

GUISELEY THEATRE

The Plan



Mission

Our mission is to unite a passionate, creative and diverse community through celebrating, preserving and making use of the Guiseley Theatre building.

Vision

Guiseley Theatre is a vibrant cultural hub that enriches our community through its heritage, artistic expression, and inclusive engagement whilst ensuring that the Guiseley Theatre building remains “**For the use of the inhabitants of Guiseley, forever**”



OUR AIMS

1 To celebrate the heritage of Guiseley Theatre and its people.

Celebrate the building and its community and enable people to appreciate the area they inhabit.

2 Ensure the Guiseley Theatre Building remains a community asset.

Act in the best appropriate manner to ensure that the building remains a space usable by the community enabling cultural, educational, social and recreational activities to proliferate, thereby enabling them to achieve their full potential and make a stronger positive impact on the local community.

3 To develop the Theatre building to achieve its maximum potential.

Improve accessibility and utilise professionals where necessary so that work is done to correct and safe standards.

4 Seek to attract national companies to Guiseley Theatre.

Attract local regional and national companies and entities to the Theatre enabling them to bring culture and arts to Guiseley and develop the perceived character of the town.

5 To become an enabling organisation.

Enable users, charities and community groups to make a direct impact on the community.



6 Create opportunities for local people.

Providing opportunities for local people, artists and businesses to volunteer, to learn and create in the Guiseley Theatre Building.

7 To be a home for community organisations.

To provide community organisations with a space to run on a day-to-day basis, rehearse, create and serve, acting as a hub for their organisation.



Nic, a member of the community ensemble in 'On Hallowed Ground', 2022. An original play, celebrating Guiseley AFC

CONTEXT

Guiseley Theatre was originally built as Guiseley Town Hall in 1867 and whilst never truly functioning as a municipal building, performances took place in the building from day one. As the building was officially declared open, it was dedicated **'for the use of the inhabitants of Guiseley, forever'**. From that moment onward, the building has seen many uses from a cinema, hospital, library, fire station and school before officially being renamed as Guiseley Theatre in the 1980's as the building was adopted by the community amateur dramatics group. Throughout the 156 years of the buildings existence, it has constantly been at the centre of the community, a place where people can gather to meet, plan, create, and be entertained.

In 2019, the lease with Leeds City Council was formally adopted by Guiseley Theatre Community Interest Company (an organisation born out of the existing committee members, users and community professionals) with ambitious plans for 2020, including a Community Asset Transfer (CAT) which would ensure an extended period of tenancy in the building. The Coronavirus Pandemic meant that these plans were postponed and instead the focus of the company became to survive the restrictions and renovate the building, making use of the forced downtime. This period saw the building transform from a dated 'village hall' to a vibrant and attractive Victorian style building. In this time, Guiseley Theatre CIC improved the rehearsal facilities installing a dance studio, decorated throughout in traditional Victorian styles and began a major rewire of the building. This work was fully funded by crowdfunding, private donations and restricted funding. Since these improvements have been made to the building, we are now a unique and premiere venue for hire in our area, where we have also seen the benefits to the community, feeling they have invested in the building after seeing and being a part of the physical changes within it. Our recent investment in the bar facilities was made possible through local philanthropic support — a model we hope to build on as we continue to enhance the theatre for the local community.

After surviving the lockdown period and refreshing the building's appearance, our focus shifted to rebuilding public confidence and welcoming community groups. This has been challenging, especially with the ongoing cost of living crisis. 2024 has seen audiences and community groups return to pre-pandemic levels meaning an increase in income, programming and footfall. Guiseley Theatre is now operating at maximum capacity with the current staffing and facilities available.





The next steps involve:

- A Community Asset Transfer of the theatre building to Guiseley Theatre CIC
- Major redevelopment of the building
- Widening the staff team

The redevelopment of the building and widening the staff team both require substantial funding from the charities and trusts sector which is only possible upon securing a Community Asset transfer of the building. Like many public spaces, we anticipate operating through a mix of earned income and support from public funding, charitable trusts, and foundations. Initially, we are seeking core funding to create additional posts focused on marketing, outreach, events management, and facilities. These roles will help us maximise the building's potential for local people, increase engagement, and ultimately grow income to sustain the posts long term.

Currently, we are home to approximately 95 monthly room bookings which each host their own unique community who use the building on a regular basis. These groups intersect a diverse cross section of the wider community with parent and toddler groups, health and fitness classes, after school activities, senior citizens groups, amateur performance groups, business meetings, campaign meetings, training to name but a few.

We have taken on additional staff, seeing our team grow to 11 part time staff and a pool of freelance theatre technicians, and have substantially increased our volunteer pool to the point that we now have a dedicated and passionate community of stewards, front of house managers, bar staff and crew.

In alignment with the strategic visions of the Leeds Plan 2040 (creating a functional town centre), the West Yorkshire Plan (creating a Happy community), and the Arts Council England's 'Let's Create' initiative, we are dedicated to making Guiseley Theatre a central point for cultural engagement and continuing the legacy of Leeds 2023 and their 'Let culture loose' mantra by being a beacon of culture across Outer North West Leeds and beyond. This commitment involves not only enhancing the accessibility and inclusivity of our venue but also actively reaching out to underrepresented groups within our community. Through collaborative partnerships, targeted marketing, and community engagement initiatives, we aim to draw in those who may not have previously considered the theatre as a destination for entertainment, education, or personal growth. Our intention is to take a multi-agency approach by working with health, education and social prescribing bodies such as Aireborough Together, Aireborough Learning Partnership Trust and Linking Leeds to extend our reach and impact beyond the cultural sector.



...Absolutely gorgeous, perfectly observed, beautiful storytelling...

Audience praise for 'The Garden', 2023, an original piece of childrens theatre produced by Guiseley Theatre CIC and Codswallop CIC

SITUATION ANALYSIS

POLITICAL FACTORS

- Perceived Government **value and support** for **culture, communities** and the **creative industry**.
- Local counsellors **actively interested** and supporting of the Theatre and its role in the community.
- Leeds City Council actively **promoting community asset transfers**.

ECONOMIC FACTORS

- **Inflationary pressure** still felt (increased materials and repair costs, increased artists fees)
- Some increased in **employer costs**
- Increase in **energy prices**
- **Cost of living** rise
- **Above average** household incomes in the area with 15% lower income and higher deprivation households

SOCIO-CULTURAL FACTORS

- Employment – roles are **part time** hours which can limit their attractiveness and the retention of staff appointed
- **Accessibility issues** with a Victorian building
- **Ethnic diversity** of area 90% White British, 5% Asian, 2% Black and 3% mixed ethnicity
- Demographic of Guiseley- **75% working age** employed, balance mix families, working age adults and retirees
- **Fewer people volunteering** (increases in retirement age and pressures on free time)
- **Audience Gap** of 18-35 year olds, also this age group seeking **voluntary opportunities** to develop skills
- Guiseley commuter town - **good transport links** to central Leeds
- **Drinking culture** - could open up the theatre to capitalise on this
- Evidence that people are exercising **financial restraint**
- Future in **Pay What You Can** - minimum ticket price/ financial accessibility

TECHNOLOGICAL FACTORS

- Changes in **technology accelerating** - risk could make our technology obsolete
- Theatre technology is currently **outdated** and not up to **industry standard** or future proof

LEGAL FACTORS

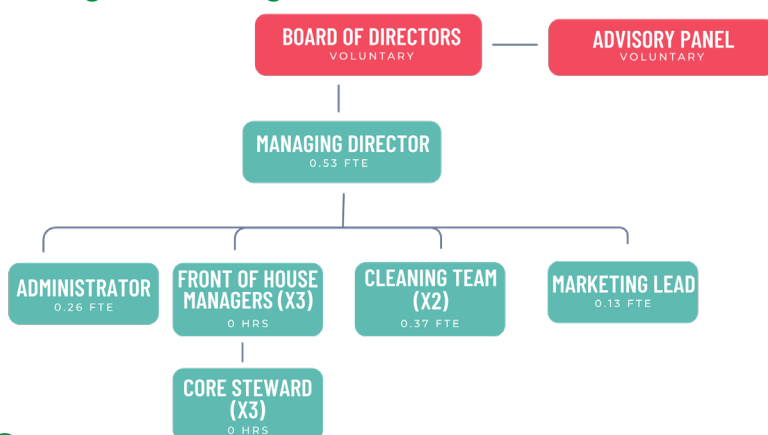
- Employment bill changes particularly re: **zero hours contracts**
- Apprenticeship **levy reform** and establishment Skills England
- Current lease arrangement with Leeds City Council **restricts eligibility** to apply for funding from charitable bodies

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

- Victorian building - **accessibility issues** and currently not developed to be **environmentally efficient**
- (e.g. single glazing, outdated heating system) **needs investment** to achieve net zero
- Resident concerns about **noise**
- Lack of **parking facilities**

PEOPLE

Guiseley Theatre is run by a huge team of directors, staff, volunteers and freelancers who are all dedicated to making the building thrive. Our current structure of directors and staff looks like this:



Directors

The Board of Directors is made up of four passionate individuals. The Board consults, where appropriate, its external advisory panel to ensure that the Board is in a position to make effective and well-informed decisions.

Madeleine Irwin, Chair

Madeleine is a freelance specialist in creative and cultural engagement, with expertise in project management, research, evaluation, resource development, training, and facilitation. She holds a PhD in Applied Theatre and Young People's Spiritual Wellbeing and works across the arts, education, health, and community sectors. Recent collaborations include Bradford City of Culture 2025, The British Library, Royal Ballet and Opera, 20 Stories High and Forced Entertainment. A Certified Practitioner in Therapeutic Play Skills (PTUK), she is currently training towards a Postgraduate Diploma in Play Therapy. Madeleine has held leadership roles at Orangebox Young People's Centre, Interplay Theatre, and Creative Partnerships West Yorkshire and has served on several arts and community boards. Passionate about creative learning and community collaboration, she provides strategic leadership at Guiseley Theatre, ensuring it serves as a hub for engagement and well-being.

