



Theatres Trust funds vital theatre projects across the whole UK

Theatres Trust, the national advisory and advocacy body for theatres, has awarded more than £100,000 in grants to theatres in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales through its Small Grants Programme with The Linbury Trust.

A record 24 theatres will receive a share of £107,498 in this round of the grant scheme, which supports not-for-profit theatres to be viable and thrive in the future. This is the largest number of projects supported yet by the Small Grants scheme. The theatres being supported include Studio 1A Theatre, in Bangor, Northern Ireland; Welsh venues Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Celyn Collieries Institute in Newbridge and The Welfare Ystradgynlais in Swansea; and the Barn in Banchory and Pitlochry Festival Theatre in Scotland. In England, theatres are being funded from the south west (Tolmen Centre in Cornwall) to the north east (Tyne Theatre and Opera House in Newcastle).

Projects supported include making improvements to accessibility (Sherborne Studio Theatre, Dorset; Almeida Theatre and Orange Tree Theatre in London), sustainability (Bristol Old Vic, Cambridge Junction, Leeds Playhouse) and digital technology use (Alexandra Palace Theatre, London; Colchester Arts Centre). A large number of recipients in this round are for urgent and essential repair and maintenance works (Blackpool Grand Theatre; Horse + Bamboo, Rossendale, Trestle Arts Base, St Albans; Watermill Theatre, Newbury; Woodshed Theatre, Oxford; and London theatres Hackney Empire, Lyric Theatre Hammersmith and Stratford East).

Jon Morgan, Theatres Trust Director, says, *Theatres Trust is delighted to be able to support more theatres with small projects to make a big impact to their sustainability, accessibility and inclusivity, as well as vital maintenance projects. This is the largest round of this scheme to date, with the high number and wide range of projects demonstrating the demand for investment in the UK's theatre buildings to ensure they are fit for current and future audiences.*

Stuart Hopley, Director, The Linbury Trust says, *It's great to see theatres across the UK benefitting from this grant and utilising this funding to make these incredible places more resilient, from reducing utility costs, to improved accessibility. These theatres are a fine example of the vital role arts and culture in local communities and places.*

The next round of the scheme is currently open for applications with a deadline of 7th June 2024.

Notes to Editors

Title	Theatres Trust
Website	http://www.theatretrust.org.uk/smallgrants
Twitter	@TheatresTrust @TheLinburyTrust
Photograph	In The Wings at <i>Oliver!</i> , Leeds Playhouse, Photo by Danny With a Camera

The Small Grants Programme was launched in 2021 with the generous support of The Linbury Trust, which renewed its funding in 2022 for a further three years. The scheme has received additional support from The Mackintosh Foundation and Charles Michael Holloway Charitable Trust.

Small Grants Programme recipients

Aberystwyth Arts Centre, £4,826

Opened in 1972, Aberystwyth Arts Centre is one of Wales' largest and best-known venues. Funding will support investment in low maintenance, inclusive digital access technology. Strategically placing screens around the site will support wayfinding as well as being used for event information and guiding visitors and audiences so that they can easily, accessibly and inclusively engage with the venue.

Alexandra Palace Theatre, London, £5,000

Originally opened in 1875, Alexandra Palace Theatre was closed for 80 years and on Theatres Trust's Theatres at Risk list, before reopening in December 2018 following a major restoration project. The grant will fund new digital relay and digital fundraising equipment. Auditorium cameras, transmission and video relay screens in the lobby will support relaxed performances, allowing audiences to view the show if they choose to

leave the auditorium and relay screens in dressing rooms will improve the experience for performers. The installation of a 'tap-to-donate' digital fundraising point in the lobby will allow the theatre to collect card donations and Gift Aid.

Almedia Theatre, London, £5,000

The Almeida Theatre, opened in 1980, is a small producing house in Islington with an international reputation. The grant will support the replacement of the front door of the Almeida's '108' office and rehearsal building, which currently has limited accessibility for wheelchair users, disabled artists, participants, and staff.

The Barn, Banchory, Aberdeenshire £3,030

The Barn in Banchory is the largest multi-arts space in Aberdeenshire, created from an abandoned farmstead. The grant will enable the venue to continue a programme of insulation works being made to its backstage area, which will make it more comfortable and save on energy usage.

Blackpool Grand Theatre, £4,557

Designed by eminent theatre architect Frank Matcham, the Grade II* listed Blackpool Grand is struggling to stand up to the impacts of climate change. This grant will fund urgent repairs to its guttering, which is currently unable to cope with the increased rainfall and storms. Materials will be used that are sympathetic to the building's heritage.

Bristol Old Vic, £5,000

Bristol Old Vic is the UK's longest continuously working theatre and a nationally significant producing house. As part of its commitment to environmental sustainability, Bristol Old Vic is investing in LED lights for the paintshop and back-of-house office spaces, replacing fluorescent tube lighting, compact fluorescent (CFL) tubes and halogen stage lights, saving energy and impacting on carbon reduction in the process. This grant is part-funding the project which is estimated to reduce lighting energy consumption by between 60% and 90%.

Cambridge Junction, £4,590

Opening in 1990, Cambridge Junction hosts a range of arts and community activities across three spaces. The grant is for the installation of LED bulbs in the multifunctional J3 space, which will reduce energy consumption, lower utility bills and create a more welcoming and inclusive atmosphere.

