



## About The Courtyard Centre for the Arts

The Courtyard Centre for the Arts is operated by The Courtyard Trust, a charitable company limited by guarantee with a voluntary board of management. The Courtyard Trading Company Limited is a wholly-owned subsidiary which operates the catering and bar functions for the venue.

The Courtyard is a large, fully-accessible, purpose-built theatre and centre for the arts with a main auditorium seating up to 418 in a variety of flexible styles and a standing capacity of 460 (stalls) when flat-floored. The Courtyard also houses a studio theatre with a capacity of 130 (seated) or 220 (standing), a gallery with 2 additional gallery areas, a rehearsal room/dance studio, meeting rooms and an award-winning licensed cafe bar. The theatre is well-served by modern backstage access, well-equipped dressing rooms, workshop, management offices and its own dedicated parking facilities.

The Courtyard is also home to a number of other professional arts organisations which include The Music Pool, 2Faced Dance Company, Dance Fest and Alloy Jewellers, who have a dedicated studio space from which a number of resident jewellers work.

The Courtyard is proud to be a multi-genre, professional presentation and co-producing venue with a loyal and sizeable audience in the West Midlands region and beyond. In terms of our programming ethos there is something for everyone and everything for someone. This lies at the heart of the organisation as it endeavours to engage, serve and provide opportunities for all the communities of the region, from whichever ethnic or social background, to engage in the arts and all its forms of expression. The Courtyard is recognised as a National Portfolio Organisation by Arts Council England.

The business grew and developed through the needs of the community to express itself artistically. This fact is recognised, respected and translated into a genuine desire for community participation to be at the heart of theatre life with presentations, productions and classes led by many local groups that complement and are supported in turn by the varied professional programme.

The Courtyard was created out of partnership between the National Lottery, Hereford City Council, which subsequently became Herefordshire Council, and Arts Council England, all of which recognised the need for Herefordshire to diversify, regenerate, embrace tourism and create a diverse dynamic local economy where cultural expression deservedly takes its rightful place within the economic mix. The Courtyard was the first Lottery-funded, new-build arts venue in England, opening on September 18 1998. The Courtyard pays tribute to these organisations for supporting this vision and thanks those who continue to invest in its journey. The theatre remains a key part of the transformation of Hereford and actively involves itself in regeneration issues within the City and surrounding area, contributing to the debate at both management and board level, where appropriate. The Courtyard harbours capital developmental ambitions of its own, ones that will further embed it in the economy of the City

and as a destination of economic choice, artistic expression and enjoyment.

The Courtyard is at the hub of the Herefordshire community and plays a major role as the primary performance venue for the county. It is a resource, a building, a focal point for tourism and a key driver of the local economy. Most importantly, it is a place where the arts are at its heart, where individuals and groups can express themselves, observe and quite simply enjoy the arts. The pleasure and the benefits they can bring are The Courtyard's first and main principle.

## **Mission, Vision and Values**

### **Mission**

A dynamic arts centre creating artistic excellence locally and nationally, building opportunities through participation, diversity and inclusion and growing sustainably.

### **Vision**

The Courtyard is an inclusive and welcoming arts centre aspiring to achieve artistic excellence in all that we do within an environment that is welcoming to everyone. The Courtyard is a sustainable, robust and resilient organisation continuing to develop and add to the quality of life for the people of Herefordshire.

### **Values**

**PARTICIPATION:** Promoting a programme of participatory and non-participatory engagement ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to get involved.

**INCLUSION:** We are a welcoming organisation and believe it is important to have a diverse team and programme that is reflective of our community. The Courtyard is committed to proactively engaging with people and making sure everything that we offer is accessible to all. We are passionate that everyone in Herefordshire has the opportunity to experience and be inspired by the arts.

**EXCELLENCE:** We are extremely proud of what we do and work as a team to ensure that we achieve excellence.

**RESILIENCE:** Continuing to be resilient and sustainable, seeking out new income streams and being economically efficient whilst ensuring we maintain and improve artistic values.

**PARTNERSHIP:** Building on effective collaborations and partnerships in order to achieve shared goals and aspirations. Developing new partnerships to achieve goals of artistic diversity and audience development.

## **Strategic Objectives**

- Achieve our objectives within a framework of a balanced budget and a well-run organisation to ensure sustainability and growth.
- To support innovation, creativity and development of talent and to work with partner organisations to support the programme.
- To ensure that we are engaging audiences and artists, and to increase our national profile throughout the remaining part of our 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary year.
- To develop inclusive participation, learning and skills in the arts, film and digital media.

- To attract talented people to The Courtyard's team through the Board, administration and our artistic programme and to invest in them.
- To build on our in-house productions and to develop local talent through them.
- To programme a diverse range of shows and events of the highest possible quality to attract and satisfy a wide range of communities.
- To develop new ways of engaging both audiences and artists, including by developing our programme and through our education and participation, learning and development opportunities.
- To play an active role in the cultural life of the region and to develop and champion the work of artists, and to support the development of talent and skills by working with other organisations through collaborations and co-productions to support this, including working with Hereford Cultural Partnership and Great Places Scheme.
- To remain sustainable by developing income streams, investing appropriately into our physical infrastructure to support additional income generation and operate responsibly to run at a surplus, building up our current operating reserve.
- To develop The Courtyard both financially and artistically through a two-year development project that will increase the capacity of the building enabling the organisation to further develop its work.