

# Watersmeet Review 2023-2024



watersmeet

 **THREE RIVERS**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL



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# About Watersmeet

- Opened on 1 May 1975 and will be celebrating 50 years in 2025
- A multi-purpose arts facility serving the community and visitors to Three Rivers
- A 515 seat main auditorium with the ability to host flat floor events with a separate function room with a capacity of 100
- A programme of live theatre, film, event cinema, pantomime and hires
- Operated and managed by six permanent members of staff, each with specific areas of responsibility
- 69 casual staff (Duty Front of House Managers, Technical, Box Office & Front of House) supported by 81 volunteers





# Vision & Aims - Excellence

**To be recognised as a vibrant entertainment hub for the local community**

To support and contribute towards the Three Rivers District Council's Corporate Framework objectives which outlines its aim for the district to be a great place to live, work and visit. This vision is underpinned by a set of core objectives that align with the council's Values & Behaviours, ensuring a consistent and transparent approach to operations.

To deliver a vibrant and inclusive programme that appeals to a broad demographic, the theatre will continue to develop a well-rounded programme that not only entertains, but also reflects and celebrates the diversity of the community of Three Rivers.





# Core Priorities

**To provide a financially sustainable and affordable arts entertainment and hire facility for the residents of Three Rivers and beyond**

- To be welcoming, friendly and to provide the community with a venue they can be proud of
- To provide an efficient and reliable service that exceeds expectations
- To improve the energy efficiency and reduce the environmental impact of the facility
- To be accessible to all



# Values

- **We are proud**

We are proud of who we are and the services we provide, proud to be here, proud to make a difference each and every day

- **We are respectful**

We are all unique, we recognise and celebrate difference. We are open, approachable, we treat each and every person we meet with respect

- **We are passionate**

We want the very best for our place and our people. We work together, tirelessly with care and attention to get the job done. Passionate for our people, passionate for our place, passionate for a job well done





# Business Plan

**The Watersmeet Business plan 2024-27 sets out a clear direction for the theatre**

**The plan includes:**

- Programming
- Sales & Marketing
- How the theatre will continue to contribute towards the council's objectives
- Forecast financial planning
- Future capital projects
- A detailed swot analysis
- Watersmeet's approach to programming and future events

**To view the Business Plan, please visit [watersmeet.co.uk](https://watersmeet.co.uk)**



# 2023-2024 Performance

## Highlights for the 2023 - 2024 financial year include:

- 14,460 tickets sold across 45 co-promoted live theatre shows
- 3,797 film tickets sold across 49 titles and 1,116 event cinema screenings
- 13,499 pantomime tickets sold for Sleeping Beauty starring Naomi Wilkinson, Jai McDowall and Bunny Galore
- 69 hires by charities, local theatre groups, schools, commercial organisations and religious celebrations

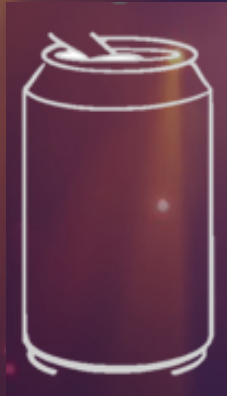




# Secondary sales - facts and figures



**2,517**  
hot  
drinks  
2023-2024



**2,593**  
cans  
of  
**Water**  
2023-2024



**5,241**  
units  
of wine  
2023-2024



**1,731**  
**Popcorn**  
2023-2024



**4,710**  
**Tubs of**  
**ice cream**  
2023-2024

**Record taking bar sales at ONE event**  
**£4,621.70**



# Financial Position

## 2023 - 2024

- Net turnover of £1,017,036 resulting in a net direct cost to the council of £60,680

## 2022 - 2023

- Net turnover of £1,004,700 resulting in a net direct cost to the council of £66,189





# Capital Projects

## Projects in 2022 - 2023:

- Refurbishment of the accessible toilet facilities
- Refurbishment of the main bar
- Completion of the full rewire of the venues bar, foyers and associated areas
- Completion of the projector server and associated works

## Approved future projects for 2024 - 2025:

- Replacement of the venue's electrical intake room



# Tenants and Partners

## Watersmeet Tenants:

- G2Film – occupying a section of office space behind the Watersmeet staff office
- Daybreak Nursery– occupying a large section of the ground floor

## Partners and Close Working Groups:

- Paul Holman Associates - the pantomime producer
- Friends of Watersmeet





# Community Engagement

- Artistsmeet exhibitions and workshops
- Collaboration with Community Partnerships team to screen films supporting Black History month
- Working with Environmental Protection to raise awareness of their recycling, sustainability and climate change programme
- Watersmeet Christmas Fair which is now an annual event
- Watersmeet had a presence at the Rickmansworth Festival and Rickmansworth and Chorleywood Christmas Fairs



# Participation & Accessibility

## Participation

- Volunteering – currently over 69 volunteers 'on the books'
- Work experience opportunities
- Opportunities to audition and perform in the pantomime
- Venue open days and tours

## Accessibility

- Modern washroom facility
- Infrared induction hearing system including audio describe facility for up to ten patrons attending cinema
- Touch tours (for specific events including pantomime)
- Relaxed and signed pantomime performances





# Sustainability & Environment

Watersmeet will continue to take steps to build on the improved energy efficiency and environmental impact of the facility contributing towards the council's Carbon Net Zero 2030 target and Corporate Framework objective.

Watersmeet has continued to take a number of steps to improve the energy efficiency and environmental impact including:

- When lighting has come to 'end of life', this has been replaced by lights with sensors or built in timers
- Continue to replace plastic packaging to more sustainable alternatives in the bar
- Clear signage is in place to encourage patrons to recycle
- The What's on Guide and pantomime print is produced on Forest Stewardship Council® (FSC®) paper
- Digital marketing screens have been installed to reduce leaflet collection when the venue is closed and eliminate the need for single use pull-up banners

***Watersmeet has an energy efficiency rating of '27' (October 2023) which is a category 'B' and emits between 110-140 tonnes of CO2 each year.***



# Looking Ahead - Challenges

- Competition from local cinemas screening films at the time of release - these cinemas offer competitive prices and upgraded reclining seating
- Reduction in tickets sales from some amateur dramatic groups could impact hires
- Re-opening of the Watford Colosseum
- Cost of living crisis
- Pressure on the council's budgets could impact negatively on Watersmeet's allocation of resources and capital investment
- Increased energy costs will have a significant impact on the venue with electricity and gas bills adding approximately £39,000 to the cost of running the theatre
- Loss of income from Daybreak Nursery who vacated their premises in April 2024





# Looking Ahead - Opportunities

- Watersmeet is seeing an increase in ticket sales with a higher number events being completely sold out
- Very strong panto cast with a detailed marketing plan to meet targets
- Watersmeet continues to be in a good visual condition following last year's capital investment
- Attracting a range of high-quality shows which has enhanced Watersmeet's reputation with audiences
- High audience numbers at many shows have had a positive effect on secondary sales
- With the approval of the business plan we are now able to program a wider variety of genres across film and live theatre



# Looking Ahead - Watersmeet turns 50

**On 1 May 2025 Watersmeet turns 50 and the venue will be hosting a number of events to acknowledge this golden anniversary**

**These will include:**

- Friends of Watersmeet Coffee morning
- Community Funday
- 70s themed film festival
- Tours of the venue
- Tea Dance
- Bingo afternoon
- 70s Disco
- Artistsmeet exhibition





# Thank you for listening



*We are a local theatre with a big ambition.  
Our future is looking bright, exciting and sustainable*