Celyn Collieries Institute and Memorial Hall, £2,959

Newbridge Memo is based in Celyn Collieries Institute and Memorial Hall, Grade II and Grade II* listed buildings in the heart of Newbridge, South Wales. Funding is for

repairs to key plant machinery, especially heating systems, which is a pivotal step in ensuring Newbridge Memo's sustained functionality and providing a welcoming environment.

Colchester Arts Centre, £3,200

Housed in a converted church, Colchester Arts Centre is a community-based arts centre. The grant will fund hard-wiring connectivity and an internet upgrade. This will enable the venue to offer more captioned and live-streamed performances, opening up to wider audiences.

Hackney Empire, London, £5,000

Designed by renowned theatre architect Frank Matcham for the Stoll Moss Group, Hackney Empire opened in 1901 and is now a Grade II* modern variety theatre at the heart of one of London's most diverse boroughs. This grant will fund urgent works to its roof and external fabric in order to ensure safety and prevent further deterioration.

Horse + Bamboo, Rossendale, £4,777

Formed in 1978, the company has been based in its 90-seat venue since 2006 and has a focus on children's theatre, serving its semi-rural local community. The grant will support refurbishing the floor in the well-used theatre workshop space, making it safe and suitable for all users.

Leeds Playhouse, £4,000

Leeds Playhouse has been one of the UK's leading producing theatres for more than 50 years and recently underwent a major redevelopment in 2019. This grant will support the theatre in changing over the backstage and working lights to LEDs in the Quarry Theatre, the largest auditorium in the venue.

Lyric Theatre Hammersmith, London, £4,882

Lyric Theatre Hammersmith is a leading producing theatre in a reconstructed Frank Matcham auditorium. Funding is to refurbish the electrics in the café/bar to bring it up to modern safety and reliability standards. This will also improve the customer service experience and allow the Lyric to expand its food offering.

Orange Tree Theatre, Richmond, London, £3,178

The Orange Tree is Richmond's only producing theatre and an award-winning independent venue. This grant will enable the theatre to improve accessibility for Deaf and Hard of Hearing audience members by installing three large area hearing loops across the venue – in the auditorium, one in the bar, and a portable loop in the box office, which could be moved if needed.

Pitlochry Festival Theatre, Scotland, £5,000

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 currently hires captioning equipment which limits the number of captioned performances it can host. The grant will pay for one of two caption displays it aims to install, which will increase its accessible performances and reduce costs and environmental impact.

Sherborne Studio Theatre, Dorset, £4,000

Amateur Players of Sherbourne are based in a converted Baptist chapel. The funding is to resurface an uneven path with a low maintenance, non-slip surface and replace steps with a ramp and handrail, improving access to the theatre for less mobile patrons and wheelchair users, who make up around 20% of its audience.

Stratford East, London, £5,000

Grade II* listed Stratford East is a 140-year-old theatre in the heart of Newham, East London with an influential producing programme. The grant will fund replacing and restoring the Dress Circle flooring and replacing the Upper Circle safety bar in keeping with modern safety standards. These vital projects will ensure that the theatre can continue operating and welcoming audiences safely, while being in keeping with the aesthetic of the Victorian theatre.

Studio 1A Theatre, Bangor, Northern Ireland, £5,000

Bangor Drama Club was founded in 1935, moving into its current home Studio 1A in 2017. The grant will fund two key elements – new signage for theatre to improve its visibility within the community and new stage lighting, which will reduce energy costs and provide a much higher quality of illumination, together with easier and safer maintenance.

Tolmen Centre, Constantine, Cornwall, £5,000

Based in a converted Wesleyan Chapel, the Tolmen Centre has become an important asset in the provision of live performance in Cornwall. The theatre's boiler is now 25 years old and was condemned by the servicing engineer in December 2023. This grant will help fund a replacement boiler, which is essential to adequately heat the premises.

Trestle Arts Base, St Albans, £4,500

Trestle Arts Base has been serving the community as a cultural hub for over 20 years since it was converted from a chapel. This grant will enable Trestle Theatre Company to carry out essential repairs to the roof of the building.

Tyne Theatre and Opera House, Newcastle, £5,000

Newcastle upon Tyne's Tyne Theatre & Opera House is one of only nine Grade I listed theatres in England. The grant will fund an upgrade to the theatre's dated and energy-inefficient emergency lighting system. This will save on energy costs and improve sustainability, while ensuring customer safety.

Watermill Theatre, Newbury, £5,000

The Watermill Theatre is situated in a converted mill in rural West Berkshire. The wooden external staircase that provides access to the dressing rooms and acts as an emergency exit has begun to degrade. With help from this fund, the staircase will be replaced with a galvanized metal one.

The Welfare Ystradgynlais, Swansea, £4,000

The Welfare Ystradgynlais has a long history as a community and cultural venue that has continuously operated as a cultural centre, and social hub for its community since it was built in 1934. The project supported is to install a mesh Wi-Fi system, which will provide reliable building-wide Wi-Fi. This will improve the appeal of the building to hirers, visitors and performers, and support the installation of a new phone system.

The Woodshed Theatre, Oxford, £5,000

Part of the Story Museum, the Woodshed Theatre hosts a rolling programme reflecting the museum's mission to share great stories in great ways. The grant will contribute to the cost of a new single layer polymer membrane for a flat roof section of the building which houses the Woodshed Theatre. This urgent repair work will prevent leaks and make the building warmer and cheaper to heat.

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 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 areas of culture, environment, social and community welfare; and also funds work benefiting young people, older people and overseas humanitarian aid. www.linburytrust.org.uk

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