

Epsom Playhouse gets a 40 year uplift

30 August 2024



Epsom Playhouse opened in 1984 as part of the development of The Ashley Centre and since opening has hosted a wide and varied programme of events featuring both professional and community productions. Highlights including The Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Stephane Grappelli, Kenny Ball and his Jazzmen, the James Last Orchestra, Instant Sunshine, Jack Dee, Harry Hill and many many more.

At the beginning the Council head hunted **Graham Stansfield** (deceased 2018) for his contacts in the entertainment world which helped establish the Playhouse's reputation early on. Then all the theatre seats could concertina into the back wall, opening the space for balls and exhibitions. Expensive to maintain and service these seats were replaced by the comfortable fixed seating that remains today.

The Playhouse is home to a variety of local amateur ensembles including the Epsom Symphony Orchestra and the Epsom Players.

The former "members bar" or "upstairs area" has been defunct for many years and is getting a long overdue facelift and repurposing. It will become available for private hire for functions.

A spokesperson for EEBC said "We are currently working on improvements to Epsom Playhouse using an allocation of monies from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

One of the first areas for development is the bar on the ground floor. Soon, this will split into two - there will be one bar for bottled drinks and one area for draught - alleviating some of the queues that can happen at busy times. The ground floor bar will also benefit aesthetically from a new artistic mural, depicting singer and actress, Evelyn Dove. As well as this, there are also plans to add a new platform lift to aid accessibility to the upstairs area, which will itself be transformed with a mezzanine overlooking the foyer, improved seating, new flooring, another artistic mural and a refurbished bar area."

Speaking of the upcoming plans to develop facilities, Councillor **Clive Woodbridge**, (RA Ewell Village) Chair of the Community and Wellbeing Committee said, "Epsom Playhouse is a wonderful entertainment venue for the borough, and I am delighted that it is now benefitting from a much-needed uplift, which will help it to reach its full potential as a place for creatives to gather, perform and spectate!"

Epsom Playhouse's programme of events and successes are under the management of **Elaine Teague**.

UK SPF funds were allocated to help places around the country deliver enhanced outcomes, in recognition that even affluent areas contain pockets of deprivation and need assistance.

The main Auditorium seats 450 and plays host to major leading theatrical companies, including opera, dance, drama, comedy, light entertainment, variety, popular children's shows and more.

The Myers Studio within the Playhouse seats up to 80 and is used as a regular venue for professional productions, and community events. Both the Auditorium and the Myers Studio are available for both corporate hire and private hire.

For more information visit www.epsomplayhouse.co.uk