

CHICHESTER FESTIVAL THEATRE

23rd August 2011

Paul Over Esq
Director of Employment and Property
Chichester District Council
East Pallant House
East Pallant
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 1TY

Dear Paul

Chichester Festival Theatre - funding

Firstly, I would like to express our thanks, once again, for the confidence that the District Council has placed in Chichester Festival Theatre (CFT) by agreeing to provide a grant of £250,000 per annum from 2010/11 until 2017/18. This is not only vital for the continuing operation of CFT, but was, and will continue to be, an important factor in Arts Council South East's (ACESE) decision to award CFT National Portfolio Funding status. ACESE sets great store by the funding arrangement between us.

As you know, we have been looking at the capital needs as we approach the 50th Anniversary of the Festival Theatre. In 2009, the Trustees commissioned two reports: a detailed dilapidations study and a visioning exercise that aims to solve all the problems of space in the Festival Theatre and, in particular, health and safety and access issues for our audiences and staff. The costs of the preferred scheme are in the region of £20-22 million and we are currently in a period of public consultation before a final decision is taken. The summary of the Conservation Management Plan is already on our website and many audience members have already completed the comment cards which are available in the foyer.

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Arts Council England (ACE) will be announcing a new national Capital Programme during September/October this year, to which we intend to make an application. ACE has reiterated the importance of the funding agreement which I have mentioned above in any application which we may make to the Capital Programme.

Following the increasing popularity of CFT's artistic programme, many more people from outside the District are coming to see the plays and shows, and a large proportion of them use the Northgate parking facilities. As a result of this, it has been suggested that a nominal evening parking charge – say, until 8.00pm – might be introduced, and that this charge should be seen to be for the benefit of CFT. It is something which we believe audiences would be prepared to support, and would also indicate to ACE that CDC was helping CFT to achieve the funds necessary to progress the refurbishment and redevelopment of the Festival Theatre.

I understand that Cabinet will be considering the wider issues of car parking at its meeting on 8th September 2011 and wondered if the above proposal might be included in its considerations.

With thanks and best wishes

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Finch', written in a cursive style.

Alan Finch
Executive Director

cc John Marsland