Armstrong Hall Trust
Community Round Table | Friday 21st July 2023

"Our commitment this evening is to open the lines of communication with local people and consult on current priorities for the Armstrong Hall Trust"

The Trustees

WELCOME & INTRODUCTION

The Thornbury Town Councillor's are collectively the sole trustee of the Armstrong Hall

Management

Chair | Jayne Stansfield

Vice Chair | James Murray

Secretary | Kath Greenman

Treasurer | Chris Bloor

Mark Oaten | Danny Bonnett | Helen Ball | Chris Woodhouse | John Reynolds | Phil O'Rouke | Simon Johnson | Cheryl Jenkinson | Helen Harrison | Chris Davies | Maggie Tyrrell | Fiona Deas
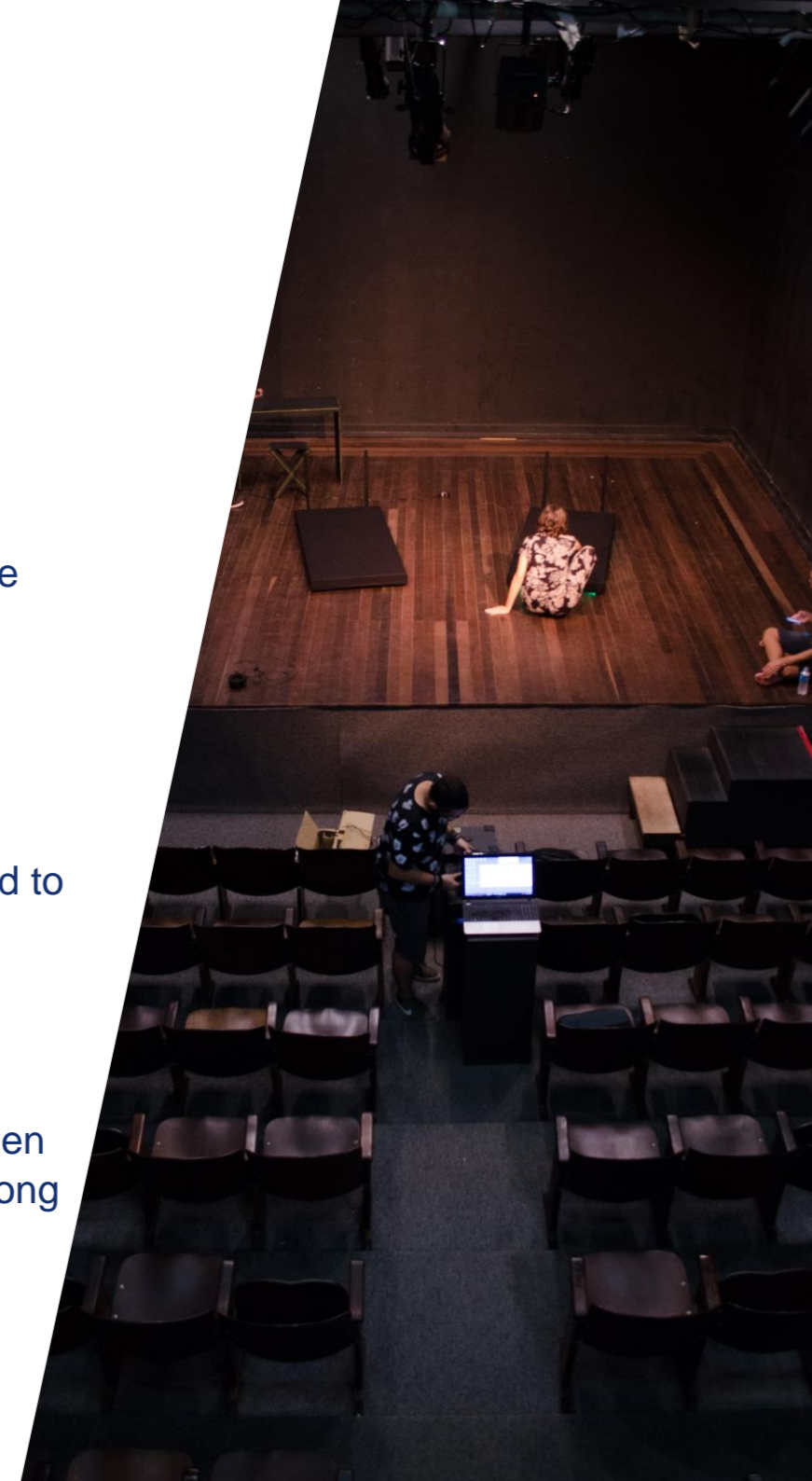
General Housekeeping

- Health & Safety

- Meeting Etiquette

- Note Taking & Feedback

- Next steps

- armstronghalltrust@gmail.com

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

- The Armstrong Hall Trust owns the assets of the Armstrong Hall, The building housing the museum and Miss Saisie's derelict cottage on the high street. The Trust currently holds £130k in cash reserves. These reserves are historic funds, donated and raised locally and ring fenced for their intended purposes. A decision has been taken by the trustees to sell Miss Saisie's derelict cottage on the high street to remove the liability to the Trust and raise much needed funds for maintenance, insurance and ongoing costs.

- The Armstrong Hall building itself closed during the pandemic and sadly hasn't reopened since. This decision was not taken lightly by trustees at the time, but a detailed condition report was compiled, estimating that upwards of £260k was required over a ten year period to ensure the hall is safe to reopen for the medium term. The Hall had been running at an annual revenue deficit for a number of years.

- Whilst the Armstrong Hall has been closed, conversations dating back to 2020/21 have been ongoing with South Gloucestershire Council with a view to selling the assets of the Armstrong Hall Trust, and using the funds to design and build a modern and fit for purpose space for local people adjacent to the Turnberries venue in town.

3 CURRENT PRIORITIES

Creation of a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO)

- Seeking legal advice from Community Voluntary Service (CVS) South Gloucestershire

- We recognise the challenges and frustrations the current governance model poses and wish to simplify and make fit for purpose for everyone involved

- Looking to separate the link between the Town Council and the Armstrong Hall Trust, with potential for local groups to have a seat at the table

Evaluating the Armstrong Hall site for the future

- Recognised that there is a lack of provision now that needs to be addressed in the short term

- Funds in excess of £260k are required to bring the Hall back to life and reopen

- An updated business planning exercise is going to take place to evaluate the feasibility of the Hall if it were to realise the funding needed above and reopen in part or in whole

- We are aware of how passionate local people feel about reopening the Armstrong Hall, this can only be done if it has a sustainable and sound financial future

Exploring the sale of the Armstrong Hall assets to build a bespoke & fit for purpose facility for Thornbury

- Land sale believed to realise in the region of £1m - £1.5m

- Positive dialogue with South Gloucestershire Council in relation to the reconfiguration and extension of the existing Turnberries venue in the Town

- Significant external partnership funding believed to be available for this scheme, which would enable local people to contribute to the design and offer

OPEN DISCUSSION

WHAT TO EXPECT NEXT

The creation of a new CIO governance structure that can welcome the community to be a part of the decision making and solution

An updated business plan for the Armstrong Hall site, showing what it will cost to modernise and renovate, and how it could operate in a sustainable manner

A detailed proposal, design and business plan for a new facility in Thornbury located at the Turnberries site

armstronghalltrust@gmail.com