



The Old Courthouse,
Jaycroft Road,
Burnham on Sea,
TA8 1LE

15th June 2023

To: All Members of the Princess Management Committee

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED TO ATTEND an extraordinary meeting of the **PRINCESS MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE** to be held on **20th June 2023** in the Council chamber, Old Courthouse, Jaycroft road, TA8 1LE at **7.00 pm** for the purpose of transacting the business set out in the agenda below.

All members of the public are welcome to attend.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "K Noble", written on a white background.

Katherine Noble

Town Clerk

Please contact the Town Council reception (01278 788088) if you need further information on this agenda.

Members of the Princess Management Committee

Councillor R. Baker
Councillor P. Clayton
Councillor J. Flurry
Councillor R Keen

Councillor S Perry (Chair)
Councillor C. Searing
Councillor B. Vickers
Councillor J. Warren

Princess Management Committee Meeting Agenda
20th June 2023

Public participation

A public participation session will now be held before the meeting starts. Anyone wishing to speak on any matters should give notice of the request and subject matter to the Town Clerk no later than midday on the last working day prior to the meeting. Public participation shall be restricted to the public participation session, unless directed otherwise by the Chair. In accordance with standing orders the public participation time will not exceed 15 minutes in total with no individual speaker exceeding 3 minutes.

34.0.T23 Apologies for absence

35.0.T23 To receive any declarations of interest on items included on this agenda

36.0T23 To receive and approve the minutes of the Princess Management Committee meeting held on 6th June 2023 (copy enclosed)

37.0.T23 Matters arising from previous minutes

38.0.T23 To consider Princess Theatre Review report and recommendations

39.0.T23 The next meeting of this committee will be held on 1st August 2023 at 7pm

**Minutes of a meeting of the Princess Management Committee held
on 6th June 2023 in the Council Chamber, The Old Courthouse,
Jaycroft Road, Burnham-on-Sea at 7 pm**

Present: Councillors S Perry (Chair), P Clayton, R Keen, C Searing, B Vickers, J Warren

In attendance: E Dutton, Deputy Town Clerk and one member of the public

Public Participation – No representations were made.

24.0.M23 To receive apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Baker and Flurry.

25.0.M23 To receive any declarations of interest on items included on this agenda

There were no declarations of interests.

26.0.M23 To elect the Committee Vice Chair for the ensuing year

Resolved Councillor Warren was elected as Vice Chair of the Princess Management Committee.

27.0.M23 To receive and approve the minutes of the Princess Management Committee meeting held on 11th April 2023

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Princess Management Committee, held on 11th April 2023, were presented by the Chairman.

Resolved that the minutes be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chair.

28.0.M23 Matters arising from previous minutes

There were no matters arising.

29.0.M23 To receive the Chairs report

The Chair said the free screening on the 6th May for the Kings Coronation was well attended and positive feedback was received. Cllr Searing also attended and said everyone enjoyed it, and had a good time.

There was a Civic Reception for the Fritzlar Twinning Society, who had visited for the first time in a couple of years. They were very impressed by the Theatre and by the welcome they had received.



**Burnham-on-Sea
& Highbridge**

TOWN COUNCIL

On Sunday 4th June 2023 there was a volunteer's day held at the Princess Theatre, there was a steady stream of people that attended. Participant groups said they had been very happy to have an opportunity to explain what they did, as a result some volunteers have been recruited.

The Town Council has received the report from the consultants on the Princess Theatre. The HR Sub Committee have considered the staffing element of it, but other operational suggestions or recommendations will be considered at an extraordinary meeting at the Princess Management Committee on the 20th June 2023.

30.0.M23 To receive the Princess update report

The report was noted.

Several questions were raised. These will be followed up by the Town Clerk and the answers circulated to the Committee members.

31.0.M23 To consider report on the purchase of a haze machine

Resolved that the purchase of a haze machine at a cost of £482.39 + VAT, is approved and will be funded from the technical theatre budget.

32.0.M23 To consider report on the purchase of replacement two way radios

Resolved that the purchase of replacement two way radios at a cost of £204.99 + VAT, is approved and will be funded from the IT budget.

33.0.M23 Date of next meeting

The Chair explained there will be an extraordinary meeting held on the 20th June 2023 at 7pm.



