



Report to Lowestoft Town Council

The period over the pandemic has been particularly difficult for all sectors of the Arts including Community Theatre. The Lowestoft Players were almost silent and kept apart for 16 months. Financially this was very worrying for our 55-year-old organisation, but with government support, rate relief, support from local councilors and a spectacular Crowdfunder campaign, the company was raring to go last July. In September 2021 we were able to stage our previously rehearsed and twice deferred production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat to a sell-out audience at our Theatre, The Players Theatre. This was followed by a production of The Vicar of Dibley at Christmas in December 2021, also a sell-out.

Our annual Pantomime at the Marina Theatre in January 2022 was deferred due to Covid. This has given us the opportunity to perform the pantomime – Beauty and the Beast – at the Players Theatre this coming May 2022, a panto fit for the Platinum Jubilee!

We have also held several other events at the Players Theatre including family entertainment, comedy nights, tribute bands, the B & B Young People's Theatre Group's production of Shrek the Musical, various school productions and events plus BBC Radio 4's Any Questions. All of which has helped to support the running of the Players Theatre building. The building is also used and available for private events.

Since purchasing ('The Bethel') Players Theatre in 2008, The Lowestoft Players have been working to improve the building and its facilities for the enjoyment of the public and our members. This last year has seen the installation of new ecofriendly heating and air management system. This was funded by an excellent Crowdfunder campaign. Access was improved to the Main Auditorium. This was supported by The Theatres Trust. Decoration of the interior of the building was carried out by members of the Lowestoft Players.

This last month has also seen us successfully gain planning permission to improve the windows and external signage. Our aim is to better identify the building as a Theatre and work with the community of Lowestoft to establish our building as a Community Theatre for the future. This aim is supported by The Theatres Trust and Historic England.

We have many aspirations to see the building further developed, increasing its capacity, improving facilities and access to make this an essential part of the makeup of the Cultural Quarter of our Town Centre. We have had great support for our designs and vision to see the Players Theatre develop to a Landmark Building for the benefit of the Town and residents. A feasibility study has just been completed by Shelia Moss King to support our plans and aspirations for future funding opportunities.

We welcome the help and support we have been given by Darren Newman and his team at East Suffolk Council plus generous grants from local Councillors from their locality budgets.

We are encouraged to see membership of The Lowestoft Players and supporters of Players Theatre returning after such a difficult period. We very much welcome the opportunity to help build a better future for the Performance Culture of our Town Centre.

Nicholas Garrod

Chair of The Lowestoft Players

April 2022