

Chesil Street, Winchester SO23 0HU

NEWS RELEASE

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PLANS FOR A NEW EXTENSION TO CHESIL THEATRE WINCHESTER

Chesil Theatre has taken a step forward with plans to expand their Chesil Street arts venue with a planning application submitted to Winchester City Council in August 2023.

In 2022, land was purchased adjacent to the existing medieval building and, since then, Trustees have drawn up a detailed scheme for future needs. These include a new foyer/rehearsal area, community/performance space, improved facilities for young actors and those with mobility impairments and additions to the dressing rooms to meet legal requirements.

Winchester Dramatic Society, founded in 1863, took over the redundant St Peter’s church in 1962, when the building was in a dangerous condition and threatened with demolition. With assistance from the then Winchester Preservation Trust, and significant fundraising, the building was converted into the Chesil Theatre, opening in 1966. Over the years, Chesil Theatre continued to expand, adding two thriving youth theatre groups, a national new playing writing festival and community outreach programme.

Chairman of the Trustees, Stephanie Danby said:

“We feel we are now making real progress with our exciting plans to enhance this part of the Conservation Area and ensure the future viability of a valuable heritage asset that we have been solely responsible for over 60 years. We are very encouraged by the positive pre-application discussions with Winchester City Council and look forward to working with them to obtain planning consent for our exciting development.”

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Editor’s Notes

The attached image is provided repro-free for editorial use.

About Chesil Theatre

Chesil Theatre (Winchester Dramatic Society) is based in the heart of Winchester, presenting up to eight productions a year, ranging from traditional classics to contemporary works. Chesil Theatre also encourages new writing through its biennial festival *TakeTen*, runs drama workshops, community outreach projects and readings, two lively youth theatre groups and offers stagecraft and technical training. The Company has been performing for over 150 years.

Since 1966 Chesil Theatre has been the Society’s permanent home - a former 12th-century church in Chesil Street, Winchester. This heritage building provides an intimate 75-seat studio-style theatre and versatile performance space.