Jacob Phillips

Jacob is a freelance theatre director, producer and facilitator working across Leeds for over a decade with organisations such as Opera North, Leeds Playhouse, Leeds Libraries, Wrongsemble, Bradford Literature Festival and many more. Jacob is also Artistic Director of Codswallop CIC and through this work has intensively worked on cultural engagement in Outer North West Leeds through play, theatre and other creative outlets, he has a reputation for creating raucous, poignant and captivating visual theatre. Jacob also serves as Guiseley Theatre's Managing Director, running the day to day operations of the building and has been instrumental in developing the vision for the organisation over the past 9 years, working with the community led committee that ran the building prior to the formation of the CIC in 2019.

Sarah Gibson

Sarah has been deeply involved with Guiseley Theatre for over 40 years, working closely with the diverse communities that use the building. In addition to her role at the theatre, Sarah is a local primary school teacher with strong connections throughout the community.

With support of the advisory panel, the Board carries an array of skills that compliment each other and is well equipped to manage the company in its current state. As the company grows, we would look to acquire board members with skills in event management, fundraising, marketing and audience development, building and facilities management, community engagement, governance, fund management, and creative programming.

Advisory Panel

The Advisory Board comprises of:

Paul Cooper

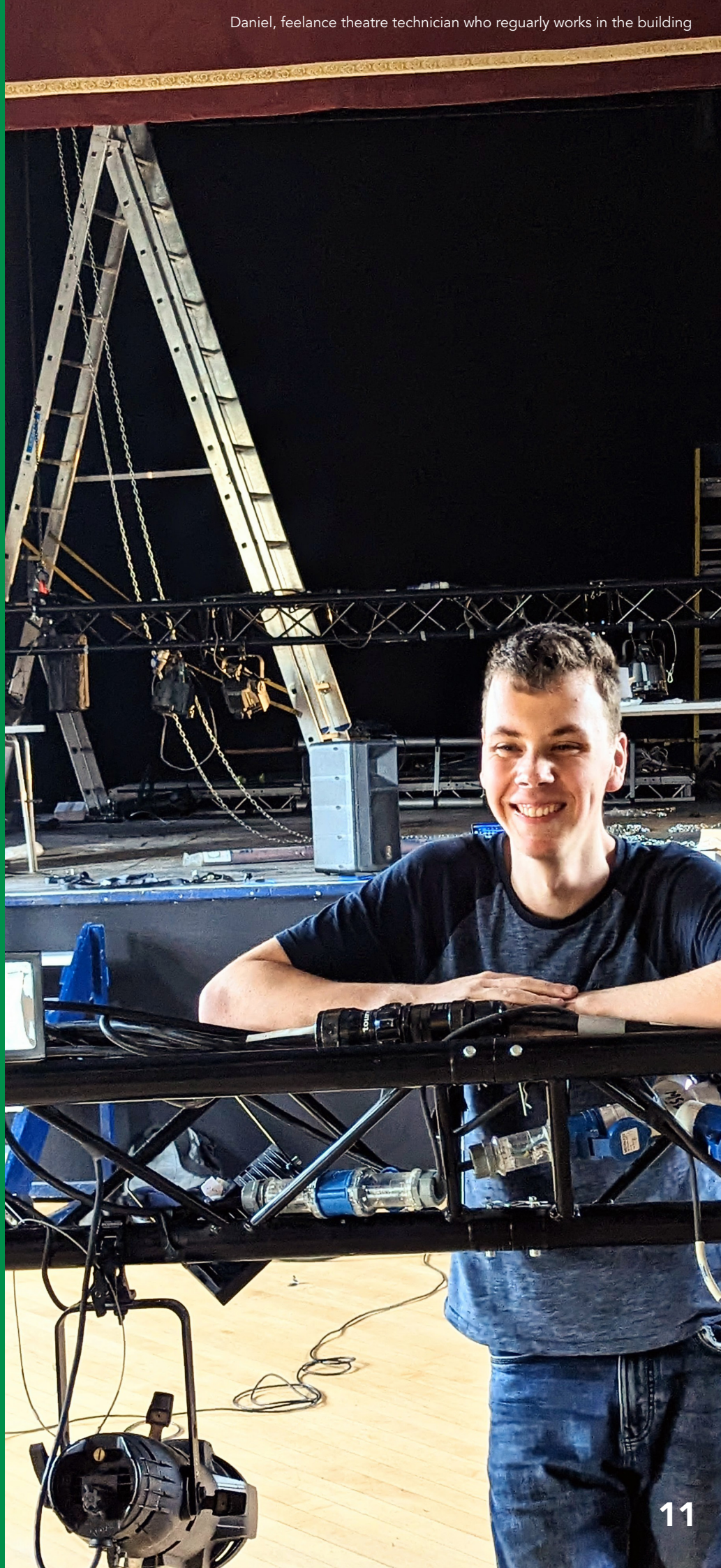
Paul is an accountant with experience managing the finances of large companies with multi-million-pound budgets. He oversees the day-to-day financial transactions at Guiseley Theatre.

Miia Numela-Price

Miia serves as a supportive 'critical friend' to the Board, offering strategic guidance, constructive feedback, and insights on best corporate governance practice, risk management, and strategy. She provides her time on a sessional, unpaid/volunteer basis. She leans on her years of experience as a corporate/commercial lawyer, most recently heading up an in-house legal team of a locally headquartered software technology company. She is an active member of the senior leadership team in her current employed role.

Katherine Littlewood

Katherine has a career in senior management in the public sector with skills in organisation development, strategy, transformation and change, communications and marketing, portfolio and project management, inclusion, HR, coaching and learning and development.





Volunteers

Alongside our staff, we work with over 100 volunteers who regularly support the building behind our bars, stewarding events, writing funding applications and creating a welcoming environment. Volunteers have a huge importance in the history of the building and we intend to keep this focus for the future. We are immensely grateful to our dedicated and passionate community of volunteers who share our vision and actively help us to achieve it.

Freelancers

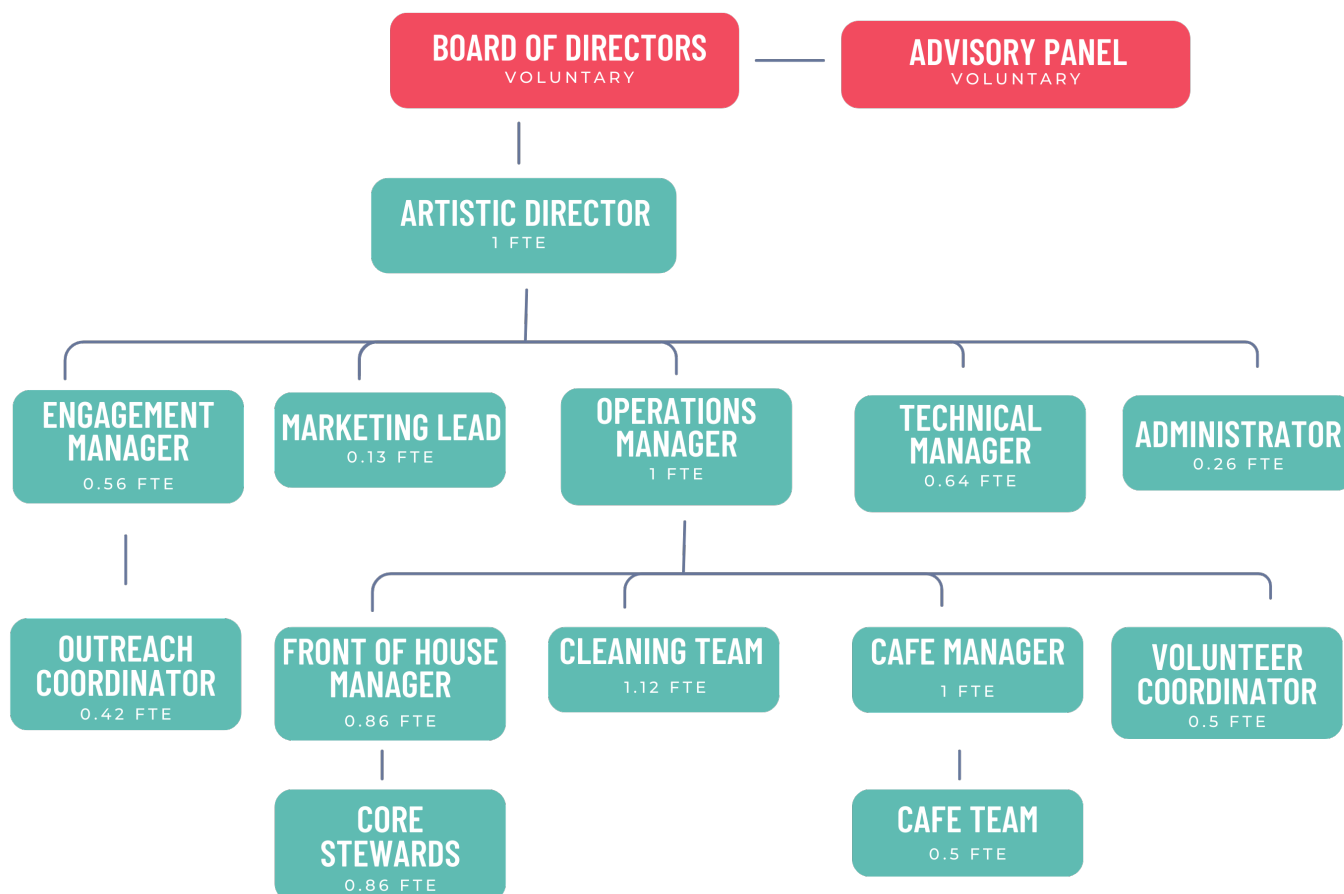
Supporting our employed staff, we also work with a wide range of creative and trade freelancers. These are people with specialist skills who work in the building regularly and handle tasks such as the technical aspects of theatre production, electrical rewire and alterations, specialist joinery and some aspects of cleaning.

Contracts

We also have contracts in place with 3rd parties to handle fire extinguisher maintenance and security, sanitation and waste to ensure that we comply with the relevant legislation.

Aspirational Staffing Structure

The theatre currently employs 11 individuals who keep the building functioning on a day to day basis. We intend to grow this team over the next 10 years to the model below, which will enable us to better serve the community and manage the increased use of the theatre building. We are seeking core funding to create additional posts which would enable an increase in marketing, outreach, operations management and technical management enabling us to deliver on our aims for the building and local people and ultimately leading to increased income generation to sustain the posts longer term.



