



Report to Lowestoft Town Council 2024

The Lowestoft Players and The Players Theatre continue to play an important role in the cultural activities of the town & the last few years has been challenging, but the support shown by patrons since the pandemic has been overwhelming.

This last year has seen us produce five inhouse productions, including at the Players Theatre, The Hunchback of Notre Dame, Elf the Musical and murder mystery. Our traditional family pantomime Cinderella was performed at the Marina Theatre and we are delighted by the support we have there.

We are currently in rehearsal for Kipps the Half a Sixpence musical in June, followed by Andrew Lloyd's Musical Cats in September. Our pantomime will see a new title with the Players performing Goldilocks for the first time in our 57 year history of performing pantomime in Lowestoft.

We have also supported The B&B Young Peoples Theatre Group with rehearsal and theatre space for their productions of Matilda and School of Rock and as well as a new venture for a piece of original work produced by local writers called Spotlights by Proscenium Youth Theatre.

The theatre has also hosted several one night shows, parties, Christmas shows and events and school productions.

Notably, the Lowestoft Players were instigators for two charitable performances which supported the Britten as a Boy Campaign. Offering the venue and crew for these performances, the last one featured Alistair McGowen and compared by Lowestoft's own Zeb Soanes, the events raised several thousands of pounds towards the statue of Benjamin Britten as a Boy to be placed on Kirkley Cliff in the near future.

The Players Theatre also opened the building to the public in order to contribute to Lowestoft's Heritage Open Days last September.

The Company continues to work with East Suffolk Council as an Ambassador for the Town Centre and hosted a recently successful meeting at The Players theatre in March.

We continue to maintain and improve the look of the building and with several grants from councillors enabling funds, matched with some of our own reserve for new signage for the front elevation.

Lowestoft Town Council also supported the installation of a Emergency Defibrillator on to the front of our building supporting the Battery Green Area.

Recently, the Lowestoft Players were successful in obtaining planning permission for a Landmark redevelopment and new extension to The Players Theatre which will greatly improve the services and facilities we could offer includes more space and comfort for patrons attending productions and allow multi users to the building. The redevelopment will drastically improve the appearance and fabric of then northside elevation of the Players Theatre, fitting with the proposed developments for the Cultural Quarter. Our plan is to achieve RICS Design Stage Level Three in allowing us to have better opportunities for Capital Grants as the overall cost for the development is estimated at around £1.5M

We continue to be concerned of our lack of involvement/inclusion of the Cultural Quarter especially as we sit on the edge of the future improved area and are worried about the duplication of facilities that already are existing in the town. We continue to raise our concerns with relevant bodies and hope that as this is developed that we will become more included. We are generally supportive of the development and hope that this will bring more opportunities to the town, but not to the cost of existing business's and the demise of our own building.

Martin Wilson

Director – The Lowestoft Players