Princess Theatre Organisational Review

2023

GJG

Burnham on Sea Princess Theatre & Arts Centre Organisational Review

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1. Introduction

This report presents the initial findings of the Princess Theatre & Arts Centre (PT&AC) review conducted by GJG Consultancy and Phill Smith. It seeks to provide insights into the venue's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges. We assess the current state of the PT&AC, including its staffing, financial situation, community support, potential lost income, audience profiles, and other relevant aspects.

Additionally, the report offers recommendations for improving PT&AC's operational efficiency, financial sustainability, and overall success. These recommendations include suggestions for organisational restructuring, cost-saving measures, revenue generation opportunities, enhanced community support, marketing strategies, and the skills required for a new manager. The report also addresses the Princess Management Committee's (PMC) role in supporting the venue and fostering more robust communication and collaboration with the wider council and community.

Overall, the report serves as a review and analysis of the Princess Theatre, providing key stakeholders with insights and actionable recommendations to drive positive change, enhance the visitor experience, and secure the long-term viability of the venue.

2. Methodology

The review employed various methods and approaches to gather information and assess the PT&AC. Key methods used:

One-to-One Interviews: The consulting team conducted individual interviews with team members to understand their current roles, responsibilities, and operating practices. These interviews aimed to gain insights into the theatre's functioning from the staff's perspective.

Follow-Up Questions and Additional Information: Following the interviews, the consulting team sought further clarification and gathered additional information from the staff and town clerk better to understand specific areas and processes within the theatre.

Workshop with the Princess Management Committee: A workshop was conducted with the Princess Management Committee (PMC). This collaborative session involved engaging PMC members in discussions regarding the theatre's current state, challenges, and potential improvements. The workshop provided valuable insights and perspectives from the committee members.

Comparison with Similar Venues: Headline comparisons were made with local venues of similar scales. Comparisons involved analysing accounts data and information from comparable theatres to benchmark the Princess Theatre's performance and identify areas for potential improvement.

Data Analysis: The consulting team thoroughly analysed financial information, major expense areas, and income sources. This analysis aimed to evaluate the theatre's financial performance, identify potential lost income, and uncover opportunities for cost reduction and revenue generation.

These approaches allowed for a holistic understanding of the theatre's operations, financial situation, staff dynamics, community support, and audience profiles. The insights from these methods formed the basis for the review's findings and recommendations, ultimately guiding the path toward enhancing the Princess Theatre's performance and sustainability.

3. Summary Findings

Here is a summary of the findings from the initial review conducted for the Princess Theatre & Arts Centre:

1. Expenditure and Income:

1.1. The venue's expenditure, with new budgets, is roughly in line with similar-scale organisations in the region.

1.2. Post-COVID, income has improved; however, it remains lower than in other venues.

2. Staffing and Organisational Structure:

2.1. The current staff consists of a small dedicated team.

2.2. There needs to be more explicit leadership, especially following the departure of the recent Business Development Officer (BDO).

2.3. The staff members are dedicated and conscientious but are under additional pressure due to the absence of one team member and manager.

3. Subsidy and Local Support:

3.1. The venue's support for at least seven community groups, including choirs, pantomime society, youth theatres, art classes, and curling, is currently hidden.

3.2. The current subsidy pricing model does not always adequately cover expenses.

3.3. There are lost opportunity costs, such as Sunday afternoons, that could be utilised for more commercial activities.

4. Potential Lost Income:

4.1. There is potential for the venue to be more commercially driven, but this could impact community benefit.

4.2. Opportunities for increasing income include implementing box office agency fees for hires, early/late get-in fees, marketing contra fees, beyond basic technical cost contras, and even customer booking fees.

5. Other Revenue Sources:

5.1. A new Manager should explore the possibilities of securing funding from Somerset Council and Arts Council England as well as other key stakeholders.

5.2. There is a potential for further grant funding through The Friends of the Princess, setting up as a separate charity and securing additional funds.

6. Audience Profiles:

6.1. Three main audience segments have been identified: Home & Heritage, Trips & Treats, and Dormitory Dependables.

6.2. These groups have medium to low levels of cultural engagement.

6.3. Each segment has distinct characteristics and interests, which should be considered in programming and marketing efforts.