With the creation of new roles, we would also see the increase in hours across all the existing staff, leading to a team that is equipped to do their job well.

By creating the role of Engagement Manager, we hope to increase the active community investment, usage and sense of ownership in the building, rather than pursuing a purely passive entertainment provider model.

We would also look to create the role of Operations Manager, which would oversee the logistics of running the building on a day to day basis and manage the staff who make it happen. This would separate the responsibilities that currently sit with our 'Managing director' between operations and Artistic Director, who would then focus on the artistic vision of the building, programming and social impact.

The Volunteer Coordinator would be a new role that is dedicated to managing, responding to the needs of and maintaining the community of our volunteers. This role would ensure that our volunteers feel valued and ensure that they get something out of the time that they dedicate to us.

PARTNERSHIPS

We work with Codswallop CIC to deliver high quality community cultural engagement in the building. Codswallop CIC is recognised as our **Company in Residence** as they use our facilities to make new, professional and meaningful theatre. Codswallop also excel in community engagement in the arts using Guiseley Theatre as a base for all their activities, running weekly arts classes, community performances and workshops. We benefit from this relationship through positive interactions with the building, increased footfall and establishing a quality reputation in the community for the arts and genuine engagement, as well as having industry professionals work in the building to create new work.



CODSWALLOP

A performance by 'Oddballs Juniors', a youth drama club by Codswallop CIC, based at Guiseley Theatre

RESOURCES

Since the CIC was formed in 2019, we have invested heavily into the fabric of the building, including a full rewire, redecoration throughout, new bar facilities and toilets, meaning we now have a functioning entertainment venue.

Our equipment, whilst outdated and basic, allows us to adequately host theatre and music events. With a range of lighting, rigging, truss and staging, our space can transform from day to day. The system we have in place currently is a temporary fix to replace the unsafe infrastructure we inherited. We intend to install a permanent and modern system.

We have two functioning bars meaning we are able to serve audiences rapidly during intervals and are well equipped to serve functions and weddings.

Our main auditorium has a capacity of 298 with a mix of fixed seating on the balcony level and modular seating in the stalls. This means we are able to host performances and events of all sizes up to our 'full house', including intimate performances, cabaret style seating and custom stage layouts such as thrust and in the round.

We have a variety of hireable spaces that are equipped for specialist needs, including a rehearsal dance studio with full height mirrors and dance mat flooring, a board room (ideal for meetings and tutoring classes) and our Offenbach room which celebrates our Victorian features and serves as a function room. These spaces, along with the main auditorium, are versatile spaces that adapt to the needs of our many hirers.

As we prepare to open a cafe in the building, some of these spaces will undergo refurbishment and re-purposing as we adapt to how the spaces are used.

To the rear of the building, there is a yard space (mostly used for parking), a workshop and bunker (both of which are used for storage). The area occupied by these buildings is roughly the same size as the main theatre building.

Behind the scenes we also have effective booking systems, contracts, invoicing systems and policies in place to ensure that we are able to operate safely and confidently.



A chandelier in the Offenbach room

PERFORMER TESTIMONIALS

“

We literally couldn't imagine running Black Heart anywhere other than that beautiful room in that building. It's home to us and felt like home right from the beginning and as we approach our next show 5 years on, nothing has changed.

We're over the moon that we are able to provide exactly what we set out to, family friendly entertainment that kids as young as 3/4 years old right through to those in their 70's can enjoy, with many of them experiencing theatre for the first time through us”

- Black Heart Wrestling

who run a monthly family wrestling show, with a full-sized ring at Guiseley Theatre

“

Guiseley Theatre is a venue with enormous potential, and with the right investment, it could become a thriving cultural hub for the local community. Guiseley Theatre CIC's vision aligns with the needs of artists and audiences alike, ensuring the building is not only preserved but developed into a space that fosters creativity, accessibility, and engagement.

For Wrongsemble, the future growth of Guiseley Theatre would provide an enhanced space for high-quality touring work, benefiting both the venue and companies like ours that rely on well-equipped, well-supported theatres to deliver outstanding cultural experiences. Investment in the building would not only secure its future but would also strengthen partnerships between organisations like ours and the communities we serve.”

- Elvi Piper

Artistic Director, Wrongsemble



Wrestlers taking part in monthly Black Heart Wrestling match



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I visited Guiseley Theatre with my one woman show, 'Amy Johnson: Last Flight Out' in February 2025 and could immediately see the potential of the building. With its collection of spaces varying in size and atmosphere this building is a gem of a space which given the right support would thrive and become an even more valued part of the local community. Performance spaces, meeting rooms, rehearsal rooms and studios, cafe and restaurant space and potential to hire out for events, possibly even filming. After speaking with a core member of staff, I was impressed by the vision for the building and also the desire to offer a high quality programme of children's theatre and other events.

I personally see Guiseley Theatre as a future partner for my arts projects. I live in south Wales but geography is not an issue when one can work within a great partnership and a clear vision. I can picture Guiseley Theatre being a regular stop on my tours with the shows I offer and a key partner for reaching audiences in Leeds and surrounding areas.

With a long lease secured Guiseley Theatre could move forward with applications for funding and investment. The building itself requires upgrading and investment to reach the needs of the community and there is no reason this couldn't happen with the right support. Having recently secured Arts Council funding myself I am very aware of the work and commitment involved in pulling a bid together and the need for focus and clear management. I think the Guiseley Theatre team are working very hard currently within the current restrictions and I hope those making the decision to lease the building can see the value of Guiseley's vision and enable Guiseley Theatre CIC to implement it."

- Jenny Lockyer
Writer and Performer

COMMUNITY USER PROFILES

Across the 95 monthly users of our building, there is an abundance of individual, diverse communities, including - but not limited to - chess clubs, health support groups, youth activities, seated exercise groups, line dancing and more.

Below are more in-depth profiles of 3 of these communities to serve as an example.

Good Grief Guiseley

Good Grief Guiseley is a community initiative led by local residents and organisations experienced with bereavement. Hoping to normalise conversations about grief and loss so that Guiseley and surrounding areas can build upon the care and compassion and support each other.

Good Grief Guiseley have been running in Guiseley Theatre on a monthly basis since 2019 with over 50 members in their community.

“

Guiseley Theatre offered support and space to hold a regular community peer grief support cafe, it is a way of making grief visible in the community alongside many other happenings going in. The Theatre feels like a safe space, part of the community, welcoming. The group have enjoyed seeing it evolve, being painted and developed. They feel invested in it and have joined in with other venue activities not organised by GGG - moving forward in grief. I could not see GGG being as successful in peer supporting grief if it were not for the support of Guiseley Theatre and its employees.”

The Book Social

The Book Social is a monthly book club with a passion for crime thrillers who meet in 'Barretts Bar' at Guiseley Theatre, attracting members in their mid twenties to mid 60's. The group formed as strangers and has formed a tight knit community of book lovers.

The Book Social have met once a month since 2021 and have up to 20 members in their community.

“

Guiseley Theatre has provided us with a beautiful and highly functioning venue that supports all members of our community. It is a fantastic, local space where a wide range of different events take place that appeal to all in the Book Club. As a book group it provides us with a wonderful space to meet and socialise in a welcoming environment.”



Complete Coaching

Complete Coaching is a fitness group that promotes healthy life styles through physio, fitness, pilates & nutrition and is dedicated to helping people become happier and healthier. Complete Coaching has a variety of classes and groups each week with participants of all ages.

Complete Coaching have hosted classes four times a week since 2021 with up to 30 members of their community.

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It works well for my clients and for me. Good location, good facilities, affordable rates with friendly and supportive staff at the theatre. It's a lovely local environment in which to work and my clients like the venue. I like to also support the theatre as I think it's an important part of the community in Guiseley."

MARKET RESEARCH

Based on the analysis of postcodes, several key trends and insights emerge that shape our understanding of our current audiences:

Geographic Distribution

The data reveals a significant portion of our audience originates from the local catchment area surrounding the theatre. This hyperlocal support indicates strong community engagement and loyalty, which are essential for sustaining a vibrant cultural venue. The theatre serves as a cultural anchor for residents in the immediate vicinity, fostering a sense of local pride and identity.

Regional and Beyond

Beyond the local community, the theatre also draws a considerable audience from across Leeds and its neighbouring areas. This regional appeal underscores our role as a cultural destination within the broader cityscape, attracting theatregoers who are willing to travel for quality performances and diverse programming.

Audience Diversity

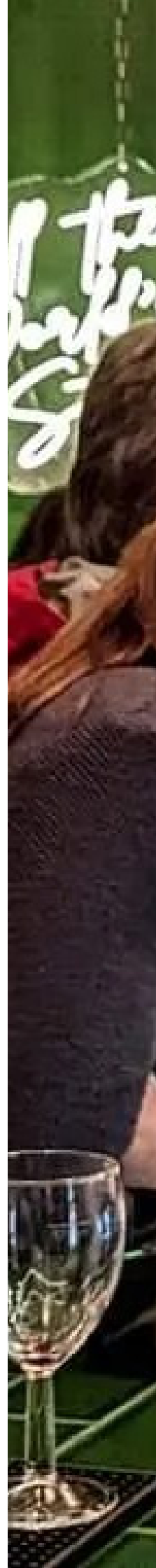
Our audience exhibits diversity across various demographics, including age, gender, and income levels. This diversity enriches the cultural tapestry of our theatre, ensuring that our programming resonates with a wide spectrum of tastes and preferences. It also reflects our commitment to inclusivity and accessibility in the arts.

Cultural Preferences

The data suggests a strong interest in a mix of traditional and contemporary performances, indicating a dynamic cultural appetite among our audiences. This insight guides our programming decisions, allowing us to curate a balanced season that appeals to both seasoned theatre-goers and newcomers alike.

Engagement and Feedback

Audience feedback mechanisms highlight a high level of satisfaction with our current programming while also providing valuable insights for improvement. Regular surveys and feedback loops allow us to continuously refine our programming and enhance the overall theatre experience based on audience preferences and suggestions.





