pub, plans to redevelop the ground and basement floors of the building. Addressing access and environment, automatic swing doors will be installed within the foyer of the venue. This will not only improve access for artists and audiences with mobility issues, the doors also create a draught lobby to reduce heat loss from the entrance.

The East End's Art Deco **Toynbee Studios** will install new infra-red, renewably powered heating – one element of a wider capital project to improve its energy footprint as well as accessibility. The heating improvements will create better conditions for hiring companies, and with increased usage and income, will improve operational viability.

Built from recycled materials in a disused warehouse, and known for supporting early stage artists and musicians, **Hackney Wick's Yard Theatre** will install a new dipped wheelchair-accessible bar with Theatres Trust support. The bespoke bar includes a storage system for the venue's eco-friendly cup scheme designed-in. The works will improve the accessibility and efficiency of the bar space, and will improve operational viability.

These awards were allocated before the coronavirus crisis and while we will continue to support urgent repairs and capital improvements, the priority for the next rounds of these schemes will be to support theatres to reopen after the lockdown. This could be carrying out necessary maintenance work to allow the public back into a theatre or it could be for making adaptations in line with increased hygiene and social distancing requirements.

Visit our website for up-to-date information on the grants schemes currently open for applications: [theatrust.org.uk/how-we-help/grants-funding](https://theatrust.org.uk/how-we-help/grants-funding).