

# NEELD

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## Strategy Plan 2018-21

### Introduction

The Neeld Community and Art Centre supports Chippenham Town Council's role to ensure Chippenham is a thriving community and a healthy, vibrant and attractive place in which to work, live and visit.

This document sets out the aims for the Neeld Community and Art Centre moving forward, incorporating the following priorities from the Chippenham Town Council Corporate Strategic Plan:

Priority 1 - Provide facilities and services which support and develop a well-connected town, which promotes health and wellbeing:

- Secure external funding where possible to develop our existing offer with regard to sports and cultural facilities
- Develop strategies to continue working with groups that are representative of the community to encourage health and wellbeing

Priority 2 - An active role in the future development of Chippenham through collaboration with partners and stakeholders

- Pursue new partnership opportunities to enhance services and assets, supporting the development of the town and community

Priority 4 - To promote Chippenham as a destination market town based on our rich heritage, history and culture

- Develop outreach and education programmes to support community arts and heritage
- Secure external funding where possible to develop our existing offer with regard to our amenities, leisure and cultural facilities

### Overview

#### Vision

We seek to be relevant to our community and informed by our location. Our vision is to fully embrace the opportunity to be central to Chippenham life.

## Mission

The Neeld Community and Arts Centre is a facility for entertainment, learning, creative expression as well as a space for people to meet.

We aim to:

- Work collaboratively and in partnership with local groups, agencies and bodies to provide a balanced programme of events and activities to appeal to the varying needs and tastes of the town.
- Celebrate Chippenham's unique heritage and character, be an integral part of the town's economy and help make our society healthy, proud and inclusive.
- Be a resource for the community to develop, pursue and promote their artistic and cultural interests, taking advantage of the venue's unique size and facilities for Chippenham
- Bring world class performances and creative experiences to the area and promote/champion those from the local area.

## History

The Neeld Hall is a Grade II Listed Building in the centre of Chippenham. The Hall traditionally served in a community/village hall function but in 2015 Chippenham Town Council invested in a refurbishment to develop the venue into The Neeld Community and Arts Centre. The community and art centres' brief to continue to provide facilities for the Chippenham community not available elsewhere in the town and develop a professional broad ranging arts and entertainment programme – thus continuing for a third century the tradition of public and social assembly and service envisaged by the donor Joseph Neeld.

The Neeld Community and Art Centre comprises the Neeld Hall, Town Hall as well as the backstage rooms - the Green and Syndicate Rooms. The venue entrance is via the Town Hall entrance on the High St.

The nature of the space and facilities lends itself to:

- performance arts activity – professional and amateur/community
- larger scale events such as fairs/festivals
- corporate and community hire

## Current staffing

The current staff allocation is:

- Venues Manager - Overall responsibility for performance, financial management, programme management, partnership development, community engagement, audience development, grant applications.
- Marketing and Box Office Coordinator - coordination of marketing activities to promote the Neeld and its activities, box Office systems development and delivery.
- Venues Booking Coordinator - sales and promotion of hire facilities working closely with Facilities Supervisor, process bookings and invoicing.
- Facilities Supervisor - building supervision, coordination of hire and professional programme Service, working closely with Bookings Coordinator, Supervision of Duty Managers & Halls Team – resource levels, rotas & performance
- Duty Officer - deliver service for Hire and Professional programme and supervise Halls team/volunteers in delivery to agreed standards
- Casual Duty Officer/Halls Team

## Programme

The current Neeld model offers a programme of approximately 40 professionally curated shows and events a year. The programme is predominantly performance art in nature, owing

to the type of space and facilities, featuring Theatre, Comedy, Music, Dance, Children's events and Opera. A list of events for 2018 is appended to this document (NB: this is not a definitive list). The venue has been operating to its current model for two years and is slowly building an audience and a reputation within the professional market.

As of July 2017 average ticket sales were 56%. This has increased substantially in the latter half of 2017.

#### Community use

The Neeld plays host to a multitude of community events throughout the year from amateur arts performances and classes through small festivals to charity events. The venue is used by local community services with a number of regular clients who have become part of the fabric of the building. Private events such as weddings, parties and local business events sure up the income from this facility.

Of the current usage, 37% derives from community services, 38% from community creative activity and events and 25% from private hire.