These trends and insights provide a solid foundation for strategic planning and development moving forward:

Community Engagement - Strengthen partnerships with local organisations and businesses to further embed the theatre within the community.

Regional Marketing - Expand outreach efforts to neighbouring areas to capitalise on our regional draw and attract new audiences.

Diverse Programming - Continue to diversify our programming to cater to the varied interests of our audience while maintaining high artistic standards.

Enhanced Data Analytics - Further invest in data capture and analytics to deepen our understanding of audience behaviour and preferences, ensuring targeted and effective marketing campaigns.

By leveraging these insights, we can continue to grow and evolve as a cultural institution, fostering a vibrant arts scene that resonates with our diverse and engaged audience base. Throughout 2024, 8263 tickets were sold for 132 events at Guiseley Theatre which proves the support the local community has for Guiseley Theatre. However, this is only 30% of the potential tickets that could have been sold meaning there is room to grow our audiences with the right staffing in place.

There is clearly a demand for what we already offer, which is appreciated by our hyper local audiences. We look to expand our audience reach further afield to fill the additional potential tickets.

Aside from events and ticket sales, we also have a strong customer base in our community bookings, where our morning and evening sessions are highly sought after with afternoon sessions largely open to potential bookings.

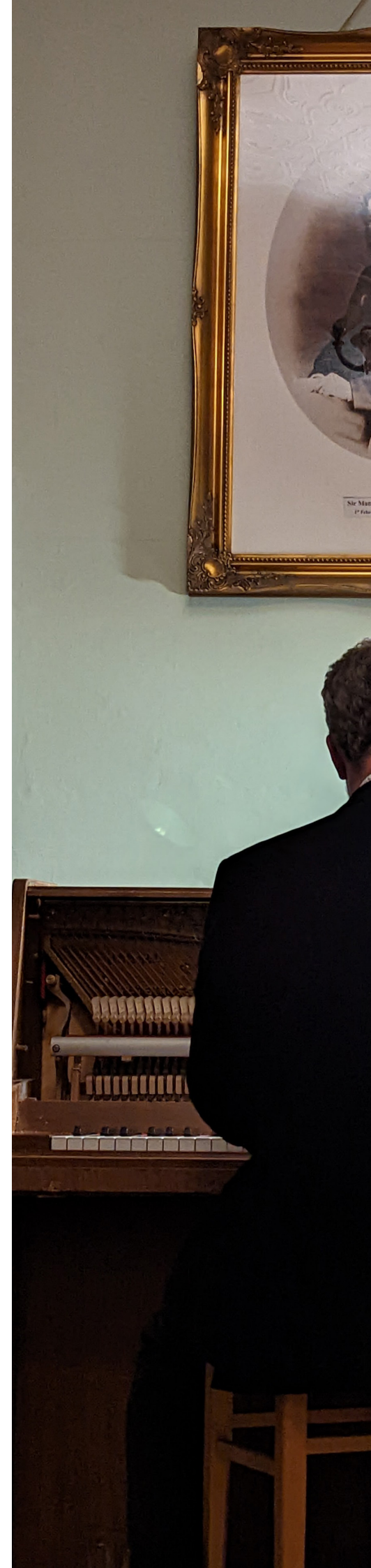
COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Guiseley Theatre CIC was formed out of existing community groups who already had a vested interest in the Guiseley Theatre building from as far back as 1923. The formation of the CIC was with the intention of allowing the building to reach its maximum potential and now the CIC represents and enables so many individual communities which come to support each other.

Guiseley Theatre is a community of communities. Our plans to employ a Community Engagement Manager will lead outreach efforts, develop customised initiatives, and forge local partnerships to boost community engagement and economic impact. Our innovative approach aims to democratise the programming process by involving the wider community and aligning with our local authority's Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) principles. These initiatives will empower a broader group of community members to participate in programming the theatre's events and activities. Additionally, we will facilitate community forums and workshops, encouraging residents to express their creative ideas, share personal stories, and identify significant local, regional, or global issues. These insights will serve as the foundation for creating and commissioning future work at the theatre. This participatory model of programming is a departure from traditional methods and aims to create a more inclusive and responsive cultural hub.

Guiseley Theatre's innovative approach to community engagement will significantly impact the local economy by increasing attendance and participation through targeted outreach and inclusive programming development. By involving community members in programming and facilitating forums and workshops, we ensure that events resonate with local interests, driving higher turnout and local spending. Partnerships with nearby businesses will create special promotions and strategically scheduled events, boosting both daytime economies (shops, libraries, parks) and night-time economies (restaurants, bars). Our community programming trips and resident-driven initiatives will attract diverse audiences, fostering a vibrant local cultural scene that stimulates economic activity.

By adopting these innovative community engagement practices, Guiseley Theatre will not only empower our communities and enhance local economies but will also set a new standard for inclusive, community-driven cultural programming. This approach will create a lasting and meaningful impact on the community.





SOCIAL PURPOSE

As a Community Interest Company, we are constantly working towards our company aims. These aims have been decided based on the needs we have observed in our community, the passions of people in the building and the resources we have available in the theatre.

We believe that through our work towards these aims, our impact on the community around us will be felt by many, improving the lives of those who live locally and who work within the arts industry. We plan to establish Guiseley Theatre as a place of learning in all aspects of our work. Whether it be on stage, back stage, front of house, administrative or operations. We recognise opportunities for skills to be passed to people of all ages, looking to expand their knowledge and develop their skill set, making Guiseley Theatre a learning theatre.

We also aim to transform the building into a Green Theatre, whereby we see the building generate its own heating and power and implement sustainable practices in its day to day operations. This would see the theatre becoming Net Zero by 2035 dependent on external major projects capital funding.

The income generating aspects of the Theatre's work, for example through ticket sales, the bar and cafe, enable us to continue to provide community room spaces to hire at more reasonable prices than if we were to charge at a rate that recovered all of our operating costs.

Our planned community engagement also offers us the opportunity to develop programmes that meet the needs of particular under-served groups in our community and to directly apply or work with community groups on applications for grants and funding to support these programmes and the associated costs of using our community spaces.

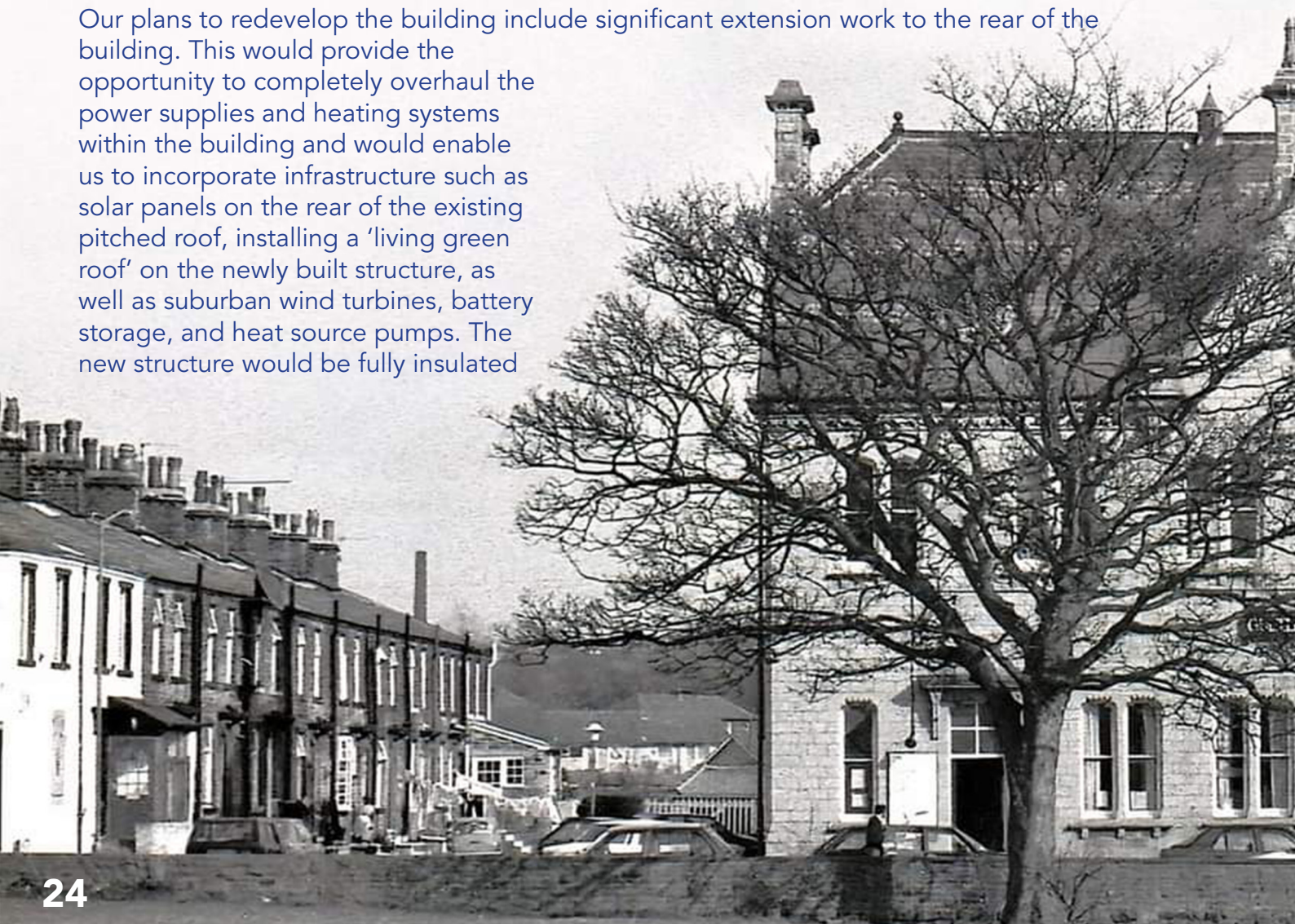
A GREEN THEATRE

The Guiseley Theatre building was erected in the late 1800s, and very little in the structure of the building has changed since then. This means we are still utilising the Victorian infrastructure originally installed, which is not energy efficient compared to 21st Century standards. The aged design of the building, while rich in history and character, presents a significant challenge in our efforts to modernise and reduce our carbon footprint.

