

	Meeting (No)	Market & Town Hall Committee (6)	
	Date	23rd April 2024	
	Document	Ref No	
	Proposal from Little Actors	MTH6/73	

Proposal from Little Actors Theatre Company for alternative use of space in the Town Hall (once lease with CW&C expires early June 2024).

This exploration is made on the basis that our recent bid to the UKSPF fund was unsuccessful, as were bids to other large national funds. We had proposed funding for the renewal of the lease and the development of plans to expand arts services and a community creative hub on the High Street. We already operate as a Warm Welcome Space and have inadvertently become the information and signposting centre for the community. We had hoped to build on that. But without core funding we cannot. Core funding continues to be a problem to secure from many sources.

We are much more successful at securing project funding for our activities but that doesn't pay the rent or other overheads.

We are requesting a collaborative partnership arrangement with Neston Town Council for additional space in the Town Hall.

Storage

Our main concern at the moment would be storage for our theatre equipment. Some of this is already stored on the stage to enhance the offering there. We would need this storage extending to accommodate our props and costumes.

We would propose that our technical equipment could be borrowed (charities) or hired (businesses) by other hall users who may be able to make use of it.

Office Space and Community Hub - proposal

We have built a reputation as the place to go to buy stamps since the post office closed.

We offer a warm space with refreshments provided – and we have been successful in securing grants and donations towards this community service.

We feel it has been useful for the community having a person available at the front of the Town Hall building to talk to people as they come in and sign post them to other services.

We believe our continued presence in the front of the building would be of benefit to the town as a whole and would keep the Town Hall as an active community hub daily.

So, we propose taking residence in the front office space to facilitate the community's enquiry and warm space needs. Little Actors would provide the personnel for this. A resident creative company if you will, working in partnership with the Town Council's officers.

All of our recent funding bids had been large scale and designed to secure core funding to develop a creatively active High Street. We have found over the last twelve months that funding is harder and harder to come by as a result of the current

difficult economic climate. However, we can tailor future funding bids to the fact that we'd be down scaling our plans and working in partnership with NTC. We feel this would be a route more likely to secure smaller pots of funding which could be allocated to our use of additional space in the Town Hall. But in the immediate future we are asking for support in kind from the Town Council as we adapt our way of working.

We feel this arrangement would benefit both parties and positively impact the town as a result.

Projects

Our children's and youth projects are secure so there would be no change to what we offer. As previously mentioned, it is easier to secure small project funding from local sources rather than trying larger national pots of money.

We would like to continue on the work we did in December when we offered a professional panto in the Town Hall. If our facilitators have the capacity to continue developing production work we will and hopefully bring more professionally led creativity to the space.

We work with the ethos that participation in the arts improves physical and mental health and wellbeing. Also, that social cohesion and pride is promoted by bringing people together for creative activities.

We do hope that we can come to some form of working arrangement so as to keep Little Actors active on the High Street and not have to resort to home working for the organisational side of our work. We feel this would be a step back for LATC and also for the community.

Samantha Giblin MA

Artistic Director, Little Actors Theatre Company

Further Information

Details regarding storage

Little Actors would like to store boxed props and costumes under the stage and possibly some book cases in the basement. They will unfortunately be forced to have to dispose of or give away most of the furniture in the current office space and any paperwork or anything of a confidential nature will be taken to a secure home office space.

We would propose to offer this storage free of charge, given that Little Actors hire the Town Hall on a weekly term time basis plus hold additional workshops and performances through the year. A review date could be set and an agreement signed in advance.

Considerations regarding The Councils Delivery Plan

If agreed this arrangement would support several goals in The Council's Delivery Plan as follows:

- Goal 2 – Work to make our town safer. 'Make the Town Hall available to supplement health care, wellbeing or social service if required' – Develop the Warm Welcome Space (item on M&TH agenda for 23.4.24)
- Goal 4 – Encourage Visitors. 'Stage directly or with partners, specific events which raise the profile of the town and encourage visitors'
- Goal 6 – Deliver Excellent services according to both needs and consumer choice. 'Provide subsidised use of the facility by community organisations and charities which support the Councils strategic aims.'

Nicky McMahon
Market & Town Hall Manager