



PROPOSAL FOR BURCHATTS BARN GUILDFORD SHAKESPEARE COMPANY

INTRODUCTION

“A beacon for the Arts” Brian Blessed

Guildford Shakespeare Company (GSC) is a professional theatre company and arts education organisation whose objective is to re-ignite peoples’ passion for live theatre, Shakespeare and great story-telling, by producing home-grown dynamic and inspiring productions that are accessible to the widest possible audience. It is also the only resident, site-specific theatre company in the South East.

Since our creation in 2006, over 100,000 people have seen our 39 site-responsive shows. Our 2015 production of *King Lear* with Brian Blessed at Holy Trinity Church on Guildford High Street attracted more than 6200 people from all over the UK. In the last 12 months we have also staged three original adaptations of *The Legend of King Arthur*, *Robin Hood* and *Alice in Wonderland*. These three productions have also promoted access to central community and heritage venues including Holy Trinity, St Mary’s Church, Racks Close, Guildford Museum, Stoke Park and Guildford Castle Keep.

As a site-responsive theatre company, GSC’s use of found spaces, local landmarks and vacant buildings helps develop and nurture community interest in these sites, both culturally and economically, inviting individuals to be more explorative of their town whilst encouraging pride in their community. Our presence also supports improvements to venues through continued, varied use, helping to sustain our cultural heritage.

INVESTING IN THE COMMUNITY

We have a busy education and outreach programme reaching over 8000 students annually providing nine regular clubs, in schools workshops as well as free workshops, performances, classes and complimentary tickets to disadvantaged schools across Surrey, GSC also works closely with Weyfield Primary School, Guildford Grove School, Kings College, Oakleaf Mental Health Charity and Challengers.

From September 2018 to August 2019, our Brave New World project comprises the following six projects focussed specifically on tackling social isolation and disadvantage, engaging with 3500 people, young and old:

- **The Plays the Thing** – a tour of *Macbeth* and *Romeo and Juliet* to 12 disadvantaged secondary schools in Surrey
- **Delight in Shakespeare** – a tour of *A Midsummer Night’s Dream* to 15 disadvantaged Primary Schools in Surrey
- **A Time for All Things** – a year-long project to provide free Shakespeare workshops for every year group at King’s College.
- **Speak the Speech** – An annual programme of work at Guildford Grove to provide years 4 – 6 with Shakespeare workshops.
- **Spirit of Youth** - a social inclusion project for primary school children and elderly care home residents
- **With My Eyes** - a mental health project to help encourage communication between generations within families

Guildford is much enhanced by groups such as GSC and their work is a critical part of the town’s future well-being (socially, spiritually and culturally).



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USING BURCHATTS BARN TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY

Live theatre has the power to bring communities together, not only to experience great performances, but also for participants to share each other's stories, lives and thoughts. When that collective experience is made locally an added layer of pride is infused, which further promotes continued engagement.

Since moving into Midleton Road, thanks to the support of Guildford Borough Council, in 2016 GSC's growth has been rapid: our core team has doubled to 6 full-time staff with a 7th starting in January 2019. Our GSC Young Company designed for young people considering a career in the arts is now its 3rd year, whilst our practical day-to-day logistics have improved beyond all recognition. The facility to have everything and everyone under the same roof has truly transformed what GSC are capable of.

However, we are already outgrowing this, and our ambitions for the charity and the work we are developing desperately needs more space and a guarantee of stability for the future.

Such a development will enable us to maintain our objectives of a model of artistic excellence, recognised within our own industry. It will help ensure we meet the strategic goal of being a valuable asset and resource for Guildford, which its residents can be proud of. The acquiring of a larger building will help forge stronger, improved local links whilst maintaining a competitive edge regionally.

Whilst we will continue to produce work in heritage sites and open-air spaces around the town, having our stores, offices and enlarged rehearsal space will enable us to focus our energies on producing more of this work. We will also be able to produce increased seasons throughout the year, whilst further developing our education and outreach programmes. In particular, these projects will be better served by Burchatts Barn as the building offers a more accessible location for the public and participants than our current base.