Currently, we have single-glazing windows throughout the building, outdated and inefficient heating systems, and are fully reliant on gas and electricity supplies from the main grid. These factors contribute to higher energy consumption and increased operational costs, making sustainability a crucial priority for us moving forward.

Since 2019, Guiseley Theatre CIC has converted all domestic lighting in the building to LED and worked with Leeds City Council to re-roof the theatre and install insulation to the roof space. We have also spent a significant period of 2024 working with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority conducting sustainability and efficiency audits to fully understand the environmental impact of the building and the areas that require investment. Further to this, with financial support from Climate Action Leeds and Leeds Community Foundation, Guiseley Theatre CIC replaced disposable cups with reusable 'festival cups' and wine, prosecco, and cocktail glasses. This immediately eliminated 95% of the theatre's single-use plastics for the theatre's day-to-day practice, marking a substantial step toward reducing waste and promoting environmentally friendly operations.

Our plans to redevelop the building include significant extension work to the rear of the building. This would provide the opportunity to completely overhaul the power supplies and heating systems within the building and would enable us to incorporate infrastructure such as solar panels on the rear of the existing pitched roof, installing a 'living green roof' on the newly built structure, as well as suburban wind turbines, battery storage, and heat source pumps. The new structure would be fully insulated



and equipped with efficient systems, and with these investments coupled with LED theatre lighting systems and windows and doors with secondary glazing, our aim is to be as close to 'off-grid' as possible.

The 'Theatre Green Book' is a fantastic resource with guidance, advice, and best practices for cultural buildings to operate in a climate-conscious manner, with advice ranging from building new theatres, running existing theatres, and producing new theatre shows. The Theatre Green Book will be integral to the redevelopment of Guiseley Theatre and will enable us to implement sustainable practices in day-to-day operations. This would see the theatre becoming net zero by 2035, a goal we are fully committed to achieving.

By making these vital changes, we will not only secure the longevity of the building but also enhance its reputation and moral duty of being sustainable and environmentally responsible within the community. Our focus on green initiatives aligns with our broader mission to create a theatre space that is not only a cultural hub but also a model of innovation, learning, and sustainability. With continued investment, partnerships, and strategic planning, we are excited about the prospect of transforming Guiseley Theatre into a future-proof, energy-efficient, and environmentally conscious venue.



A view of Guiseley Theatre in the early 80's.

A LEARNING THEATRE

We recognise that Guiseley Theatre is used as a place of learning in many aspects of our day-to-day running. From the classes that are run by our community users to the vital skills learnt through our volunteering opportunities or through the many work experience placements we host throughout the year, learning is at the heart of our operations. We see our venue as a dynamic educational space where people can develop their abilities, gain practical experience, and immerse themselves in the arts and events industry.

Our goal is to utilise the building as a Learning Theatre where we offer opportunities for people of all ages to learn skills across all departments, from administration and hospitality to community engagement and stagecraft. By fostering an environment of continuous learning, we aim to create a space where knowledge sharing and skill development are embedded in our daily activities. Whether individuals are just starting their careers, looking for a change, or wanting to enhance their existing expertise, Guiseley Theatre aims to provide meaningful opportunities that cater to a variety of learning needs.

We have identified that whilst there is a gap in our audience demographics of 18-35-year-olds, this age bracket is where we gain volunteer support from young people looking to enhance their skill set in an effort to become more employable. We also see working-aged people looking to learn additional skills that are outside their employed work remit, as well as retired individuals eager to learn and experience new environments in their retirement. Essentially, we recognise an overwhelming desire from people of all ages to learn the ins and outs of running a venue, and we see this as a fantastic opportunity to support personal and professional growth through hands-on experience.

Our intention is to acknowledge this desire and position ourselves to be able to offer both informal and formal training and qualifications. By fostering the rhetoric of being a Learning Theatre, we aim to support those looking to expand their skill set across all our areas of work, such as marketing, hospitality, event management, administration, and stagecraft. We will offer placements, apprenticeships, and courses with the aim of introducing new talent to the cultural sector and workforce. Additionally, we will collaborate with local businesses, training providers, and educational institutions to ensure that the learning opportunities we offer are relevant, impactful, and valuable to those who participate.

We would also be in a position to expand our offering to schools and colleges, inviting them to utilise our resources and staff skills. By doing so, we can promote an interest in the building amongst local young people from an early age, establishing a sense of ownership, pride, and belonging throughout the community. By engaging with students and young learners, we hope to inspire the next generation of theatre practitioners, event managers, and cultural enthusiasts, ensuring that the legacy of Guiseley Theatre continues for years to come.

Our Volunteer Coordinator would take responsibility for volunteer development and establishing a more informal method of learning through buddying systems,



training, and experience. This ensures that volunteers get something meaningful out of their time with us, whether that be new friendships, practical skills, or career advancement opportunities. We want every volunteer to feel valued and enriched by their experience at Guiseley Theatre, and we will continue to develop strategies that make volunteering an accessible and rewarding pursuit.

Guiseley Theatre has the potential to be well-positioned and equipped to educate and train vast numbers of people who are passionate about the building, the industry, and their community. Our vision is to transform Guiseley Theatre into a hub of learning and development where individuals, regardless of age or background, can gain experience, improve their skills, and contribute to the vibrant cultural life of our community. Through structured training, hands-on opportunities, and strong partnerships, we will ensure that Guiseley Theatre remains a beacon of learning, creativity, and community engagement for years to come.

STRATEGY FOR EARNING INCOME

Guiseley Theatre is already operating and earning an income, which demonstrates a demand for our offer in the community. Our ability to generate revenue through various streams is a testament to the strong support we receive from local residents, businesses, and arts enthusiasts who recognise the value of having a thriving cultural hub in the area. The success of our financial model ensures that we can continue to reinvest in the theatre, improving our facilities, programming, and overall visitor experience.

We have three existing streams of income that each roughly make up one-third of our annual turnover. These are:

Room hire

Our spaces are regularly rented out by community groups, businesses, and individuals for various purposes, including meetings, rehearsals, and private events. This steady source of income helps us maintain and manage the theatre's day-to-day operations.

Ticket sales

Our programme of performances, live entertainment, and events attracts audiences from across the region. By curating an exciting and diverse lineup of shows, we ensure that ticket revenue remains a strong pillar of our financial sustainability.

Bar takings

With our licensed bar operating during events, we are able to generate additional income which contributes to the theatre's financial stability. Providing a welcoming hospitality experience for our patrons not only increases revenue but also enhances the overall visitor experience.

In 2025, a fourth stream of income will be launched in the form of a café, utilising our bar space during the day. This will allow us to maximise the use of our facilities while providing an additional offering for the local community. The café will serve as a social hub, attracting people throughout the day for coffee, food, and informal meetings. By diversifying our income streams in this way, we will strengthen the financial resilience of the theatre while further embedding ourselves within the daily life of the community.

With a café space, increased community use, and a thriving programme of events, the building will be operating at its maximum capacity. This will ensure that we are making the most of our resources while continuing to deliver a high-quality experience for all who engage with us. Expanding our offerings allows us to engage with an even wider demographic, fostering stronger connections with different community groups and increasing footfall throughout the year.

The opportunity the Community Asset Transfer (CAT) provides is the ability to unlock access to major funding and grants that include capital investment. This funding will enable us to



Lee, a volunteer preparing cocktails at the theatre bar

make critical improvements to the fabric of the building, enhancing accessibility, environmental sustainability, and overall infrastructure. Additionally, securing long-term financial support through these grants will allow us to expand our team of employees, ensuring we have the right expertise and capacity to meet the growing demands of our community and stakeholders.

Most major funders require a minimum of 25-50 years remaining on a lease as a condition of providing financial investment. The CAT will give us the security needed to apply for significant funding opportunities, positioning us to develop and implement ambitious plans for the future. This long-term stability will allow us to carry out major renovations, enhance our technical capabilities, and create a more inclusive and welcoming space for all.

Our varied programming ensures we attract a diverse audience from the population, with many repeat customers. From family-friendly performances and community theatre productions to live music and cultural events, our broad offering appeals to a wide range of interests and age groups. By continuously evolving our programme to reflect audience demand, we maintain strong levels of engagement while ensuring financial viability. This commitment to diversity and accessibility not only strengthens our financial sustainability but also solidifies our role as a key cultural asset within the region.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND PROCEDURE

Overview

Since 2022, the financial management of the Theatre has been undertaken by Paul Cooper, a member of the Advisory Board. Paul is a Chartered Management Accountant with over forty years' experience in both PLC and private company environments, and he has managed companies with turnovers up to £25 million.

Following the formation of the Company in late 2019 and having overcome the formidable challenges presented by the Corona virus Pandemic, the Management Team have built a solid platform on which to take the Theatre forward.

The refurbishment work undertaken throughout the Theatre during the Pandemic, together with the return of the public appetite for social gatherings, has seen turnover increase from £53,000 in the 2022 Financial Year, to a current level of more than £110,000. This growth has been achieved with a small, but highly committed, salaried team supported by a team of dedicated volunteers.

The Company has demonstrated its ability to manage and grow in a challenging external environment, and with the ability to access external funding through a long-term lease, the opportunities offered by this unique building and potential audience offer great future potential to develop the arts in Guiseley and the surrounding area.



An audience enjoying a live music event at Guiseley Theatre



Financial Management

Budgets

An Annual Budget is presented to the Board and is revised quarterly for Board approval. Cash flow forecasts are prepared quarterly for review by the Board and are monitored on a weekly basis by the Finance Director.

Spending

Other than day to day operational expenses, no payments, or commitments, including salary and capital expenditure, can be made without the approval of an Advisory panel or Board member. All bank payments require two signatories, one of which must be a Director.

Audits

Although it is not a legal requirement for a company of our size, a full annual audit is conducted by Pete O'Hara, a Chartered Accountant recognised as an expert in the audit of theatrical companies.

Systems

All financial transactions are recorded using the Xero online accounting system. All payroll taxes and deductions are calculated by Xero online software.

All payments to employees are reported online to HMRC. Any staff changes or changes to staff terms and conditions are approved by the Board.

