

Watersmeet Review

2024-2025

watersmeet 50
celebrating 50 years

 **THREE RIVERS**
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Watersmeet today

- Watersmeet opened 1 May 1975 and is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year
- Operated and managed by five permanent members of staff, each with specific areas of responsibility
- 67 casual staff (Duty Front of House Managers, Technical, Box Office & Front of House) supported by over 50 volunteers



Corporate Framework

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:

- **Responsive, Responsible Local Leadership**

- To provide a financially sustainable arts and entertainment for the community
- To deliver outstanding customer experience

- **A Great Place to do Business**

- To develop relationships with external and internal partners and businesses

- **Sustainable Communities**

- To provide an inclusive and accessible theatre experience

- **Net carbon zero & climate resilience**

- To work towards net carbon zero 2030



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



Watersmeet Celebrates 50 years

The following events have been held to commemorate Watersmeet turning 50:

- **Venue tours**

Three tours showing the workings and operational side of the venue were conducted. The tours attracted 52 members of the public

- **Season of 70s films**

Four films were screened; each film featured a themed cocktail and 149 tickets were sold

- **Community Fun Day**

Over 500 members of the community enjoyed the day with local businesses given the opportunity to attend the day and promote their products and services

- **70s Disco**

A 70s themed evening which saw 255 attendances

- **Tea Dance**

A sold-out event hosted by Mr Wonderful who conducted the original tea dances at Watersmeet when it first opening with many guests asking for this to be a regular event



Business Plan

The Watersmeet Business plan 2024-27 sets out a clear direction for the theatre. The venue has been implementing the targets and measures detailed in the document.

So far Watersmeet has:

- Met the KPI of 22,500 tickets sold 2024-25
- An improved understanding of the audience demographic
- Exceeded membership package targets of 100 members with 50% retention rate
- Continued to engage with local businesses to support their event requirements
- Worked with numerous council services to host and support awareness events
- Continued to develop relationships with local amateur dramatic societies

To view the Business Plan, please visit watersmeet.co.uk



Programming

The Watersmeet Business Plan sets out the route for the venue's programming.

For live shows and productions Watersmeet prioritise:

- Annual pantomime
- Commercially successful music acts and children's theatre
- New shows through co-promotion
- Films targeting the audience demographic on a regular programme with inclusion of more diverse titles to attract new audience
- Event cinema with a wide range of genres

In addition, the venue will continue to:

- Develop a well-rounded programme that appeals to a broad demographic
- Embrace the flexibility and a dynamic approach to adapt the programme



Performance 2024-25

Highlights for the 2024/25 financial year include:

- 14,054 tickets sold across 54 co-promoted live theatre shows
- 5,964 film tickets sold across 59 titles and 29 event cinema screenings
- 15,325 pantomime tickets sold for Jack and the Beanstalk starring Lee Latchford-Evans, John Lyons, Jay Rawlings and Bunny Galore
- 42 hires equating to 83 days of venue hire by local theatre groups, schools, commercial organisations and religious celebrations



Marketing facts & figures

A structured marketing plan, tailored to each genre is in place for every event including promoted shows, film, event cinema and pantomime. In addition to this, themed marketing for children's shows, accessible performances and special screenings are carried out throughout the year. Our digital engagement increases year-on-year (with the exception of X which is declining nationally)

	April 24	April 25
Website visits	259,779	261,528
Instagram	1,660	1,987
X	1,178	1,146
Facebook	2,493	2,849
Email	24,229	26,251
Panto emails (new)	-	1,825



Financial Position

2024/25

- Net turnover of £1,031,123 resulting in a net direct cost to the council of £26,497

2023/24

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



Capital Projects

Approved future projects for 2024/25:

- 30 fire doors have been replaced and a further 25 have been repaired
- The electrical intake room has been replaced and now has a prolonged life which will safeguard the reliability and compliance of electrical infrastructure in the venue



Tenants and Partners

Watersmeet Tenants:

- G2Film – occupying a section of office space behind the Watersmeet staff office
 - G2Film produced the pantomime assets for marketing purposes
- Blooming Tulips – a new tenant of the venue occupying a large section of the ground floor replacing the previous Daybreak Nursery
 - Meetings have and continue to take place to build relationships and to develop collaborative working

Partners and Close Working Groups:

