

Please remember the Stephen Joseph Theatre in your will



Together, let's keep
the story going

SJT

Stephen
Joseph
Theatre

www.sjt.uk.com

Box Office 01723 370541

Scarborough Theatre Trust Ltd.
Registered Charity Number 253606

Hello!

I'm Alan Ayckbourn, current Director Emeritus and Artistic Director of the SJT from 1972 – 2009.

I want to thank you for considering the SJT as a place to leave a legacy gift. When I first took over the role of Artistic Director in 1972, the freedom allowed me to push myself in directions few other writers and directors could imagine or hope for. I've been proud to premiere over 80 of my plays here in Scarborough at the SJT, and I hope I speak from experience when I say new ideas and opportunities are vital to the future of the theatre.

This brochure contains useful information if you're considering leaving a gift in your will, and if you want a chat or have any questions, the SJT team is always available – we know it's a hugely important decision, and one you need to feel fully confident in making.

Making a gift in your will can have the most extraordinary long-lasting effect, and whether you're considering something nominal or a little larger, the SJT will use it to support vital work both on our stages and in our local communities.

In the end, our common bond is our humanity – that's the basic strand which has run through the SJT in all its various guises and disguises over the years. New work is still a vital part of the SJT, and, with your support, I hope it will continue long into the future.

Sir Alan Ayckbourn



“More than any other theatre, SJT is the one that has given me the greatest pleasure and gives me the keenest anticipation when each programme comes out. It even led to me buying a property in Scarborough!”

“So it seems natural to want to give something back and give this pleasure to others in the future.”

Roger Crowther
SJT Legacy Donor

“It was a way of saying thank you for years of unique summer entertainment and the difference your drama clubs made to our neighbour's son – once a nervous child, he's now Head of English in a London school.”

Family of a legacy giver

Your generosity secures the next 70 years!

"I've always remembered my time at the SJT fondly, so I'm delighted to be able to add my name to the illustrious roll call of people associated with it. It's a beacon of excellence in my home county."

James Norton
SJT Patron

We're so proud to be celebrating seven decades of unforgettable stories, from our early years as the Library Theatre, to Westwood, and now to our current home in Scarborough's iconic former Odeon cinema.

We want to ensure our work lasts another 70 years and beyond, which is where you come in! We know choosing to leave a gift in your will is a huge decision, but you might have something very particular in mind you'd like it to go towards – over the next few pages, you'll find lots of information about our different departments and what they all do, which might help you decide where you'd like to direct your gift.

If you're equally happy for us to use it where the need's greatest, you can write 'unrestricted' to allow us to focus funds where they're most needed at the time.

Thank you for taking the time to think of us and read about what we do – it's really appreciated.



Productions!

In 2024 alone, we staged **293 performances** on our theatre stages – including **45 visiting shows** across **67 performances** – bringing a wide range of stories and experiences to our audiences.

At our very heart lies **our unique round stage**, the very first theatre-in-the-round in Britain and one of only a handful across the UK. Its 404 seats surround the stage, creating unforgettable intimacy between audience and performer; stories are lived, not just watched. Behind the scenes, incredible innovation supports this magic: a purpose-built stage lift allows sets to glide easily into place, while a pioneering trampoline-style mesh above the stage lets technicians work safely and invisibly. This blend of intimacy and ingenuity makes the Round a true treasure, a place where memories are made and shared.

We're also committed to making theatre as accessible as possible, creating **28 accessible performances**, including BSL interpreted, relaxed, audio described and captioned shows – 24 of them our own productions, and four from **Frozen Light**, a company creating multi-sensory theatre for audiences with profound and multiple learning disabilities (PMLD).

From **set and costume design**, to **props and lighting**, a gift from you will could fund an entire production or add that extra sparkle we wouldn't have been able to include otherwise. It allows us to dream bigger and bolder, crafting unforgettable shared experiences in the way only live theatre can.

Your support means we can keep inspiring local communities through creative projects and sharing the magic of live theatre with audiences near and far.



New writing and talent development

Our founder, **Stephen Joseph**, was passionate about theatre-in-the-round and new writing. He believed everyone should have the opportunity to create and tell their story, and his legacy continues to this day.

Now an internationally renowned theatre, many new writers have been nurtured here over the years, including **Stephen Mallatratt**, **Tim Firth**, **Vanessa Brooks**, **Fiona Evans**, **Sarah Phelps**, and of course, our now Director Emeritus, **Sir Alan Ayckbourn**.