Insurances

Appropriate insurances are currently in place to cover:

- Employers Liability
- Public Liability
- Contents

Once a Community Asset Transfer has been obtained, we will obtain buildings insurance.

Assets

An inventory of all physical assets will be kept and regularly updated

Reserves

Financial reserves are kept to ensure financial stability of the company and the ability for it to meet its objectives and committed payments.

Guiseley Theatre CIC will maintain reserves at a level that is at least equivalent to three months operational expenditure.

The Directors will review the amount of reserves that are required to ensure that they are adequate to fulfil the company's continuing obligations on an annual basis.



New, reusable plastic cups used by our bars, which have cut out the need for single use plastics in our day to day operations



Damian, a volunteer stage hand, organising props in the wings of 'Me and the Scallywags', 2023

OBJECTIVES

These objectives will direct our focus on how to properly and continually work towards our company aims, which can be found in full on page 4&5

Objective 1:

Continue to operate the Theatre as a community asset applying for a Community Asset Transfer to secure the longer term sustainability of developing and operating the building

Working towards Company Aims:

2. Ensure the Guiseley Theatre Building remains a community asset.

Objective 2:

Develop the Theatre building to be more:

1. Accessible, with increased front of house facilities to improve community access and use for a wider range of groups

2. Modern, with up to date technical and staging infrastructure to provide industry standard facilities for staging performances; thereby becoming a more viable venue for a broader range of productions including regional and national

Working towards Company Aims:

3. To develop the Theatre building to achieve its maximum potential.
4. Seek to attract national companies to Guiseley Theatre.

Objective 3:

Increase community engagement and involvement creating a Cultural Hub

Working towards Company Aims:

- 1. To celebrate the heritage of Guiseley Theatre and its people.
- 5. To become an enabling organisation.
- 7. To be a home for community organisations.



Objective 4:

Create opportunities for local people through programmes, employment, and training and development opportunities

Working towards Company Aims:

- 6. Create opportunities for local people

TIMING AND ROLL-OUT

Objective 1:

Continue to operate the Theatre as a community asset applying for a Community Asset Transfer to secure the longer term sustainability of developing and operating the building

Core activities on-going each year

- Continue annual programme of events, supported by staff and volunteers
- Continue to provide community facilities, e.g., rooms for hire
- Hosting Codswallop CIC, a community-based arts development, outreach and engagement company, invested in the local community and subsidised by arts funding
- Maintaining the building and its core facilities

Year 1 (May 25 - April 26)

- Start the process to obtain a Community Asset Transfer from Leeds City Council for a 99 year lease
- Introduce annual an user survey and collate engagement data to demonstrate community support to identify priority areas for funding and resource allocation

Year 2 - 5 (May 26 - April 29)

- Securing the Community Asset Transfer with the 99 year lease
- Applying for and securing grants and major funding to expand staffing
- Expand the range of cultural, educational, social, and recreational activities offered at the theatre through partnerships with local arts groups, schools, and community organisations
- Increase community participation and engagement by hosting regular events, shows, workshops, and classes catering to diverse interests and age groups
- Use user survey data and audience analysis to measure the impact of Guiseley Theatre on the local community: use survey data to track key indicators of community well-being, such as participation in cultural activities, social connectedness, and perceptions of the neighborhood's quality of life

- Expand the range of activities offered at the theatre: use survey results to identify gaps in programming and preferences among different segments of the community, informing the development of new initiatives and partnerships
- Increase community participation and engagement: Use the survey to measure changes in community engagement over time, tracking factors such as attendance levels, satisfaction with events, and willingness to volunteer
- Establish the Theatre building as an esteemed cultural venue and community hub, renowned for its accessibility, safety, and state-of-the-art facilities, especially as a Green Theatre and a Learning Theatre

Year 5 onwards (May 29 - April 35)

- Establish sustainable funding mechanisms: Use survey and ongoing monitoring insights to demonstrate the impact of Guiseley Theatre on the community, helping to attract sponsors, donors, and grants to support long-term operations and maintenance
- Foster a sense of ownership and pride among local residents: continuously adapt and improve programming based on community preferences, ensuring that the theatre remains a valued asset whilst actively engaging them in participatory activities and encouraging their support for the Theatre's initiatives, resulting in a measurable increase in volunteer hours contributed, active participation in community events and increased audience numbers



Mr Montgomery's Chaotic Carnival, the first piece of live theatre after the pandemic

Objective 2:

Develop the Theatre building to be more:

1. Accessible, with increased front of house facilities to improve community access and use for a wider range of groups

2. Modern with up to date technical and staging infrastructure to provide industry standard facilities for staging performances thereby; becoming a more viable venue for a broader range of productions including regional and national

Year 1 (May 25 - April 26)

- Install a permanent ramp to provide accessible access to our community asset
- Open a cafe to provide refreshment facilities for users
- New signage to increase visibility and presence of building and its purpose in the community
- Install a new front door improving accessibility and heat retention

Year 2 - 5 (May 26 - April 29)

- Develop stage and backstage area with industry standard stage and technical infrastructure (e.g., Rigging, trusses, winches and brackets, electrical power, fixtures)
- Identify and reach out to national companies in the arts and culture sector through targeted outreach and networking efforts
- Secure agreements with at least two national companies to host performances or events at Guiseley Theatre within the next 12 months (longer term more sustained engagement)
- Develop marketing materials and promotional campaigns highlighting Guiseley Theatre's amenities, location, and potential as a venue for national companies
- Feasibility and funding for renovation to address structural upgrades, environmental sustainability and further facilities
- Increase the number of national companies regularly performing or exhibiting at Guiseley Theatre by 50%



A chandelier created out of old decommisioned theatre lights, being installed in the main staircase as part of the rewire project

Year 5 onwards (May 29 - April 35)

- Planning, building and implementation
- Position Guiseley Theatre as a premier destination for national companies seeking to showcase their productions in the region, with a steady influx of high-quality performances and events
- Forge partnerships with other venues to co-produce work
- Elevate the cultural profile and perceived character of Guiseley as a vibrant arts destination, attracting visitors and residents alike to experience the diverse range of performances and exhibitions offered at the Theatre
- Contribute to the local economy by attracting visitors to Guiseley and supporting small businesses through increased footfall resulting from national-level cultural events hosted at Guiseley Theatre
- Establish an endowment fund, capital funding and / or sustainable revenue streams to support ongoing maintenance and restoration projects for Guiseley Theatre
- Collaborate with regional tourism boards, local authority and cultural institutions to position Guiseley Theatre as a key attraction in the area, driving increased footfall and revenue
- Solidify Guiseley Theatre's status as a nationally recognised cultural landmark, contributing to the socio-economic development and cultural vibrancy of the surrounding area

Chris and Emma's Wedding Breakfast, one of many weddings we have hosted at Guiseley Theatre



Objective 3:

Increase community engagement and involvement creating a Cultural Hub

Year 1 (May 25 - April 26)

- Utilise the cafe as a catalyst for engagement activities
- Identify funding for Community Engagement Manager. Apply, Secure & Appoint
- Conduct outreach and awareness campaigns to inform users, charities, and community groups about the resources and support available through the organisation

Year 2 - 5 (May 26 - April 29)

- Establish routine processes to gather impact data to support grant and funding applications
- Increase the number of community organisations using the Theatre as their home base by 30% indicating growing engagement and use of the space.
- Establish partnerships with schools to increase engagement and involvement
- Develop educational or skills-based programs and workshops focused on theatre arts, technical production, and accessibility awareness to engage the community and promote inclusivity. This will also enable skills development and employability for volunteers.
- Host regular events, PR and marketing activity showcasing the heritage of Guiseley Theatre, including historical exhibits, performances, and guided / virtual tours.

- Establish partnerships with local schools, libraries, and community organisations to integrate educational programs highlighting the theatre's significance.
- Launch a digital archive documenting the theatre's history, accessible to the public via the theatre's website or a dedicated platform
- Expand community engagement through regular cultural events, workshops, and outreach programmes aimed at fostering a deeper appreciation for the theatre and its heritage.
- Cultivate a robust network of volunteers and community advocates dedicated to preserving and promoting the theatre's legacy for future generations.
- Expand the range of support services offered to users, charities, and community groups, such as training workshops, technical assistance, or funding opportunities to enhance their capacity, impact, sustainability and further facilities.
- Increase the number of national companies regularly performing or exhibiting at Guiseley Theatre by 50%

Year 5 onwards (May 29 - April 35)

- Establish the organisation as a central hub for community engagement and collaboration, recognised for its role in empowering users, charities, and community groups to address local needs and make a positive impact



Doodles art club, an afterschool provision by Codswallop CIC

Objective 4:

Create opportunities for local people through programmes, employment and training, and development opportunities

Core activities on-going each year

- Employed roles for Managing Director, admin support, Duty House Managers, Core Stewards, cleaning team members, marketing
- Freelance and contract roles to local trades people
- Use of local companies for maintenance and renewals activities

Year 1 (May 25 - April 26)

- Contract for regular maintenance work
- Redevelop volunteer strategy and deliver training
- Training for staff members (e.g., food hygiene, first aid, etc.)