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



Community Engagement

- 4 x Artistsmeet exhibitions
- 2 x film screenings for Environmental Protection
 - 12 Inches of soil (Nov 2024) – 371 attendees
 - Screening of Oceans (June 2025), 509 attendees
- Annual Christmas Fair
 - 34 stalls
 - 135 entries to Santa's grotto
- Events supported
 - Croxfest
 - Rickmansworth Winter Fair
 - Chorleywood Christmas Fairs

Tickets donated to school fairs and other community events

- 35 film tickets
- 12 family panto tickets



Participation & Accessibility

Participation

- Over 50 volunteers
- Opportunities to audition and perform in the pantomime for 16 young people

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



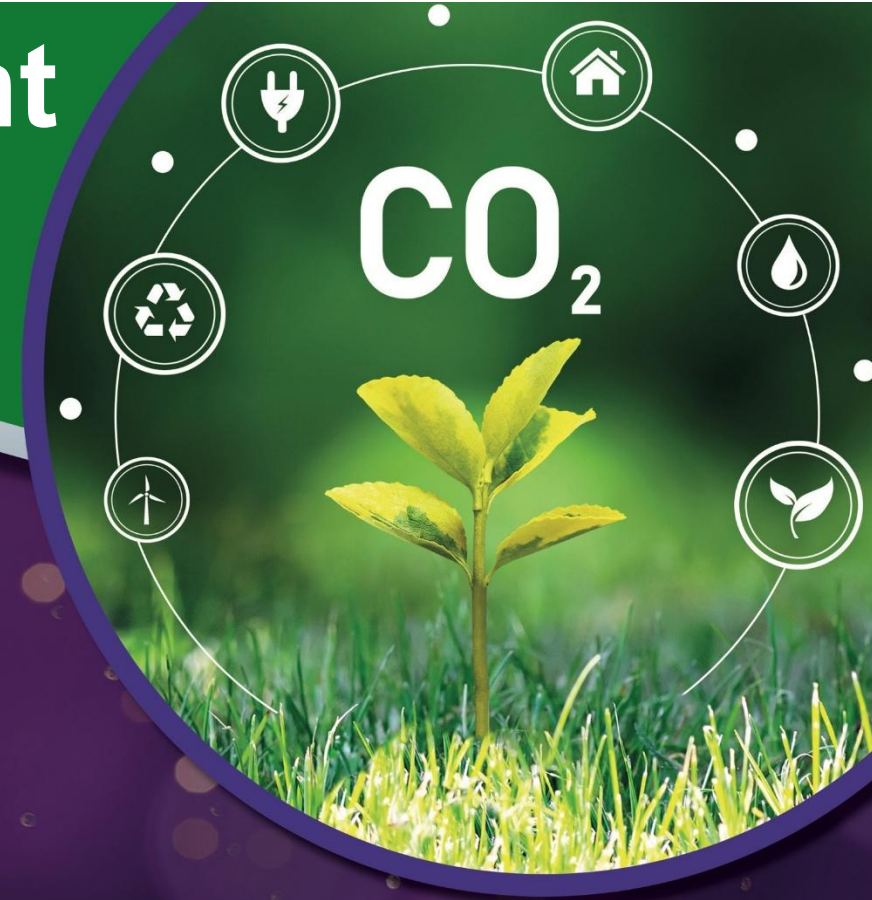
Sustainability & Environment

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 target and Corporate Framework objective.

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

- All lighting is now LED and all lesser used rooms e.g. toilets and stores are now on sensors
- Coffee cups are 100% recyclable
- Coffee grounds and tea bags are now recycled through the council's food waste collections
- Cleaning chemicals continue to be switched to more environmentally-friendly products

Watersmeet has an energy efficiency rating of '27' (October 2024) 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
- Re-opening of the Watford Colosseum and the larger named acts that they have booked
- Pressure on the council's budgets could impact negatively on Watersmeet's allocation of resources and capital investment
- Increase in raw material and staffing costs
- Local government reorganisation – the uncertainty of how this will impact Watersmeet
- Increased domestic development whilst perceived as an opportunity, has the potential to cause issues in the immediate area with complaints relating to noise



Looking Ahead - Opportunities

- A better understanding of our audience demographic will allow us to programme more effectively and introduce new visitors to the venue
- The 50 year anniversary programme has enabled us to re-engage with past customers increasing our audience engagement
- Watersmeet continues to be in a good visual condition following recent capital investment
- The venue attracts 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
- New nursery giving us the opportunity for partnership working increasing income to the venue
- Increased domestic development meaning that residential new-builds bring in new audiences



Thank you for listening

We welcome any questions.

watersmeet **50**
celebrating 50 years

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

 **THREE RIVERS
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