7. Cafe and Bar:

7.1. The cafe/bar's contract will be reviewed at the end of the lease term.

8. Financial Management and Control:

8.1. There needs to be more detailed and reliable management data.

8.2. The existing financial management could benefit from tighter control and better management accounting practices.

8.3. The report suggests establishing key performance indicators (KPIs) or other management indicators to monitor and manage performance effectively.

These findings highlight both positive aspects and areas for improvement within the PT&AC.

4. Staffing and Organisational Structure

There is a small dedicated team. However, team members are currently operating under additional pressure, mainly due to the need for clear leadership. The lack of clear leadership, particularly following the departure of the recent BDO, can create challenges in decision-making, coordination, and setting strategic direction. This absence has led to an increased workload and could lead to potential burnout and lower morale. To address the staffing challenges and improve the organisational structure and leadership model, the following recommendations are suggested:

Appoint a New Manager with clear leadership skills: Recruiting a new manager with proven venue management and leadership experience is recommended. This individual should be able to provide clear direction, drive the theatre's vision, and facilitate effective decision-making. In the short term, it might be useful for the venue to employ a freelance external expert to provide high-level management support until a new manager can be appointed.

Develop Improved Organisational Processes: The theatre should review its existing organisational processes. This assessment should identify areas for streamlining roles, improving communication channels, and fostering greater accountability.

Establish Clear Objectives and KPIs: In collaboration with the Princess Management Committee (PMC), the new manager should set clear objectives and key performance indicators (KPIs) to monitor and measure the theatre's performance. These targets should align with the theatre's strategic goal and help drive progress and accountability.

Foster Staff Development and Engagement: The theatre should prioritise staff welfare and development by providing training, skill-building, and career growth opportunities.

5. Subsidy and Local Support:

The PT&AC extends hidden support to numerous local community groups. It actively assists and fosters the growth of these groups by offering various forms of aid. This support includes subsidised hire rates, allowing the community groups to access the theatre facilities and spaces at a reduced cost. The venue recognises the importance of community engagement. It provides a platform for these groups to showcase their talents and pursue their artistic endeavours. The subsidy covers a significant portion of the venue costs, ensuring that the community groups can affordably utilise the theatre and benefit from its resources. By offering this hidden support, the

PT&AC contributes to the cultural vibrancy of the local community, enabling diverse groups such as choirs, pantomime societies, youth theatres, art classes, and curling enthusiasts to thrive and flourish.

However, the current subsidy model, which offers a reduced hire rate for community groups at the PT&AC, significantly impacts the venue's financials. While it supports and fosters community engagement, it burdens the theatre financially. The gap between the subsidised rate and the actual venue costs represents a subsidy that affects the venue's overall revenue.

Opportunities for reducing costs and generating more income through community support could be explored. One option is to review and reassess the community hire charges to ensure they align with the value provided and cover a more significant portion of the venue costs.

Additionally, the theatre and/or community groups, possibly with support from the theatre, could seek additional financial support through grants or business sponsors.

6. Potential Lost Income

Our research identified several areas where the PT&AC could improve its financial sustainability by optimising cost management and exploring various income-generating avenues while providing valuable support to the local community.

PT&AC to enhance revenue generation and operational efficiency:

Box Office Agency Fees: Introducing box office agency fees would help generate additional income by charging a percentage of ticket sales to hirers. Agency fees provide a sustainable revenue stream while ensuring the venue benefits from successful events.

Technical Cost Contrasts: Negotiating technical cost contrasts with contracted companies can help reduce expenses. The theatre can optimise its expenditure by exploring cost-sharing agreements or reimbursement models for specific technical requirements and potentially lower overall production costs to the venue.

Booking Fees: Implementing customer booking fees can provide an additional revenue stream. These fees, charged per ticket, can contribute to covering administrative costs associated with ticketing services and enhance the financial sustainability of the theatre. The venue does currently levy a booking fee but this just covers the cost levied by the ticketing provider so no additional income is raised by the venue. By raising the fee above that charged by the provider

this would provide additional revenue for the venue. The risk is customer resistance and so clear communication is key.

