

■ The Electric Theatre, Guildford

LEASE PROPOSAL

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■ The Electric Theatre, Guildford

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PERSONAL STATEMENT

Like much of Guildford's arts community, we have been deeply saddened to witness the gradual decline of The Electric Theatre since the ACM lease began. What was once a thriving hub for performance and creativity has steadily lost its identity as a theatre space.

For me, the connection is personal. As a child, I performed countless times at The Electric in amateur productions and those experiences were formative in my journey into the theatre profession. In later years, as both performer and producer, I had the privilege of staging events there continuing that lifelong relationship with the venue.

Between us, Charlotte and I bring decades of professional experience working across the world as both performers, producers and venue managers. We are also rooted in Guildford's cultural life: as owners of The Fallen Angel Cabaret Bar and directors of Guildford Fringe, one of the town's most prominent community arts companies. We have built a proven track record of creating high-quality, inclusive and financially sustainable arts programming.

We have the drive, passion and determination to restore The Electric Theatre to its former glory and beyond, re-establishing it as a beacon for small-scale international touring productions, local companies and community use. Our vision is for the theatre to once again be open, accessible and welcoming to all, while being run with the commercial discipline required to ensure its long-term future.

Located in the very heart of Guildford, The Electric Theatre should not be fading into the background. With thousands of people passing daily, it has the potential to stand proud and shine once again as a vibrant cultural landmark. We are committed to making that vision a reality.

OUR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN GUILDFORD

At Wysch Productions T/A Guildford Fringe, community is at the heart of everything we do. While we are a commercial company, our driving force has always been inclusivity and making the arts accessible to as many people as possible in Guildford.

Over the years, we have been proud to deliver and support a wide range of community projects, either as producers, organisers or managers. These projects are not side initiatives, they are an integral part of our mission.

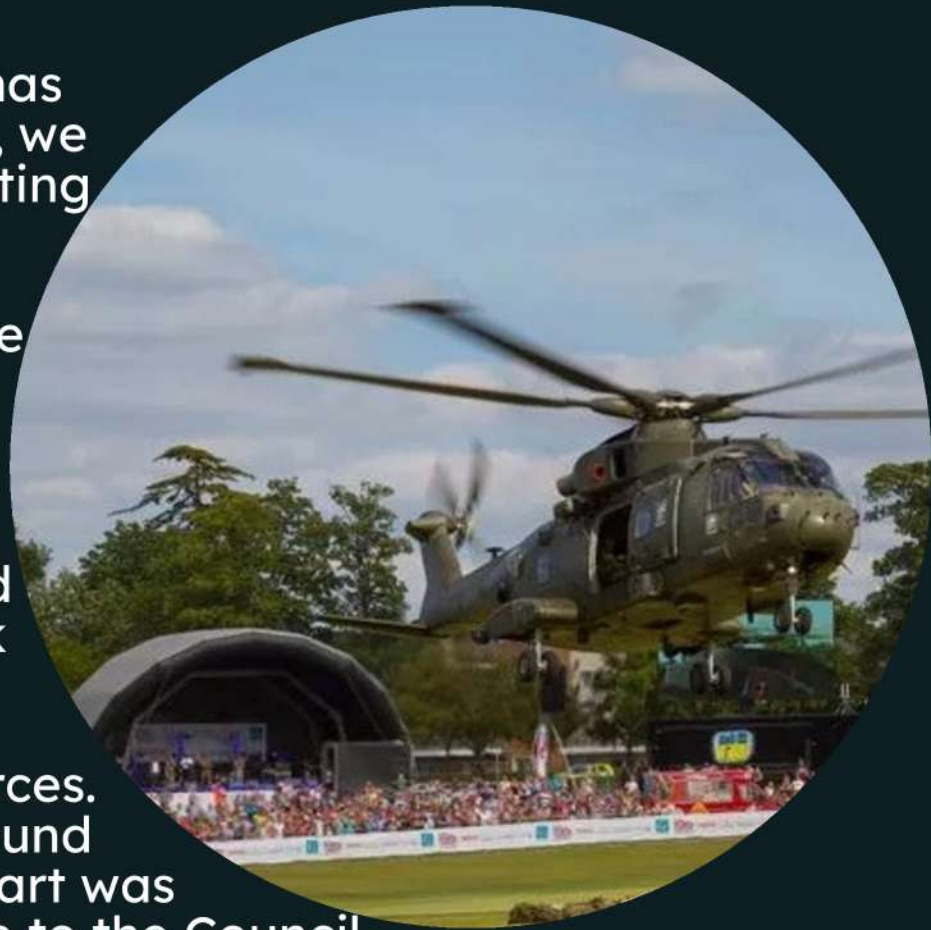
One of our proudest achievements is Guildford Fringe Festival, which has just celebrated its 13th year. The Festival is currently with the Charities Commission, with the aim of becoming a standalone charity. Over more than a decade, we have hosted thousands of performers who might not otherwise have the chance to stage their work due to high costs. We provide a wide-range of support: programming, marketing, technical assistance, front of house and general guidance. For audiences, ticket prices remain intentionally affordable, typically between £0-£15 ensuring the Festival continues to be the most accessible way to enjoy such a diverse range of performances in our town.



