

END OF GRANT REPORT

Please complete electronically and send to info@brixhamtowncouncil.gov.uk or in hard copy and return to the Town Clerk, Brixham Town Council, First Floor, Town Hall, New Road, Brixham TQ5 8TA

Thank you.

Why we are asking you to complete this

A few months ago, your organisation or group received grant funding from Brixham Town Council.

As part of that process, and as explained in our Grants Policy, all organisations receiving a grant are required to complete this End of Grant Report to the Town Council no later than six months after it was awarded, showing how the money was spent and how you achieved your outcomes.

The sum you received was given on behalf of the residents of the town, so this report is an important way in which we assess the success of the grant made and how it benefitted those living here.

Please answer the questions as fully and as honestly as you can and continue your answers on a separate sheet or expand the text area if you need more room. You are asked to return your report **within six months** of receiving your grant. You might find it helpful to refer to the Grants Policy document which can be found on the Community Organisations/Grants Policy page of our website www.brixhamtowncouncil.gov.uk

1. Please explain who benefitted from your project/event/initiative.

The money has been spent on hiring the downstairs room of Chestnut Community Centre, in Brixham, for theatre show rehearsals, which has allowed for an enormous range of benefits:

- Local Brixham people (as well as wider Torbay people, coming to Brixham) as listed below:

- 1) Local Brixham people wishing to develop and showcase their performance and creative skills sets regardless of previous experience.
- 2) Local people wishing to enjoy theatre as audience, experiencing classical literature brought to life in an all new way, having a different type of theatre to attend; making friends, and several discovering theatre-going (and thus supporting Brixham Theatre as a result) as a new interest and hobby.
- 3) our local theatre company; The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company, continuing to grow and being able to look forward to creating more such opportunities for local people, as founded to do.
- 4) Chestnut Community Centre, in Higher Brixham

In terms of measuring outcomes of the performances in Brixham, from ticket sales, our sales were in line with most other theatre productions in regional venues (excluding the West End!) as discussed on theatre producing websites. This means that post-covid, sales have tended to be down a little as audiences are still cautious both about attending events due to fear of catching Covid, or last minute show cancellations in case of illness in the cast or crew. Having said that, we were still well into very functional audience numbers. We have not yet been able to measure the online streaming as the show, filmed at

Brixham Theatre, will stream online as a digital offering at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, in August 2022. Data will be available subsequently upon request.

The show was extremely well received: please see Brixham Theatre audience feedback below:

Email from audience member at Brixham Theatre:

Dear Laura,

I thoroughly enjoyed your production of Ben Hur. What a great story! A story line that mirrored our lives over the last few years. The Romans versus the Jews/Putin versus Ukraine; leprosy forcing families apart just like the pandemic and then the death of Christ on the cross just as we approach Easter. I (and others I spoke to) was profoundly moved in the second half when Ben Hur flouted the rules and hugged his mum. It makes me well-up just thinking about it. So many unable to have physical contact through the present pandemic made it an all too familiar experience.

I loved Ben Hur's clear, confident and steady speech throughout his performance.

The power and strength exuding from the guys who played the parts of those in authority were tremendous.

The actor who loved Ben Hur and took care of his mum and sister was totally convincing and pulled at my heart strings. Her accent added to the poignancy.

Ben Hur's mum is such a good actress - as is the lady with the American(?) accent. They make it seem so effortless!

I can only imagine how difficult it must have been to coriagraph the rowing. Super!

I thought I would miss the chariot race scene but the fighting between the gladiators, and then Ben Hur and his Roman ex- best friend was totally gripping - and with all the gymnastics and very good use of sound tracks (throughout the play) - it was really clever.

There were a number of young children in the audience. They were so well behaved that I assumed they were experienced theatre goers. I spoke to their parents - they were not experienced - just enthralled! They thoroughly enjoyed the outrageous Scot and his obvious preference for horses over humans!

All in all - well done everyone! What a triumph! I do hope I will see you all on stage again soon.