Year 2 - 5 (May 26 - April 29)

- Create and recruit to Volunteer Manager role
- Secure funding for an outreach post to deliver a skills development programme for 16 - 30 year old volunteers and a series of workshops, classes and skills building sessions open to the public, focusing on arts, creativity, and theatre related topics to provide learning opportunities for local individuals and businesses
- Deliver an annual in-house production, commissioning a creative team to work with the theatre on a regional, locally relevant piece of theatre
- Establish partnerships with local schools, community centres, and arts organisations to promote the availability of educational and creative programmes at Guiseley Theatre, increasing awareness and participation among local residents
- Facilitate networking events and collaboration opportunities between local artists, businesses, and community members, fostering a supportive ecosystem for creativity and innovation

Year 5 onwards (May 29 - April 35)

- Establish accreditation programmes or certifications in collaboration with local educational institutions or industry bodies, recognising individuals who have completed training or gained experience through Guiseley Theatre's programmes, enhancing their employability and professional development

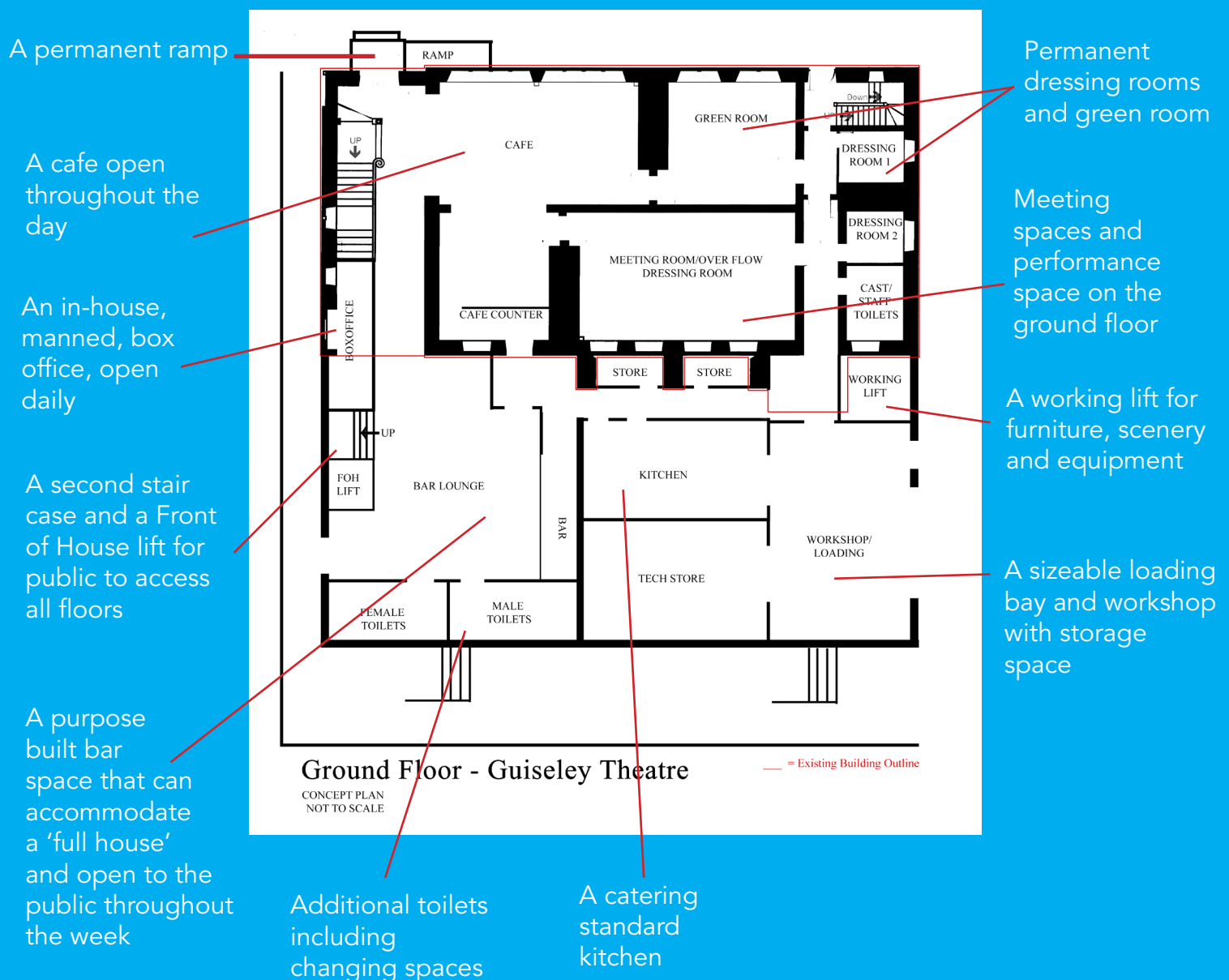


EXTENSION CONCEPT PLANS

These plans are purely a tool to visualise how an extension on the building could look. We have incorporated features that we would like to see which, in many cases, have been born out of frustrations we have experienced using the building on a day to day basis. These would be used to inform our planning when consulting with Architects, but any work undertaken would be subject to full planning permissions, permissions granted from Leeds City Council as landlords and funding constraints.

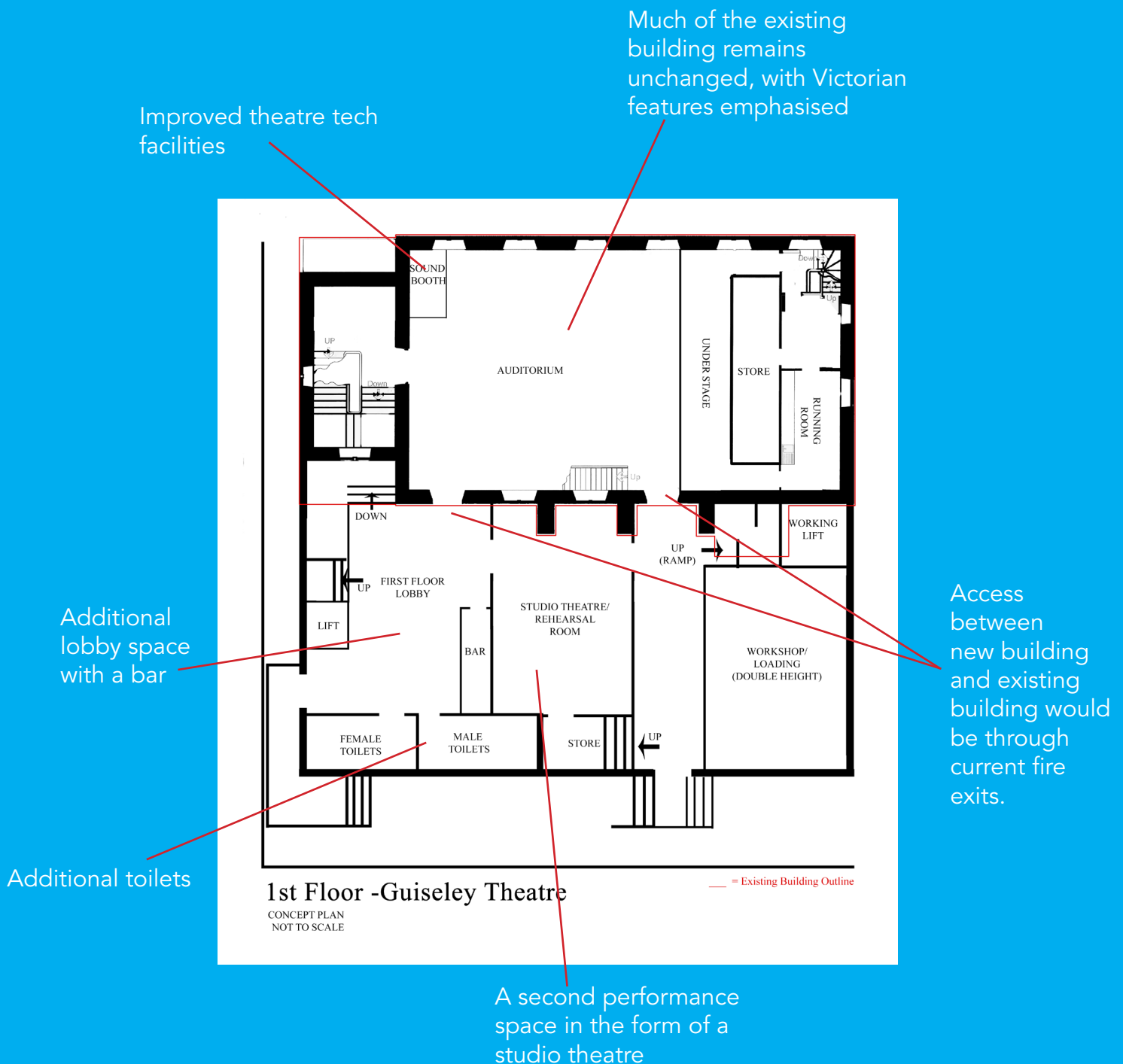
Ground Floor

The ground floor would become a hive of activity throughout the day as it would cater to most of our Front of House provisions, open to community use.



First Floor

The first floor is our main auditorium space that currently is accessible via stair or stair lift. These plans would see the space become fully accessible whilst introducing additional performance spaces and Front of House facilities.



Stage Level

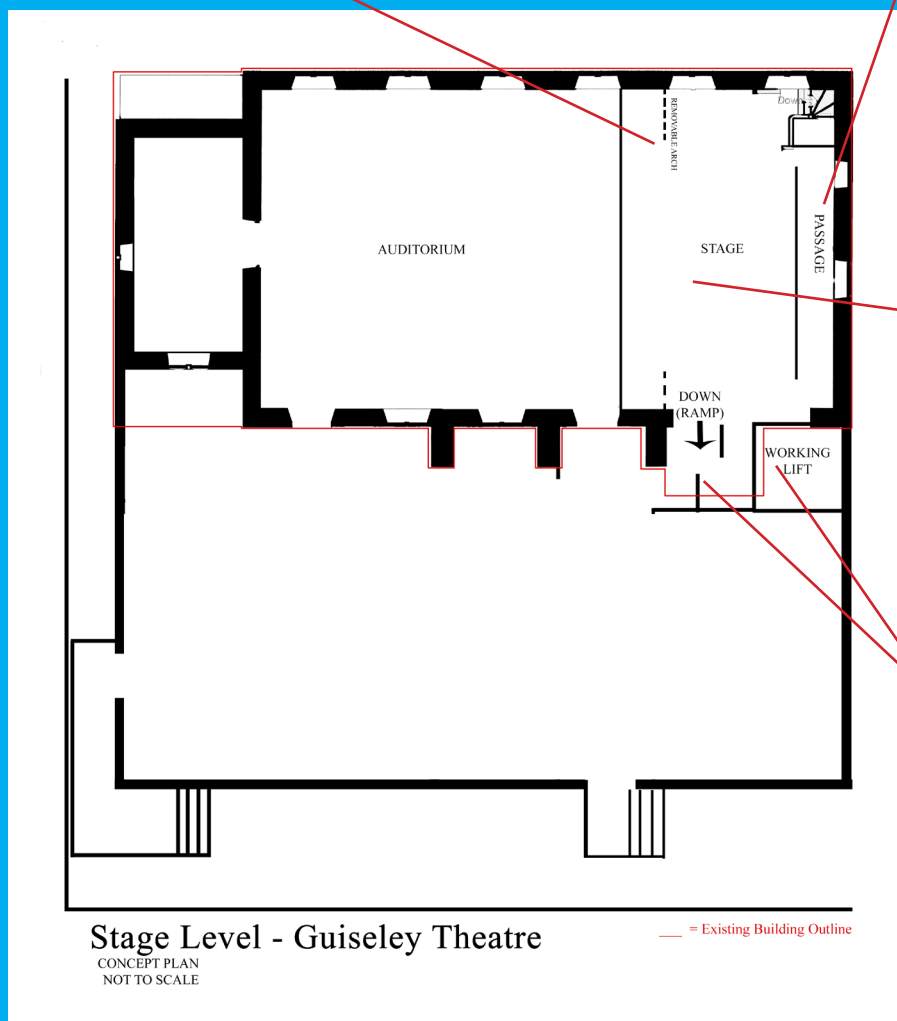
Our stage is currently on a rake (meaning there is a slope towards the audience) which proves to be problematic for visiting productions along with tight wing space and stepped access. These improvements would open us up to hosting a more diverse programme of events and make working in the space easier, making Guiseley Theatre an attractive venue to touring companies.