Restoration Fees: Other possibilities could be a restoration levy charged to customers which is income to the venue that could fund further improvements e.g. showers in the dressing rooms. This rationale behind this would need to be clearly communicated to the customer perhaps with an opt out clause. At the moment there is a donation option but it's unclear where this goes to or how it is used.

Ticket Delivery Charges: Further consideration could be given to reviewing the fulfilment fees charged by the venue to reflect the various methods that tickets can be delivered to customers with the opportunity for further revenue streams and reducing costs to the venue.

By strategically implementing these changes, the Princess Theatre can optimise operational efficiency, and strengthen its financial position. It is essential to carefully evaluate these changes' potential impact and balance generating income and maintaining audience satisfaction.

7. Audience Profiles

The three local audience segments in high numbers identified for the PT&AC are Home & Heritage, Trips & Treats, and Dormitory Dependables. Each segment represents a distinct group with specific characteristics, interests, and implications for programming and marketing strategies. Understanding these audience segments helps the theatre tailor its programming and marketing strategies to cater to their interests and preferences.

Home & Heritage: This segment comprises older, retired or semi-retired individuals who own homes and live on modest pensions. They enjoy reading, gardening, period dramas, and watching Countryfile. For programming, the theatre can offer performances or events related to heritage, classic literature adaptations, gardening talks, or nostalgic productions. Marketing efforts can target this segment by highlighting the cultural and nostalgic aspects of the shows, promoting them as suitable for a mature audience seeking familiar and comforting experiences.

Trips & Treats: This segment comprises families dominated by school-age children to young adults. They lead comfortable but modest lifestyles and are closely connected to their relatives and hometowns. The theatre can focus on family-oriented programming, such as musicals,

children's theatre, or interactive performances, to attract this segment. Marketing should emphasise the experience of a fun outing or treat for the whole family, showcasing the entertainment value and creating a sense of togetherness.

Dormitory Dependables: This segment includes suburbanites and small-town residents interested in heritage activities and mainstream arts. They value community engagement and will likely attend events celebrating local talent or showcasing popular shows. The programming approach can involve a mix of mainstream performances, local talent showcases, and events that highlight the area's heritage and culture. Marketing efforts can emphasise the theatre's role as a hub for community engagement, promoting a sense of belonging and participation.

8. Cafe and Bar

Cafe/bar's contract will be reviewed at the end of the lease term.

9. Additional Cost Savings/Revenue Areas

There are a number of other cost-saving/revenue increasing measures that we identified. These include:

Review Commercial Hire Costs: Conducting a thorough review of commercial hire costs can identify opportunities to optimise pricing and ensure competitiveness in the market. This can lead to increased demand for venue rentals and potentially higher revenue.

Higher-Risk Product with Lucrative Deals: Exploring higher-risk products or events with the potential for more lucrative deals can be a strategic approach. By carefully assessing the associated risks and rewards, the theatre can pursue opportunities that generate higher returns on investment.

Review Community Hire Charges: it is essential to balance the value provided and the cost to the council while reviewing community hire charges. It ensures that the theatre's resources are allocated efficiently while supporting community groups. Adjusting the charges to align with the value and costs can lead to better financial management.

Tighter Budget Control and Management Accounting: Implementing stricter budget control and efficient management accounting practices could help identify areas of overspending, eliminate unnecessary expenses, and optimise resource allocation. This enables the theatre to operate within its financial means and maximise cost savings.

By implementing these cost-saving measures and capitalising on revenue opportunities, PT&AC can enhance its financial stability, optimise resource allocation, and ensure a sustainable future.

10. Other Revenue Sources

There exists a number of other sources of revenue beyond those currently accessed by the theatre. These are often accessed by other theatres in the region.

Somerset Council Funding: Identifying areas within the theatre's programme that align with Somerset Council funding criteria can provide opportunities for securing additional grant funding. This external funding can support specific projects or initiatives, supplementing the current subsidy and reducing the financial burden on the venue.

Arts Council England Funding: Exploring opportunities for securing funding from Arts Council England can provide financial support for the theatre's artistic endeavours. By aligning

programming and initiatives with the criteria of Arts Council England, the theatre can tap into this funding source and increase its revenue streams.