OUR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN GUILDFORD

We have produced numerous free concerts on the balcony of The Guildhall, including our much-loved Opera events. These have become a highlight of Guildford's cultural calendar, drawing between 600–1200 people each year. Performers are paid, but audiences enjoy the experience free of charge, funded entirely by us.

When the town's Christmas Lights were switched on, we took great pride in directing the entertainment, donating our time and expertise without any fee from the Council. Similarly, for National Armed Forces Day 2015, we organised all entertainment, managed two stages in Stoke Park and compered the day, working for months alongside the Armed Forces. The event welcomed around 60,000 people and our part was delivered without charge to the Council.



Each Christmas, we also run Pay What You Can tickets for our family pantomime in Godalming, ensuring families who might not otherwise afford the 'luxury' of the arts can still enjoy the magic of the theatre. To date, we have given away thousands of tickets, leading the way locally with an initiative now followed by others.

OUR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT IN GUILDFORD

Another important arm of Wysch Productions is The Fallen Angel, a venue created specifically for the LGBTQ+ community, who have found a safe and welcoming home with us. While the venue is commercial, its focus is, again, on community. We recognise that financial sustainability enables us to support those who need it most and we have always found ways to balance the two.

The Fallen Angel has hosted numerous LGBTQ+ events, partnered with Pride and, most proudly, provided a breakout space for the Trans Rights Parades.

This is not about self-promotion, it is about demonstrating the values that underpin everything we do.

Guildford Fringe exists for Guildford and its community. Should we have the opportunity to run The Electric Theatre, those same values of inclusivity, accessibility and community focus will remain at the core of our work.



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EXECUTIVE STATEMENT

Vision Statement

To preserve The Electric Theatre as a vibrant arts venue for the community and used by the community whilst ensuring long-term financial sustainability.

Mission Statement

Offer a diverse, high quality programme of arts, education and social enterprise initiatives that serves Guildford's local community and generates sufficient revenue to cover operating costs.



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WHY SAVE THE THEATRE?

There is significant interest in sustaining The Electric Theatre. A space for small scale theatre, comedy, stage schools, amateur dramatics and touring productions, this venue fills a gap in Guildford's cultural scene and it has been missed in recent years whilst ACM have been using it for other purposes.

In its heyday, the theatre was a buzzing hub for artists, producers, groups and touring companies and Guildford needs it back.



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MARKET ANALYSIS

Guildford's arts scene includes nearby venues such as the Yvonne Arnaud, G Live and The Mill Studio which cater to larger, high budget productions. Guildford also has The Back Room of The Star Inn which is a small Fringe venue and The Fallen Angel which is a cocktail and cabaret bar with a LGBTQ focus.

One of TET's strengths is being an intimate venue with a decent capacity. It has a strong local support and high-quality acoustics and central location to town and proximity to the train station and road links.



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WHAT WE WOULD PRESENT

We would host events for the community including, theatre (professional and amateur), comedy, live music, festivals, visual arts, youth productions, classes, meetings, awards and cabaret.

We would use the main house, upstairs studio, bar and outside space to make use of every area available to us.

The theatre would be a multi-use theatre which would house all artist genres across its programme.