### Context

The Neeld services the town of Chippenham and derives its audience and users from this area and within a 10 minutes' drive. An Area Report from The Audience Agency segments the majority of this market (51%) as:

- Dormitory Dependable – 26%: Regular but not frequent arts attenders living in city suburbs and small towns with interest in heritage activities and mainstream arts.
- Trips & Treats – 25%: Suburban households, often with children, whose cultural activities usually are part of a day out treat. Mainstream arts and popular culture influenced by children, family and friends.

Key demographics for the area:

- Dominant adult age profile: 35-54 years (31%)
- 0-17 age group – 23%
- 45% of all families in households have dependent children in the family
- Health: 84% are not limited in their day-to-day activities by ill-health or disability
- Ethnic Origin: 4% are from Black, Asian or mixed ethnic groups
- Employment: 91% of those economically active re in Full, part time or self-employed work

#### Box Office system

The box office system has been used for ticket sales only. As such the system has not been used to allow the extraction of useful data.

### Aims and Objectives

The Neeld aims to support Chippenham Town Councils strategic priorities by further developing the centre as a hub for culture and arts with an attractive offer for the local community.

#### 1. Taking Part

Develop the Neeld offer into two strands, informed by audience and community input:

- Community Engagement
- Professional arts and entertainment programme

#### Community Engagement

- Develop a programme of community activities throughout the year in areas the Council has identified as a priority. For the 2018- 2022 period, activities will be focussed on health and well-being of the town's residents. This activity will need to be evidence based and community-led to be relevant and demonstrate value.

#### Professional Programme

- Continue as a receiving house with the same curated programme activity level and diversify the nature of activities/performance/shows where possible.
- Co-produce one event a year, for the benefit of the community, targeting specific priority audiences.

#### 2. User growth

Gain a more in-depth understanding of The Neeld audience and users, particularly in the areas of customer expectations and behaviours and barriers to participation. Develop and execute an annual Marketing and Audience Development Plan and establish a dashboard of audience data to inform communications, marketing and programming decision making.

#### 3. Building Partnerships

Pursue new partnership opportunities to enhance The Neeld offer in targeted priorities areas, ensuring offer is community-led and therefore relevant.

#### 4. Sustainability

For the longevity of the venue develop a plan to ensure efficient use of resources and maximise income potential, with particular focus on:

- Sources of external funding
- Adding value to our offer
- Review and development of Hire Offer
- Use of Volunteers
- A review of current practices and assets

#### Budget

The venue is currently supported by Chippenham Town Council, covering staff and building costs and an annual allocation of £20,000 for programming. The programming budget will need reinforcing with grant applications to enable the community engagement programme.

The 2018/19 budget will be authorised in January 2018.

#### Risks

1. Funding. Availability of funding from grant organisations as the market of those chasing funds for community activities increases

### **Priorities for 2018**

#### Taking Part

- develop a community engagement programme

- define areas where most impact can be made with available resources. The priority being in the area of health and wellness, as identified in the Councils Corporate Strategy
- develop partnerships for community-led activity, defining needs and outcome and ensure relevance
- source external grant funding
- develop the professional programme
  - raise profile in market
    - attracting new promoters
    - trialling different show economics and price point
  - reflect audience segmentation
  - diversify programme offer by introducing a film screening element.

#### User Growth

- develop and execute an annual Audience Development and Marketing Plan
- establish a dashboard of audience data and supporting systems (including maximising box office system potential) to enable resource effective data gathering, which can inform marketing and programme offer
- Obtain customer feedback and obtain understanding on barriers to participation
- Further develop the profile of venue, including a proposal for the venue to have it's own entrance as part of Phase 3 Development Plans.

#### Building Partnerships

- Research the Health and Wellness agenda for Chippenham.
- Identify key players and establish partnerships where learning and creativity can add value.

#### Sustainable

- Conduct a review of all operations to assess overall effectiveness and identify and potential efficiencies savings.
- Customer care – assess customer feedback to identify any areas of improvement to the Neeld service offer
- Develop a volunteer resource in line with overall Councils plans
- Introduce a system for monitoring venue hire usage and capacity for ongoing continuous improvement and monitoring areas for potential increased sales.

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