Other Revenue Sources: Exploring additional revenue sources such as sponsorships, donations, and earned income can contribute to the financial sustainability of the theatre. Engaging with local businesses, cultivating relationships with potential sponsors, and implementing effective fundraising strategies can unlock new revenue opportunities.

11. Financial Analysis and Management

The current financial situation at the PT&AC indicates that expenditure, with new budgets in place, generally aligns with venues of similar scale in the region. The income is showing improvement post-COVID, which is a positive trend. However, there needs to be more detailed and reliable management data to ensure the staff can assess financial performance accurately.

Budget control is an area that requires attention. Implementing effective budget control measures will help the theatre manage expenses, monitor revenue streams, and maintain financial stability. Tighter control and management accounting practices are recommended to ensure better financial oversight and to optimise resource allocation.

While there are some positive signs of income improvement, the lack of detailed management data and the need for enhanced budget control highlight the importance of implementing robust financial management practices at the PT&AC. By addressing these areas, the theatre can better understand its financial situation and make informed decisions to support its long-term sustainability.

Implementing robust systems and processes will enable better budget oversight and resource allocation. Developing key performance indicators (KPIs) or other management indicators is also essential. These metrics will provide measurable targets to monitor and manage the theatre's performance effectively, ensuring financial goals are met and providing insights for strategic decision-making. KPIs can track revenue generation, expense control, audience engagement, and other relevant factors, helping the management team stay informed and proactive in driving the theatre's financial health and overall success.

12. Draft Council Aspiration for Princess Theatre and the PMC's Role

Conversations and clarifications with the Princess Management Committee (PMC) have centred around understanding the council's ambitions for the venue and developing a strategic approach to risk reduction. The PMC aims to position the Princess Theatre as a valuable asset within the services provided by the Town Council. They recognise the need to champion and communicate the value gained from the theatre to the wider council and community.

To better support the venue, the PMC can consider several actions. First, they should review the Terms of Reference to ensure they align with the theatre's objectives and provide a solid foundation for governance. Additionally, the PMC should establish itself as a strategic leadership board, actively involved in strategic decision-making and setting the direction for the theatre's future.

Furthermore, appointing a new manager with a clear remit and objectives in alignment with the council's ambitions is crucial. The PMC should work closely with the new manager, supporting their efforts and providing necessary resources for success. Regular reporting and transparency on programme, staffing, finance, and building maintenance are essential.

The PMC should also collaborate with Friends of the Princess to support funding applications and engage with relevant stakeholders. By actively championing the theatre's value and communicating its impact on the community, the PMC can enhance the support and appreciation for the PT&AC within the wider council and the community.

Regarding governance and trustee responsibilities, relevant information from the Clore Guide¹ emphasises trustees' importance in effectively fulfilling their roles. This includes ensuring accountability, overseeing financial management, and supporting the theatre's strategic vision. The PMC should adhere to these principles to foster good governance practices and enable the theatre's long-term success.

¹ <https://culturalgovernancealliance.org/practical-guide>

13. Summary and Conclusion

Key Findings:

- The current staffing situation at the Princess Theatre includes a small dedicated team facing additional pressure due to the absence of clear leadership.
- Hidden support is provided to local community groups through subsidy of hire rates, resulting in a financial burden on the venue.
- Opportunities for cost-saving include reviewing commercial hire costs, renegotiating contracts, and implementing tighter budget control.
- Revenue opportunities lie in securing funding from Somerset Council and Arts Council England, exploring additional revenue sources, and implementing marketing strategies.

Recommendations:

- Immediately address the absence of clear leadership and provide support to the existing team.
- A temporary manager (4 to 6 days a month) could provide leadership and staff support until a new manager can be appointed.
- Review community hire charges and renegotiate contracts to alleviate the financial burden.
- Review commercial hire contracts and renegotiate to reclaim lost expenditure.
- Review the cafe / bar contract at the end of the lease term.
- Implement tighter budget control and efficient management accounting practices.
- Explore funding opportunities from Somerset Council and Arts Council England.
- Develop marketing and programming strategies to attract a wider audience and increase revenue.

Potential Benefits:

- Enhanced financial sustainability, optimised resource allocation, and improved operational efficiency.
- Increased revenue through cost-saving measures and diversified income sources.
- Strengthened community engagement and expanded programming opportunities.