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ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE



Managing Directors: Nick and Charlotte Wyschna. Nick and Charlotte are at the forefront of the arts scene in Guildford running 100s of events each year across the town. Their personal goal is to make the arts accessible to all. The pair founded and run Guildford Fringe which includes a theatre company and festival as well as monthly comedy nights and many free events for all the family. They also own The Fallen Angel Cabaret Bar and have extensive experience in running an inclusive, hospitality led venue.



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ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE



Nick was born and raised in Guildford and then went on to train at The Royal Academy of Music, London. Still a working actor, alongside running the businesses, he is very much entrenched in the national theatre and arts industry. He has produced theatre and comedy all over the country including a play starring Will Young in London

Charlotte was also born and raised in Guildford and then went on to train at Laine Theatre Arts, Epsom. Having started her career as a dancer on cruise ships she worked her way up to company manager on the ships, in charge of various productions and 100s of staff. Now her main focus is as Managing Director of Wysch Productions.



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ORGANISATION AND STRUCTURE

For the community aspect of the venue, which would be a focus of the business, we would put together a committee so all voices are heard by the management. This could include representatives from local amateur groups, GATA, GBC, GSA, PPA and other regular users of the theatre.



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OPERATIONAL

PLAN



Staffing: hire a small core team to support us which would include:
Marketing and Front of House Manager
Operations & Bar Manager
Technical Manager
Further support would be by trained volunteers and casual staff.

Technical Infrastructure: We would need to survey the current set up in the hope of maintaining existing PA, lighting, staging, projection systems and explore upgrading as and when funds allow.

Scheduling: balance between revenue-generating hires/events with subsidised community programming.



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FINANCIAL PLAN

Primary Revenue Streams:

Ticket sales.

Venue rentals of auditorium, café, rooms.

Café/bar income.

Grants (Arts Council, local government, charitable trusts).

Sponsorships and corporate partnerships.

Donations and Membership fees.

Making use of the outside space for events and festivals.

Expenses:

Fixed: lease, utilities, staffing, insurance

Variable: maintenance, production costs, marketing, café and bar supplies.

We will investigate the possibility of installing solar panel to reduce monthly electricity costs.



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RISK ANALYSIS

Risks:

Continued operational deficits.
Market competition from larger venues.
Potential disruptions (e.g., pandemics).
Low attendance.

Mitigations:

Lean staffing & cost control.
Diverse revenue mix.
Close community alliances to ensure buy-in and volunteer support.



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NEXT STEPS

Engage stakeholders and meet with Guildford Borough Council.
Meet with local organisations who have historically used the theatre to discuss and understand their needs from the theatre.
Secure access to the current lease arrangement.
Begin negotiations with the Council.
Conduct detailed financial modelling, including venue hire pricing, café margins, grant potentials.
Launch a community campaign to rally local support, gather pledges or early sponsorship.



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OUR COMMITMENT TO THE LOCAL AMATEUR THEATRE COMMUNITY

The Electric Theatre was originally created as a home for Guildford's local amateur groups. Over time, many of these groups have found themselves priced out of the venue. We believe this must change. Our pledge is to work with local amateur groups to restore The Electric Theatre as their home, while also ensuring the venue remains financially secure. We will develop a sustainable model in which professional hires, increased bar revenue, stronger ticket sales, higher footfall, and careful cost management help to subsidise hire rates for community use.

The heart of our business plan is clear: to make The Electric Theatre the centre of Guildford's amateur theatre scene. This will require commitment from both Wysch Productions and the local groups. It is important to be transparent, the theatre cannot be offered free of charge, but we will work hard to keep costs fair and achievable so that groups can thrive. Our shared goal is to safeguard the theatre for the community for many years to come, through genuine partnership and shared responsibility. A key part of this partnership will be marketing support. Every production staged by local groups will receive support from our professional marketing team. We will provide advice and guidance throughout the production process where needed. Successful ticket sales benefit both the groups and the theatre, and this must be a shared priority. To support this, we will:

- Offer free workshops in marketing, including META advertising.
- Provide PR assistance tailored to productions.
- Use the theatre's growing mailing list to promote every event, with all groups benefiting from shared data and outreach.

We are committed to working with groups to improve sales from show to show, so that productions are sustainable and rewarding. The Electric Theatre should be a stage where local talent is celebrated and together, we can ensure it remains just that.