PROPOSAL

LEASE TERM, RENTAL AMOUNT, DEPOSIT AMOUNT, BREAK CLAUSES, TIME SCALE

- GSC would like to put forward an offer of £36, 000 p.a. (inclusive of VAT*) for Burchatts Barn and upstairs flat, on a minimum 10-year lease, with a 3-year tenant only break clause.
- Deposit – 3 months' rent.
- Time scale – we need to give 6 months' notice on our current property, but as this is a GBC building, maybe this could be renegotiated.

*GSC are a registered charity and therefore VAT exempt. We are unable to claim VAT back. We would therefore be grateful if as part of this application, GBC would consider a grant to cover the £7,200 p.a that would be payable on the lease plus to continue the £10,000 reduced rent grant that we already receive from GBC. This would amount to the only financial support that GSC receives from GBC.

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PROPOSED USE

The property would be used as the main operational headquarters for the charity, including its rehearsal and education rooms, storage (props, costume, technical equipment), and administrative offices.

This would see the property being used every day, enabling us to better engage (initially) with over 120 artists, 15,000 members of the public and 8000 participants of education classes and workshops, across the year.

GSC already has a strong partnership with Challengers, having worked together several times in recent years. We would further seek to create new partnerships with the other 'neighbours' of the site (GMES, Old Guildfordians and Urban Saints), whilst our presence, will help regenerate the East end of Stoke Park.

FRI TERMS

- Subject to Conditions Report
- Guildford Shakespeare Company is a charity. As Burchatts Farm is a Grade Two listed building, the financial risk for structural repairs is too onerous for Guildford Shakespeare Company to take on. It is fair for us to take on 'fair wear and tear' but the potential costs associated with FRI could jeopardise the future existence of Guildford Shakespeare Company. Accordingly, the Landlord would need to bear the costs for Burchatts Farm's structural repairs.
- At the time of writing this proposal, GSC has requested and are still awaiting an up to-date maintenance report.

CONDITIONS

We would be seeking permission for four additions to the site:

1. The erection of a semi-permanent Spiegeltent in the garden of Burchatts Barn, for use both as a performance and education space. This would also be a venue that could be used by the general public. To enable this, we would require an additional 5 sqm of land adjacent to the barn (currently outside of the property boundary) - see plan for details. The proviso being that this could be removed at the end of GSC's lease, and the garden reinstated. Full planning permission with designs would be sought for this.

To have a Spiegeltent sited at the top of Stoke Park, we believe would be of huge benefit to Guildford, as well as GSC:

- Nationally
 - This would be the only permanent Spiegeltent in the country
- Locally
 - Would provide a clearly identifiable site for GSC as well as a very unique one, making it a place of local interest in the borough.
 - Potential regeneration for the area around the top of Stoke Park

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2. In addition, the upstairs cottage of Burchatts Barn would become GSC's administrative offices, providing secure office accommodation for our full-time staff. To retain the property's current residential status, we propose that one of the rooms could double as accommodation for visiting artists as required, which we hope will become sufficient for the flat to keep its residential status.
3. Opportunity to erect shed for storage or additional office space in the garden area.
4. GBC to remove kitchen equipment in barn at no cost to tenant.

OUR CULTURAL AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

It is proven that continued cultural engagement strengthens the local economy. Arts Council England reported in 2007 that associated spending for the arts generated £7.77 per audience member; based on this figure, GSC has generated £113,162 off its own back WITHOUT local government or public core funding. In 2015, GSC received £45,000 in project related Arts Council funding, which in turn for every £1 awarded has generated a further £8.

To obtain a better understanding of our cultural impact on our audiences, we surveyed the 5500 people who saw our Summer 2017 shows in Rack's Close and Guildford University of Law:

- **77%** of people that saw *A Midsummer Night's Dream* in Rack's Close did not know the venue existed before coming to see the show
- **20%** of audiences had a meal before the show which based on a meal average of £25 per head equates to £28,000 for the local restaurant economy over the course of the season, £129,700 over the course of the two years that we have been at Midleton Road
- **76%** came by car. Millbrook was the recommended car park for Racks Close which at a charge of £1 to use a GBC car park after 6pm equates to £2136 over the course of our 2.5wk run of **Dream**, £19,714 over the course of the two years that we have been at Midleton Road
- **13.5%** of people travelled more than 15 miles to see the show, bring trade into Guildford that wouldn't otherwise exist
- **75%** of our audiences were coming to see Guildford specifically to see GSC.