Risks:

- Potential resistance to changes from community groups and stakeholders.
- Financial and operational risks associated with implementing new strategies.
- Need for careful evaluation and balancing of income generation with audience satisfaction.

Appendix 1: New Manager Skill Set Overview

The key skill sets needed for the new manager of the Princess Theatre include the following:

Venue Management and Leadership Experience: The new manager should have a proven track record in venue management, demonstrating effective leadership and the ability to oversee the theatre's operations.

Grant Application Experience: Experience in successfully applying for grants from funding bodies such as Somerset Council and Arts Council England is crucial for securing additional financial support for the theatre's programmes and initiatives.

Financial Management and Control: Strong financial acumen is essential to manage the theatre's budget, control expenses, and ensure financial stability. The manager should be capable of overseeing financial processes, tracking revenue and expenses, and making informed financial decisions.

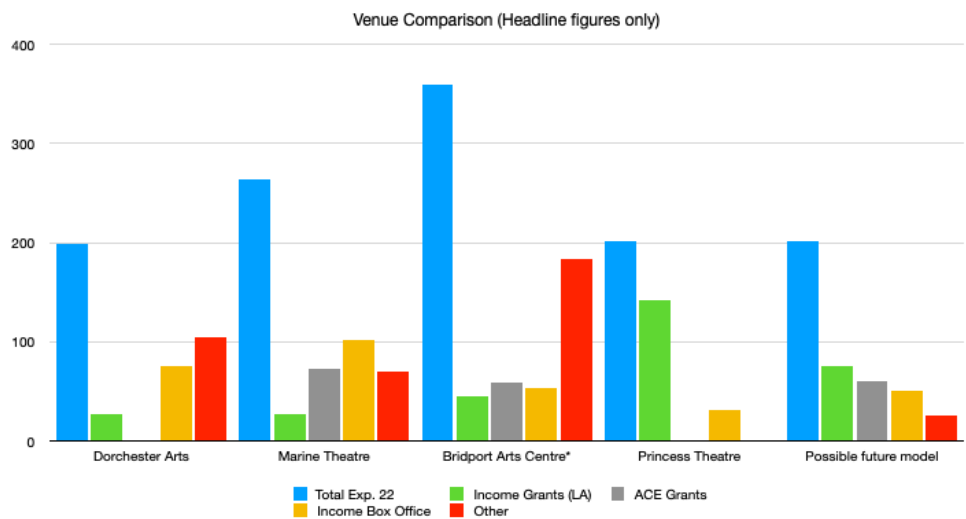
Stakeholder Management: The ability to work collaboratively with various stakeholders, including the Princess Management Committee, Town Council, sponsors, and community groups, is important. Effective communication, relationship building, and a consultative approach are necessary to align goals and foster positive partnerships.

Fundraising and Income Generation: The new manager should possess skills in identifying and maximising revenue opportunities, including sponsorships, donations, and earned income. They should have experience in developing sustainable fundraising strategies to support the theatre's financial sustainability.

Strategic Thinking and Problem-Solving: The manager should exhibit an ambitious and dynamic approach to problem-solving, demonstrating innovative and entrepreneurial thinking. They should be capable of analysing challenges, identifying opportunities, and developing creative solutions to drive the theatre forward.

Reporting and Accountability: The manager should have a strong sense of accountability, providing regular reports to the Princess Management Committee on the programme, staffing, finance, and building maintenance. They should be proficient in preparing management accounts and other relevant performance indicators.

Appendix 2: Venue Comparison Chart



	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
1	Table 1							
2	Venue	Spaces (seats / stand)	Total Exp. 22	Income Grants (LA)	ACE Grants	Income Box Office	Other	
3	Dorchester Arts	250 / 375	198	27		75	104	Gifts & Donations / Sponsorship
4	Marine Theatre	220	264	27	73	101	70	Bar & Weddings
5	Bridport Arts Centre*	194 / 350	359	45	58	53	184	Bridport Prize
6	Princess Theatre	198 / 350	201	142		31		
	Possible future model	198 / 350	201	75	60	50	25	Charity Donations to Friends & Somerset