A removable proscenium arch that would be in keeping with the Victorian features of the building but can be removed to allow for more versatile theatre sets

Building a passage at the back of the stage to provide a clear path from one side to the other without crossing the stage

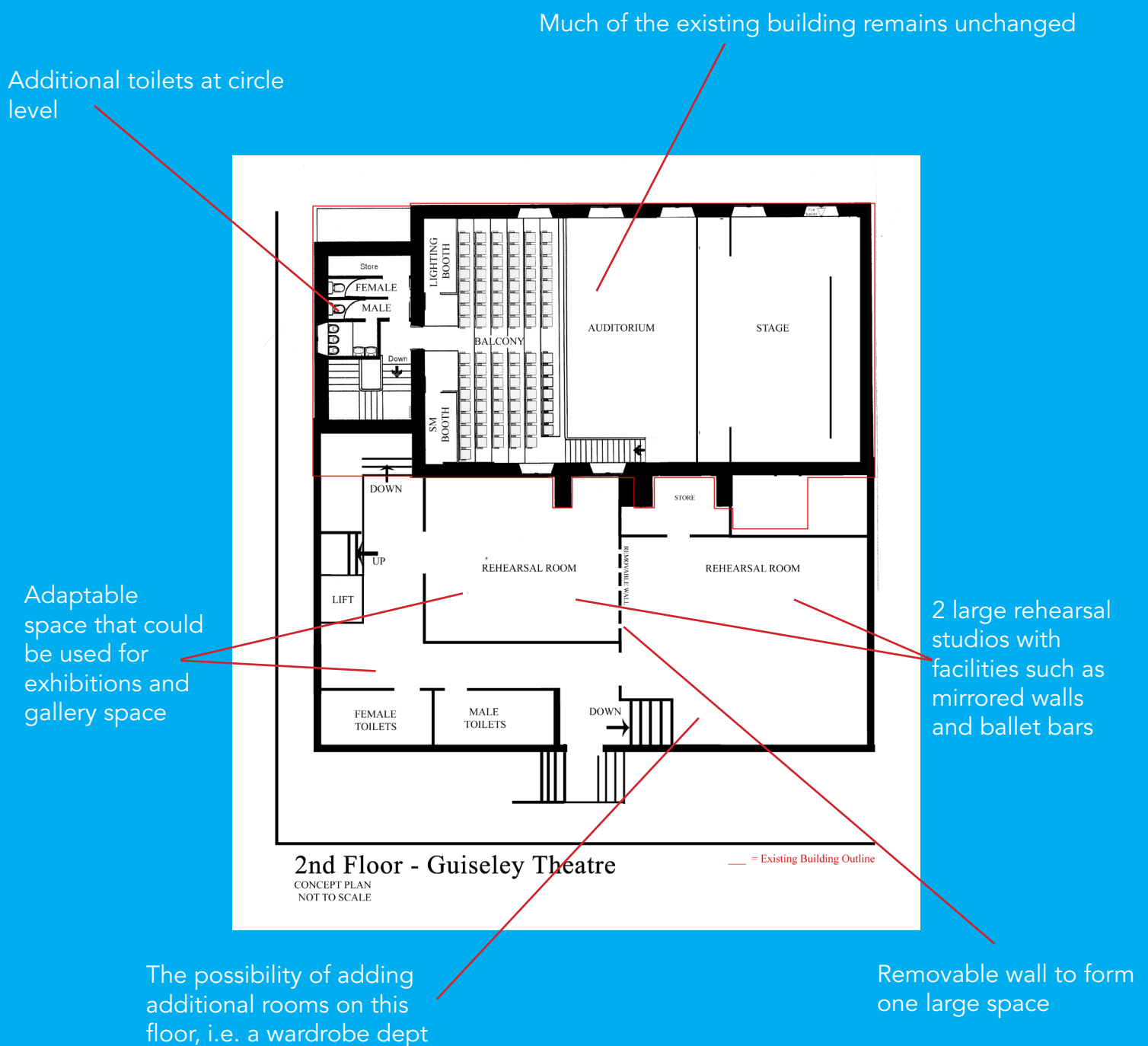
Levelling the stage and introducing a modular layout to improve the flexibility of the space

Working lift and ramp up to stage level to aid get ins and get outs and open the space up to performers with disabilities



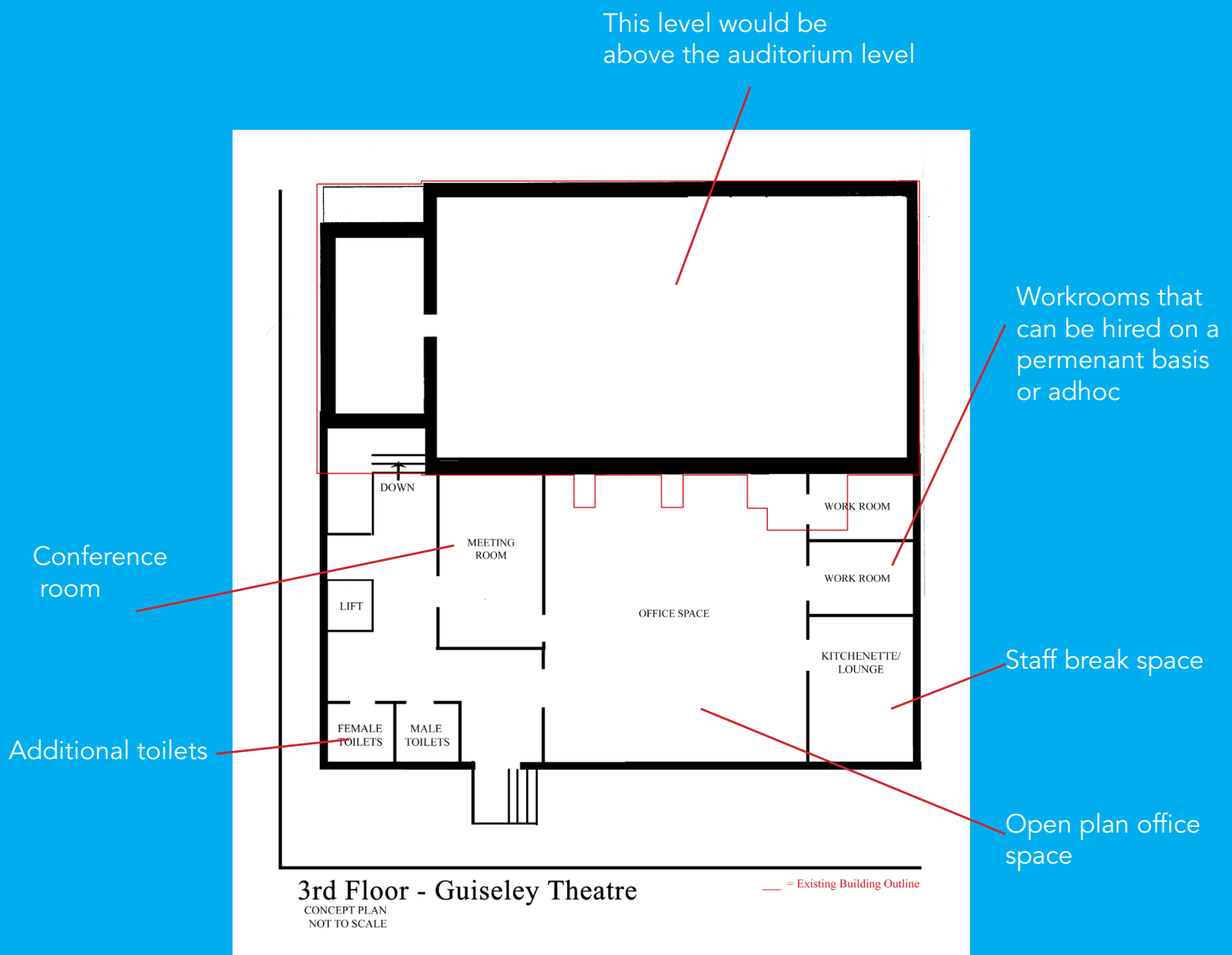
Second Floor

The second floor would not be a space that is open to the public but would be hireable to classes and rehearsals. Having dedicated rehearsal space would also allow us to host theatre companies through their research and development and rehearsal periods.



Third Floor

The 3rd floor would become a place where the building is managed, with dedicated staff facilities and office space, becoming the administrative hub of the building. This area would not be open to the public but office space could be hireable.





Lucy, a volunteer, serving customers from one of our bars



CONTACT

This document was prepared in full agreement by the Directors of Guiseley Theatre CIC.
If you have any queries, comments or require additional information, please contact:

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A full-page background image of a bright blue sky with soft, wispy white clouds. The clouds are more concentrated towards the bottom of the frame, creating a sense of depth and atmosphere.

**'For the use of the inhabitants of Guiseley,
forever...'**