



Volunteer update

Autumn / Winter 2023

Volunteer Meeting & Social

We are going to hold a volunteer meeting and social gathering on

Tuesday 3rd October 2023 – 6.30pm

This is a great opportunity to catch up with other volunteers and find out what the new year has ahead for us all. We will meet in person and it will be here in the Seagull. Please come along.

Building Update

As many of you will already have seen, the building work has pretty much finished for now.

The new toilets are open, the new accessible studio is in use and the new tech facilities are going strong.

Similarly, our workshop has been open now for several months and we have some new groups working in there every week.

There are still a few bits left to do - and the next big round of work will be January 2024. This next phase of work will be the last for a while, and will include

- All New Seating in the auditorium - expanding to 150 total seats
- A new stage floor
- A new fire exit in the old dressing room
- New counter tops and redecoration in the old dressing room
- Removal of the old toilets and installation of a new box office area.

Looking forward we are awaiting the result of another funding request which would allow us to install air conditioning into Studio 2 and 3 bringing those up to spec alongside studio 1.

Fingers crossed !

National Portfolio Status

The first 6 months of our NPO status have gone well with a number of benefits being seen throughout the building.

In April we were able to host the wonderful DOT collective for 4 weeks who worked with the participants from our community activities and our friends at Top Cats to create an entirely new piece of aerial theatre. Many of you will enjoyed this joyous display or seen them in August when they returned and performed at Pakefield church.

We also hosted the experienced Feast Theatre company for their development of the play Elephant which is based around a coastal community falling in the sea. The actors had a great two weeks with us and some of you may have seen their sharing.

We have just launched publicly the next R&D production which is based on people's memories of the Tuttles Building. Lucy Fennell and Becci Amer will be working with us over the next few months to develop this new piece.

This autumn we will also be developing a new drama piece for children based on the tale of a Jellyfish. This is an ecological tale which we hope will appeal to young families from the town.

Many of you will also have seen that work is progressing on our documentary about the Seagull which we are really excited about. We hope to do more development on this project during the autumn.

We have also launched new dance classes under the banner of Danceworks - led by Sian Websdale, this offers new dance lessons for children and adults.

Our work on the north side of the town has also grown with the development of an additional Youth Theatre which is now going to be based at the United Reform Church after the sad closure of the Grit.

Over the summer we also hosted a very successful summer school for Musical Theatre - attended by almost 60 children.

Increased Youth Offer

Much of the funding for our extension work has come from the Youth Intervention Fund, which has also funded two posts for us for two years. Joshua Pickering and Mark Finbow are now employed as Youth Development Co-ordinators, working with primary age and secondary age young people respectively.

These two have developed a whole additional range of new youth activities including

- A new Little Performers group for toddlers
- A new Early Years Theatre class
- A new Halloween based performance for the under 8's

- A new Film Making project for teenagers and aspiring writers
- A new development project for actors and producers who want to pursue professional careers in the arts
- A new weekly film making club.

Safeguarding

As you will all appreciate, the Seagull offers a lot of support now to many different types of vulnerable adults and children, and as such its vitally important that we make sure all our volunteers are up to date on their safeguarding responsibilities.

We will offer further training this year, and we must ask that everyone who volunteers attends at least one of the safeguarding training sessions. They last about 3 hours, but it's really important that everyone regularly does this training.

We also want to draw everyone's attention to the two safeguarding policies that the Seagull works from. They are both on the policy page of our website and we would be so grateful if all volunteers could take a look at them to remind themselves what we do to keep everyone safe.

Dementia Projects

Our dementia support activities continue to go from strength to strength with attendances increasing all the time.

We have now launched a new Scrapbooking / craft session led by Tiff Capps Jenner our new workshop assistant.

Become a Friend

We recently launched our new "Friends" scheme which for a small monthly fee gives our regular patrons access to discounts on certain show tickets and a free limited edition Seagull Tote bag !

If you are interested in signing up you can do so at

<https://theseagull.co.uk/become-a-friend/>

Volunteers

We are truly blessed to have such a great team of volunteers, but you can never have enough! We are always keen to recruit new people for Box Office and Bar.

If you have any friends or acquaintances who may be interested in joining us

as a volunteer (especially for Bar duty and Box Office) – please do encourage them to get in touch.

Parking

Despite enlarging our car park, we do still occasionally receive complaints from our neighbours about our customers parking inconsiderately in Morton Road.

We obviously have no control over how people visiting the Seagull choose to park their cars, but we would like to be a good neighbour, so would ask everyone to think carefully about where you park. If you cannot fit into the Seagull car park, there are free and low-cost public car parks within a couple minute's walk of the theatre. It's not always necessary to park on Morton Road.

How can you help out....?

Many of you already do a fantastic amount to help out at the Seagull. But there are easy ways that you could help us out and enjoy yourself in the process....

1) Come and see a show!!!!

This sounds obvious – but to be successful we need good audiences and the more shows you come and buy tickets for – the better it is for us. Karen has to persuade bands, actors and companies to come and put on shows at the Seagull, and that's not easy if they don't think anyone will come and see them! So, the more often we can have big audiences, the better it is for the Theatre and everyone involved. This is especially true of shows you haven't heard of! We try hard to get new and interesting shows into the Theatre – so if you see something advertised and you don't have a clue what it is Come and give it a try!!

2) Book in Advance

Please Please Please – if you are going to come and see a show – please book your tickets in advance. A lot of theatre groups and bands ring us in the week or so before they are due to come, and ask about advance bookings.

Sometimes if too few people have booked in advance, they actually cancel the show because they don't think enough people will come. We know that a lot of you show up on the night and buy your tickets on the door, but convincing a band or theatre group of that can be hard. So please – BOOK IN ADVANCE!

3) Share, Post and Like on Social Media

If you are on Facebook – please like our Seagull Theatre page (facebook.com/seagulltheatre), share our posts and write comments. Facebook is one of the main ways we publicise events and we really need your help to make that successful. Every time you share our posts, they get seen by a lot more people. If you write comments then again, more people see the posts. The more people who see it the more might come to see a show. So please don't just read it – SHARE IT, LIKE IT and COMMENT

4) Write a review

We are not just on Facebook! We are also on Tripadvisor. Leaving us a review on TripAdvisor really helps people from outside of Lowestoft find us. It only take a minute or two but it really does make a difference!

5) Offer some time

Most of our volunteers have started out working in the Box office or behind the bar, but inevitably life gets in the way and we're unable to offer any time for a while. Then sometimes you just drop out of the habit. If that's you and you haven't done a shift for a while or no longer get the texts asking you to volunteer – why not get in touch and get back into it. Even if you only do one shift a month – it would really help.

How to get in touch

There are lots of ways to get in touch – you could

- 1) Message us on Facebook – this is often the quickest way to get a response
- 2) Email us at info@theseagull.co.uk - we check these messages most weekdays – but you might have to wait a day or so for a response
- 3) Phone and leave a message – 01502 589726 – again we will get back to you as soon as we can – but it may take a couple of days
- 4) Send us a letter – No one ever does this – but it's possible.

Lastly.....

THANK YOU

We can never say a big enough thank you for all the time and effort which is put into the Theatre by all the fantastic volunteers.

Without you there would be no Seagull !!

Sammy the Seagull