



ST. GEORGE'S GUILDHALL

EST. 1406

PLAY ON!

St. George's Guildhall and Creative Hub project - King's Lynn.

BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

With support from Town Deal funding, new life is being breathed into St. Georges Guildhall, and its warehouses to develop a lively centre for culture and creativity, building on its unrivalled theatrical history, and links to William Shakespeare.

By day, this awe-inspiring theatre will become a heritage visitor attraction and a space for schools and community groups to come together to participate, learn and create. By night, the theatre will have a year-round programme of performances, ranging from home-grown works to national names. Studios and co-working spaces will become home to creative organisations and individuals and a bespoke gallery will house temporary exhibitions enhancing the high-quality cultural offer in West Norfolk.

HOW UK SPF IS BENEFITING OUR AUDIENCES

As the project is being developed, we have been working with our local community to trial and evaluate an activity programme designed to attract new audiences and share our project vision.

Supported by Town Deal funding and an award from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund we have been able to be ambitious and offer high quality activities to our visitors.

HEADS & TAILS EXHIBITION 9TH SEPTEMBER TO 28TH OCTOBER 2023

Works of some of the best-known artists in East Anglia were showcased by guest curators Contemporary and Country at the Fermoy Gallery and Shakespeare Barn in the autumn. *Heads & Tails* focused on depictions of animals, by ten artists working in the medium of painting, drawing, collage, sculpture and taxidermy. Artists included John Kiki, Colin Self and Rachael Long.

The exhibition was open free to the public and was visited by more than 1,700 people over a twenty-five day run, which included a very busy Heritage Open Day weekend. The exhibition also provided a stimulus for a creative programme for young people.



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WORKING WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

We have a dedicated Learning Officer who has developed a wide range of learning workshops for schools and school holiday activities.

Our schools programme offers exciting and unique visits that meet the national curriculum across a range of subjects from early years to A level. Our workshops focus on the Guildhall's links to Shakespeare, local history and the Tudor period with an emphasis on performing arts and drama. We also offer sessions for the home education community, adapting school sessions to suit the requirements of the group.

We welcome school groups to our art galleries and offer bespoke workshops themed to the current exhibition. We also offer CPD opportunities for teachers as part of the Heritage Education Network.



We are also hosting work experience for college students through links with the College of West Anglia.

820 young people aged under eighteen engaged with St. George's Guildhall through our schools programme between September 2023 and February 2024.

DRAGON FESTIVAL 4TH NOVEMBER 2023

The first Dragon Festival event took place on Saturday 4th November, and was designed to build on the successes of an earlier two-day event in April – Shakespeare's Birthday Bash – by incorporating a wide range of free family activities across the entire site. The aim was to drive footfall, raise the project profile and engage audiences with the Guildhall's links to St. George and the Dragon in creative and fun ways.

The event was very well attended; we had 667 visitors. Our visitors enjoyed meeting large, animated dragon puppets, costumed characters and real reptiles courtesy of a local

petting zoo. There were crafts and outdoor activities for all ages and a finale film from the ever popular 'How to Train Your Dragon' series in the auditorium.

Evaluation carried out at the event (78 in-depth, face-to-face surveys were conducted) showed that our audiences were mainly local, (from PE30). The majority, two thirds, had never visited the Guildhall before, with 88% saying they would be likely to return for other events. People said they were attracted by the theme, the range of things to do on offer, and the free entry.

Shakespeare's Birthday Bash and Dragon Festival will become annual events in the Guildhall calendar.



Throughout the coming year, we plan to continue our programme of activities at St. George's Guildhall with the aim to widen and broaden our audience reach, and to raise the profile of the project to stakeholders.

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