Given these current facts and figures, combined with the vision and energy of the Co-Founders and their Board of Trustees, GSC, in taking over operations of the Burchatts Barn would have a significant impact on the increased use and profile of the building. GSC's presence would ensure that many more people will be able to connect with the venue than currently do, and in turn boost Guildford as a popular theatre destination to visitors from outside of the Borough.

SUPPORTING OTHER ARTS ENTERPRISES AND COMMUNITY VENTURES

Working with GATA

GSC has already had a meeting with Mandy Grealis, Chair of GATA. GSC would be dedicated to ensuring that GATA continued to receive the following benefits, which they have highlighted as priorities:

- Priority booking
- Concessionary rate of venue hire
- Weekly booking period to remain the same

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By being able to continue to support GATA's use of the Electric Theatre we will be able to ensure that local amateur theatre has a base and strong output, as well as furthering the cultural output to our community, both for participation and as an audience.

We have also discussed creating opportunities such as evening and weekend rehearsal space use for all GATA members which is currently much needed but unavailable to them.

GSC will also be dedicated to finding a way to continue other social clubs that currently use the building, such as knitting, book and jazz clubs.

GSC SUPPORTING OTHER ARTS ENTERPRISES

- GSC would be able to support other theatre professional companies in their infancy by giving them support through free or reduced rent rehearsal and workshop space, where possible.
- We would create a hub for more members of the community with increased drama clubs, reading groups, poetry nights etc.
- We have already worked with other artists such as photographers and local dance groups, and our own space would help us reach out even further providing a space in which to create and explore ideas, as well as potential exhibition space.

CONTINUED USE BY THE GBC

- As GSC are keen for this heritage space to still be a vital community asset, we would like to discuss with GBC possibilities for the space to still be used for local elections, and other important civic engagements where appropriate.

FINANCIAL AND MANAGEMENT COMPETENCY

Founded in 2006, GSC became a registered charity (1139526) in Jan 2011. GSC is run on a day to day basis by the two full-time, salaried Artistic and Executive Producers, Sarah Gobran and Matt Pinches, who founded the company. It is overseen by the Trustees who were chosen for their specialist input, all of whom reside in or close to Guildford, ensuring GSC has the appropriate governance for strategic planning and governance:

- Alex Brayshaw is a Managing Partner of Ogilvy and dnx, (The UK's largest global B2B marketing agency) based in their Shere offices.
- Peter Gordon is a local business entrepreneur, radio presenter and Programme Director.
- Kate Nathoo is an Investment Manager at Charles Stanley and has worked in central Guildford for 25 years.
- Jane Shepperd is a West End Theatrical Agent running her own boutique agency.
- Dana-Leigh Strauss (Chair) is a former Commercial Negotiator at Shell.
- Karin Walker runs her own niche family law practice in Surrey and is a solicitor, mediator, collaborative lawyer, arbitrator and has set up a training organisation called Essential Family Practice with 7 other family lawyers across the country.
- Our book keeper, Cedric Gobran, has more than 25 years experience in accountancy. Annual accounts are drawn up by abi Accountants, based in Farnham.

GSC's President is Joanna Read. A director of vast experience who ran Salisbury Playhouse for many years and is currently the Principal of the world-famous drama school, LAMDA and soon to take over as the new Director and Chief Executive of Guildford's Yvonne Arnaud Theatre.



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Co-Founders Sarah Gobran and Matt Pinches have been financially prudent whilst successfully developing the company from a turnover of £15,303 in 2006 to a turnover of £489, 911 in 2017.

IN SUMMARY

We hope that this proposal will be attractive to Guildford Borough Council as it would regenerate use of an important heritage site in Guildford, create opportunities for our unique Spiegel tent, becoming an iconic location at the top of Stoke Park, and ensure GSC continues to create and deliver exceptional theatre and education experiences for everyone.

24 October 2018