Thank you all for such an enjoyable afternoon. Time well spent even though the sun was out and there were major sports events running at the same time. I made the right decision to come and watch the South Devon Players.

Very best wishes,

Jane

Social Media screenshots:

Audience feedback for Ben Hur

The South Devon Players Theatre & Film Company
(Brixham Performances)

I am SO pleased to have seen Ben Hur tonight! Congratulations to you, cast and crew for such a lovely evening!! All actors did a fantastic job and were great, individual characters who all moved the story along beautifully.
The music and sound tracks were great - especially in the gladiator scene that "gave us permission" to boo and cheer. I loved the drama, the emotion, the comedy moments - really engaging! Well done, Laura. Lovely to see this marvellous come-back after many covid-related difficulties! Best Wishes,
Deb

I totally agree with the above comment - it was a stunning performance tonight by everybody involved. I never believed that Ben Hur could have been portrayed so well on the stage. We saw a very believable portrayal of all parts and the costumes were outstanding. Sound and lighting with excellent, everyone was helpful in the theatre too. I think the other venues in Plymouth Bristol and Cornwall are lucky to have this company on tour. I can't wait to see what they do with the next plan of Beowulf


Had a great evening and thoroughly enjoyed it. Everyone did great but have to mention Dan. Brilliant as Ben Hur. Good luck with today's shows!

What can I say? Dan Houghton as Ben Hur!
Charlton Heston was completely eclipsed by this performance.
Why isn't this company performing in the West End?

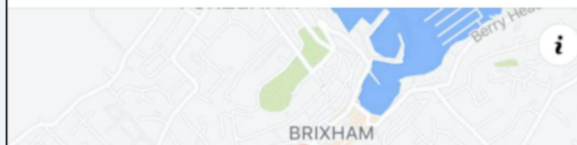
What a memorable evening and stunning performances of all the cast in Ben Hur. I laughed, I cried, and was totally captivated with the story. The lighting, sound, and special effects were spot on, and everyone's hard work and team effort created an awesome production. A heartfelt thank you to everyone involved and to Brixham theatre.

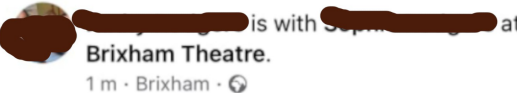

Laura, saw Ben Hur last night. I was moved to tears. Second half particularly good. Congrats

Went to see Ben Hur last night - very good!

 is at Brixham Theatre.
3 m · Brixham · 🌐

Watching Ben Hur. Really enjoying it too 😊😊



 is with  at Brixham Theatre.
1 m · Brixham · 🌐

Ben Hur
Fabulous 🥰



 Stephen Mackenzie

I thoroughly enjoyed last night's performance. Well done to all concerned 😊

2 m Like Reply

Laura, really enjoyed it. You put an awful lot of work into this. I thought the galley slave scenes were stunning, the fight scenes amazingly exciting and professional and the sequence with the cross very moving.
All the best,
Sara

2. Did you achieve the aims you set out in your application? If so, please explain how. (If not, please explain why this was not possible. (The Town Council will contact you should it require further information).

We feel that we can clearly evidence that we did achieve all but one. The only thing that did not receive uptake was our “theatre buddies” scheme aimed at reducing loneliness etc, but we are now linking with the local Gps “social prescribers” and friendship groups to see if we can do more with this idea.

3. How did your project benefit the town and residents of Brixham in real terms? (Please be as specific as possible and provide, for example, uptake to event/s, details of numbers who participated etc.)

Participants: Involvement in this show has directly contributed to the ongoing employability for several local people including four having the direct results of being accepted by national acting agencies due to this show, eleven people learning new work skills; as well as acceptance to further Torbay-based performance education and training for two young girls in severely reduced circumstances, and one student being accepted by Bristol Old Vic to train as a stage manager based on her portfolio created working on these shows.

