

Chairman's Report 2018-2019

AGM 16 July 2019



Key points:

Lambeth had submitted an expression of interest for funding from the government's **Future High Street Fund** to be used for Streatham. One focus of the bid was around Streatham Hill Theatre as a multi-use venue. We met with Lambeth, *inStreatham* and *Streatham Action* to support that bid. Unfortunately the bid did not get through.

Lambeth have included a similar proposal for the theatre in their draft **Streatham Investment and Growth Strategy** currently out for consultation. Please take a look and give your individual feedback here by 23 August. We will submit feedback as the FoSHT too. Since our meeting we have attended *Streatham Action's* public meeting about this strategy and spoken again with Lambeth officers and councillors. They seem keen to take this opportunity to use the theatre as a keystone for the strategy. They have proposed meeting with the owners to discuss it further.

We submitted a **bid for a small grant** from sponsors of the *Theatres Trust* - we were invited to do so at short notice - but didn't get through. Feedback is that other bidders had higher priority and that in the short time we had we couldn't create a specific enough proposal.

We have **met with *inStreatham*** who support our campaign to compare notes and plans. Longer term a 'cultural hub' would help with place-making as high street activity turns from shopping to experiences. Also, there is a local shortage of work space for small businesses. Meanwhile, short term temporary use would be a way of getting the building open again, but this is dependent on the owners.

Beacon Bingo have **dispensed with the services of the agent** we have been dealing with and taken the 'disposal' of their lease in house. This has restricted our communication somewhat.

We are aware of **a number of potential operators** for the building, including as a music venue and for work space. We have met with several to understand more and to let them know the thoughts and concerns of the community. One major issue with music venues would be potential disruption to neighbours from audiences coming/ going and from equipment loading/ unloading, even if the building itself was to be soundproofed.

Our **vision** is to save the building for arts/ culture/ entertainment use, ideally with work space and community access/ facilities. This could be by working with an organisation (commercial or otherwise) which takes over the building for

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their own activities. Alternatively we could create a community organisation to operate the building as a cultural hub - ideally with capital costs of acquisition/refurbishment covered by Lambeth, sponsors and/or grants.

We have met with **theatre consultants** to discuss how best to make sustainable, flexible use of the building for future uses without compromising its heritage.

Our lead architect is forming a **panel of professional advisers** to help with developing more detail, and has been working on **financial models**. These are showing that as a non-profit organisation it should be feasible to operate the building successfully as a multi-purpose cultural hub with work space etc. (assuming capital acquisition and renovation costs are covered by other means).

We have met with *Streatham Festival* and agreed to run a **street event in Barrhill Road** next to the theatre on the first Saturday of the festival - 12 October. It will provide an opportunity for local groups to have stalls and showcase their activities - music, dance, theatre, art etc. This is subject to Lambeth approval to close the road and we will need volunteers in advance and on the day. (More below.) Note that this year is the 90th anniversary of the opening of the theatre so we may also organise something on that day, 18 November.

It's been proposed that we make a **start staging arts/culture events** even though we don't yet have premises. The street event would be the first of these, then we could continue with events in conjunction with local organisations. This will need volunteers to co-ordinate.

There was discussion around the **future of the campaign, how best to achieve our aims, and the need for volunteers** to assist. There is considerable effort required to co-ordinate the campaign, programme manage, manage stakeholders, run publicity, set up a charity/community organisation, fund-raise, administration etc. and currently only a small number of people actively involved. This lead a number of people to volunteer to join the committee (see later).

A key activity going forward is **fundraising** to pay for programme management activities, and for professional expertise to carry out viability studies. However, fundraising is a major activity in itself. Previously we started to build a fundraising team and we had a few volunteers (thanks to those who offered help) but were unable to sustain the effort. We'd like to try again so if there are people still willing to help please do get in touch. Ideally there is someone who can co-ordinate the team.