

	Meeting (No)	<b>Community &amp; Environment (5)</b>
	Date	<b>10 October 2023</b>
	Document	Ref No
	<b>Neston Theatre Arts Festival</b>	<b>CE5/52c</b>

## Introduction

The Little Actors Theatre Company (a registered charity) is planning to host a theatre arts festival in Neston Town Hall. The festival will showcase the Little Actors groups and also welcome other community groups to perform. Little Actors will book a professional mentor director to give guidance to each performance group by way of verbal feedback. The festival will include a variety of groups including children's theatre clubs, musical theatre groups, youth theatre, adult drama groups and other community groups. This will be performed over a weekend in Neston Town Hall to an audience of the wider community.

## The spacehive bid

Little Actors recently launched a crowdfunding bid and details of the bid are copied below:

*Little Actors Theatre would like to present a community theatre arts festival in the rural market town of Neston. To be inclusive for the whole community & wider Cheshire West in the summer 2024.*

*The festival would include a variety of groups including children's theatre clubs, musical theatre groups, youth theatre, adult drama groups and other community groups. This will be performed over a weekend in Neston Town Hall to an audience of the wider community.*

*The festival will celebrate the creativity and talent in the Neston and Cheshire West area. Keeping it local in the market town of Neston will ensure that there is access to theatre activities in an area where transport links to bigger cities and towns are severely restricted. This will result in ease of access for residents who do not drive, especially the elderly.*

*The arts festival will also be offering opportunities to perform supported by theatre professionals. Community organisations such as the community centre and local churches will be offered collaboration opportunities as well as working in partnership with Neston Town Council.*

*The festival will take place over a weekend in the summer at Neston Town Hall.*

*What we'll deliver:*

*Dress and technical rehearsals for various groups*

*Festival presentation weekend for the public*

*Community involvement*

*Professional mentor director*

*Opportunities for local groups and individuals to perform*

*Publicity for the event*

*Why it's a great idea:*

- 1. Promoting creativity and talent in Neston and the wider county*
- 2. Improved social cohesion*
- 3. Participation in the arts improves health and well being*
- 4. The participants of all ages will have the opportunity to perform their material to a public audience. This gives a sense of value to their efforts.*
- 5. As a small rural community, access to the arts can be difficult to achieve so having a participatory theatre festival delivered in that community provides more creative opportunities for engagement.*
- 6. Little Actors' technical and staging equipment will enhance the production values of the space available.*

*The community will benefit from intergenerational interaction*

- 7. Local coffee shops and other businesses would benefit from increase footfall as external groups come to the town to perform and bring their own audience with them.*
- 8. Visiting groups will be facilitated to stage their work in the town by Little Actors experienced staff.*

*Steps to get it done:*

*Set the dates for the festival*

*Liaise with the venue to organise the festival*

*Recruit the actor facilitators*

*Recruit the participating groups*

*Rehearse material with the groups*

*Publicise the festival in the community*

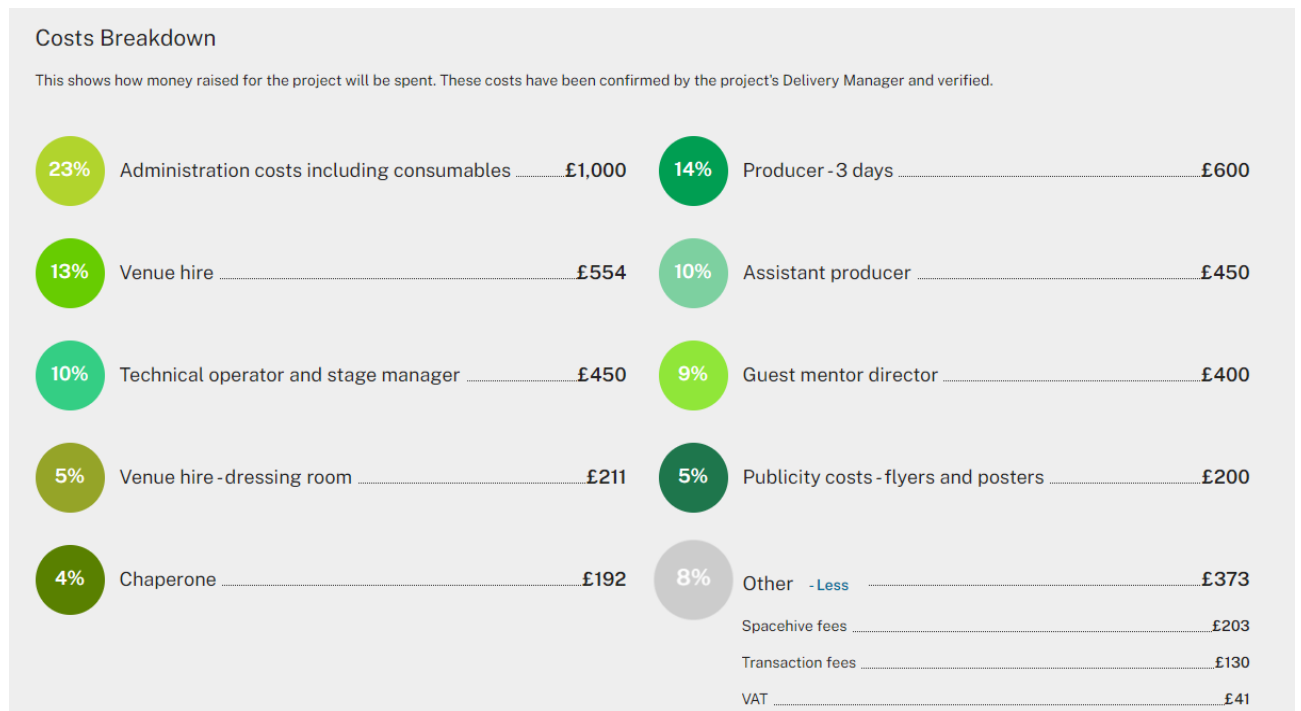
*Recruit volunteers*

*Deliver the festival over a weekend in Neston Town Hall*

*Recruit technical support*

*The Artistic Director of Little Actors has just completed the MA Applied Theatre at Royal Central School of Speech and Drama. Therefore she and the company are demonstrating a commitment to developing and enhancing theatre arts provision in Neston. In particular by cultivating and growing a positive relationship with Neston Town Council which manages the Town Hall venue, so as to develop theatre access in the town.*

*This festival will bring a much-needed collaborative and participatory theatre event to the town. It will aim to involve as many people as possible as performers, volunteers and audience.*



## Neston Town Council's delivery plan

Goal 9 of the C&E section of the delivery plan (CE5/50) commits the Town Council to developing arts and culture by:

- promoting cultural activities;
- promoting the town centre's role as a social and cultural hub for the area;
- providing opportunities to create and show new work and for artists and creatives to network;
- promoting cultural and arts activity across the town.

## For discussion and decision

The Committee may wish to consider offering financial support for the Neston Theatre Arts Festival by making a Spacehive pledge from budget 4360 (community grants) and/or 4363 (community event donations).

Audrey Duncan  
Community & Environment Committee