Chestnut Community Centre, where we rehearse, benefited from the hire money as well – as per the grant – as we hired the space for rehearsals; this meant that the money from the grant has gone directly to help support and maintain a volunteer-run non-profit community venue for a number of creative, social, arts and church groups, here in Brixham, where every penny goes into keeping the centre running and maintained for the benefit of local groups. Thus the grant has supported two local organisations for the price of one. The use of this space also allowed us to create supporting educational videos for the free education pack provided alongside the play itself.

Local people wishing to enjoy theatre as audience, our audience numbers were around 225 over the three performances in Brixham, In terms of measuring outcomes of the performances in Brixham, from ticket sales, our sales were in line with most other theatre productions in regional venues (excluding the West End!) as discussed on theatre producing websites. This means that post-covid, sales have tended to be down a little as audiences are still cautious both about attending events due to fear of catching Covid, or last minute show cancellations in case of illness in the cast or crew. Having said that, we were still well into very functional audience numbers. We have not yet been able to measure the online streaming as the show, filmed at Brixham Theatre, will stream online as a digital offering at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival, in August 2022. Data will be available subsequently upon request.

With regard to peripheral content, the educational videos have received between 500-600 views each across our various social media platforms to date.

It should be noted that we are also performing the show outside Brixham, to further showcase our local creatives, in Bodmin, Plymouth, and Penzance, and that these

performances will continue into June – and again, therefore audience numbers for those venues, will be available after the performance dates on request.

4. Will there be any longer-term benefits (legacy aspects) of the project/event/initiative? If so, please explain those here.

Yes. This project has allowed for the following:

- Links with new venues for future wider showcasing of Brixham's performers around the Southwest, including initiating discussions with a major Southwest theatre.
- Connections with new local audience members who are now following our work and that of Brixham Theatre
- Connections with more local people interested in becoming involved with us after seeing what we do
- Currently negotiating with a local venue to offer formal theatre training for adults, having proven the quality of the shows we put on.
- Links with TV and film companies enquiring about our actors for more work
- The previously described new education and work opportunities for local performers and creatives as a direct result of participation on this show.
- Excellent reviews, videos etc, helping us to grow in the future and evidence our work for future funders, venues, participants, supporters.
- Rebuilding our theatre projects after the pandemic, so that we have been able to “hit the ground running” instead of starting again from scratch
- Permanently available online content relating to the show, theatre creation etc, again showcasing local cultural contributions on a local and wider national scale.

5. How did your organisation or group acknowledge and credit the Town Council's funding (a condition of the grant)? Please list all publications, media sites, websites, literature produced and Facebook posts where you placed material and, if possible, include an example of your materials.

- Brixham Signal spring issue, our show posters and banners, printed theatre programmes, press releases, facebook/ twitter - and this grant report will be available on our website as well.

The posters have appeared all across the Southwest in printed form, for the various performances, and are also being used digitally for the Edinburgh Fringe,. These appear online on dozens of events listings websites.

<https://www.southdevonplayers.com/fundraising.html> (report will be placed here)

<https://www.southdevonplayers.com/latest-news1/thank-you-so-much> (news update at the time as copied to our social media)

Example poster:



6. Please use this space to provide feedback about your experience of applying for a grant from Brixham Town Council (how easy you found it, the process involved, our decision-making, whether and how you would like to work with us again etc.).

The whole process was very accessible, clear and fair – much more so than most other grant processes. As an autistic person, I can find “hoop jumping” on grant forms quite difficult, and yours is beautifully straightforward.

It was a little difficult not realising in advance the requirement to attend a meeting the same time as a rehearsal that could not be moved due to schedules and when the community centre is available, but luckily we had a lovely volunteer who was able to cover for that.

As a solidly Brixham-based organisation we are actively looking to work with other local community organisations wherever relevant or possible, and would love to be included in any arts and cultural discussions, and to assist where we can. Always feel free to pass on our email to anyone interested.

We are immeasurably grateful for the support of Brixham Town Council, and certainly hope to work with the Council again.

Here are some behind-the-scenes photos of preparations for Ben Hur.





Thank you for completing your questionnaire

**Brixham Town Council
Finance & General Purposes Committee**

