

# THE WAREHOUSE THEATRE

Brewery Lane, Ilminster, Somerset TA19 9AD

## THE WAREHOUSE THEATRE EXPANSION APPEAL

*Patrons: Lord Armstrong of Ilminster, Lord and Lady Ashdown of Norton-sub-Hamdon,  
Lord Cameron of Dillington, Marcus Fysh MP*

**I.E.S. Ltd. Registered Charity No. 291977**

[www.thewarehousetheatre.org.uk](http://www.thewarehousetheatre.org.uk)

**For the attention of Ilminster Town Council**

5<sup>th</sup> January 2018

Dear Sir/Madam

### **Re: The Warehouse Theatre Expansion Appeal**

I am writing to you on behalf of the Ilminster Entertainments Society regarding the Warehouse Theatre Expansion Appeal. The Ilminster Warehouse Theatre is a very valuable local community asset, regularly used by the Ilminster Entertainments Society (IES) and Youth Theatre (IYT) along with community groups such as, the Thursday Group (a weekly lecture for mainly retired people); The Cinema at the Warehouse; The Ile Flower Club; and other social activities. Many of the local schools also use the Theatre for their school productions.

However the Warehouse Theatre is short on three additional accommodation requirements and these need to be either in the Theatre or adjacent to it:

1. Stage workshop facilities and associated storage
2. Additional dressing room areas, particularly for use by the Youth Theatre
3. Additional drama workshop and rehearsal facilities, particularly for use by the Youth Theatre.

The opportunity has arisen to purchase a building, adjacent to the existing Theatre, for £125,000. The additional space provided will enable the expansion of the existing theatre facilities to address current deficiencies. The project will also provide a performing arts studio to meet the additional accommodation requirements of the IES and the Youth Theatre. These improvements will also benefit many of the local groups who use the theatre and will help to protect the long-term future of the Theatre.

Over the past 35 years more than 700 children, from Ilminster and the surrounding area, have participated in the Ilminster Youth Theatre. IYT exists to provide an education in stage skills and experience in theatrical performance, for young people aged between 6-18. IYT aims to challenge young people of all backgrounds to develop confidence, creativity and consideration for others in the context of amateur theatre. It aims to help children to become confident about speaking and participating in groups both on and off stage. The children are encouraged to develop their imagination by exploring different ways of thinking and behaving through acting out different characters and situations.

The IYT operates four groups PROLOGUE (years 2-3), ACT ONE (years 4-5), ACT TWO (Years 6-8) and ENCORE (Year 9+). The IYT currently caters for 75 children and has 12 children on the waiting list. The additional space will provide a more intimate working area for smaller group activities, such as improvisation skills and short play extracts. It will provide space to practise singing and dancing skills. The Youth Theatre is currently led by a team of volunteers, supported by parents for the performances, set design and props, this ensures that the membership fees are very affordable.

Over the past 70 years more than 1700 people from our community have taken part in IES and IYT productions. The purchase of the Old Bakery building, which is adjacent to the current Theatre, is a

I'm sure you are aware that the Ilminster Entertainments Society is currently fundraising to purchase the Old Bakery Building (adjacent to the Ilminster Warehouse Theatre) to enable the expansion of the existing theatre facilities. We have already raised approximately £95,000 and we need to reach £125,000 by 31st March 2018. We have submitted a grant application to South Somerset District Council to help us raise the necessary funds, however one of the SSDC grant criteria requires us to demonstrate support from the town council but the Ilminster Mayor Charity Fund is not available until after the deadline for our project.

I have discussed our situation with officers at SSDC and they suggested that we may be able to get an 'in principle' letter of support from the Town Council to accompany our grant application. Please find attached a letter for the Town Council outlining further information about the project and the situation with the SSDC grant request. It would be much appreciated if you could let me know if it would be possible to get an 'in principle' letter of support from the Town Council.

If you require any further information please let me know.

Kind regards

Kate

---

once in a lifetime opportunity. As you are aware there are limited opportunities for the Theatre to expand.

The Trustees have commissioned a building survey to identify the estimated cost of delivering the project. Initial costings for the required project works are approximately £115,000. The vendor has agreed to sell the building to IES for £125,000 and we have until 31st March 2018 to raise the necessary funds. At present the fundraising committee has raised almost £94,000 through fundraising events, donations from local people, theatre productions and grant applications. The trustees have commenced the process of getting detailed drawings for the project and this will enable more accurate costings to be obtained to assist with the next stage of fundraising, when we have purchased the building.

The IES has submitted a grant application to South Somerset District Council and one of the application requirements that we demonstrate support from the town council for this project. I understand that the Ilminster Town Council grants will not be available until March 2018 but the deadline for purchasing the building is 31<sup>st</sup> March 2018. If possible it would be much appreciated if the Town Council could provide an 'in principle' letter of support for our fundraising campaign so that we can submit this to South Somerset District Council alongside our grant application.

If you get the opportunity, please watch our video on You Tube which gives the full history behind the Ilminster Entertainments Society and how the theatre was first established. The Warehouse Theatre website on the letterhead above also provides more information if necessary.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s6lYquKdP5s>

If you require any further information to assist your assessment of our request, please let me know.

Yours faithfully

Kate Murdoch

**I.E.S. Ltd. Registered Charity No. 291977**  
[www.thewarehousetheatre.org.uk](http://www.thewarehousetheatre.org.uk)