We're proud to be a home for bold, original voices, championing and staging new writers and writing, from full-length productions like **These Majestic Creatures** and **The Whitby Rebels**, to script-in-hand playreadings and R&D support for artists.

Our work's been recognised with honours including **UK Theatre Awards** and **Writers' Guild Awards**, but our greatest achievement is the artists and stories we've helped bring to life, like acclaimed production **Build a Rocket**. This powerful play began its journey right here in Scarborough and went on to win **Holden Street Theatres' Edinburgh Fringe Award**, the **Sunday Mail Best Female Solo Show Award** and **Adelaide Fringe Best Theatre Award** when it travelled across the globe to Australia.

Since his journey began in Scarborough, **Alan Ayckbourn** has entrusted us with the debuts of nearly all his full-length plays. So far, **over 80 have premiered here**, spanning venues from the original Library Theatre to our modern SJT stage. This extraordinary partnership underscores not just our role as a venue, but as the creative birthplace of his astonishing legacy.

Our **Associate Director scheme** has nurtured exceptional theatre-makers who have gone on to shape stages across the UK: **Chantell Walker** brings her dynamic vision and commitment to community-focused, physically expressive theatre, while past associates have also made remarkable strides: **Kash Arshad** has directed **The Jungle Book** and **Around the World in 80 Days**, both of which were critically acclaimed; **Lotte Wakeham** went on to become Artistic Director of the Octagon Theatre Bolton; and **Chelsey Gillard** now leads the **Torch Theatre** in Milford Haven, championing contemporary work and diverse audiences. Collectively, they exemplify the scheme's role in fostering talent, innovation, and new voices in British theatre.

Acclaimed playwright **Kat Rose-Martin** works with us through the **Playwrights '73** scheme, developing new work for our stages including Christmas show for under 6s, *Wonkey Donkey* and *the Magic Christmas Carrot*.

And talking of Christmas... have you ever visited *Scarbopolopolis*? Or perhaps *Scarboresia*? Every festive season, the SJT transforms Scarborough into a world of wonder with a brand-new show written by Nick Lane. These

playful productions take a fast and funny twist on classic tales, reimagining them right here on our doorstep. Packed with nods to local places, shops and faces that our audiences know and love, they're all about bringing families together to laugh, cheer and celebrate. It just wouldn't be Christmas in Scarborough without it.

We want to keep the door open for fresh stories and perspectives, and you can make this possible. With your support, we can champion the next generation of theatre-makers for decades to come.



Leaving a legacy, changing a life

Theatre is about connection, and we reach out to thousands of people across our community.

Across 2024, we welcomed **1,139 audience members with access requirements** and made **944 tickets available for just £1** through our partner organisations **North Yorkshire Council, Eastfield PACT, Beyond Housing, Carers Plus Yorkshire, Scarborough Survivors, Yorkshire Coast Families, Westway Open Arms** and **The Rainbow Centre**.

At Christmas, we worked with **Westway Open Arms** to bring over 100 Eastfield residents to see *Aladdin* and provided **300 tickets** for FEAST – North Yorkshire Council’s school holiday scheme, offering free theatre places and a hot meal for children receiving benefits-related free school meals.

Dementia-friendly work

We’re proud to be dementia-friendly, working closely with our local **Dementia Action Alliance** and people living with dementia to make theatre welcoming for all. Across 2024, we staged **five dementia-friendly theatre performances** and hosted **252 accessible film screenings**, ensuring that everyone, whatever their circumstances, can share in the joy of live performance and film. We also host weekly



dementia-friendly movement sessions, have clear dementia-friendly **wayfinding signs** throughout the building, and integrate captions in all our dementia-friendly performances.

The Meeting Point

Our former OutReach offices on Northway have been transformed into **The Meeting Point**, a vibrant new venue for community engagement, youth and family work, and small events. Open to non-profit activities during the week and available for a small donation on evenings and weekends, the space has expanded our Creative Engagement programme and made it more visible to the public.

Users include **North Yorkshire Council, The Bridge Project** with **Adoption UK**, unaccompanied asylum seekers, **Scarborough, Whitby & Ryedale Mind, Mencap**, the **National Literacy Trust’s Story Maker** programme, **Brownies**, dementia-friendly movement classes, **Home Instead Community Café** sessions, **Fuse Youth Theatre, Mind’s Volunteering for Good** and **Creative Spaces** programmes, local actors’ groups and **Scarborough Sixth Form College**.

Through this wide-ranging activity, The Meeting Point supports creativity, learning, and community connection for people of all ages and backgrounds.

In the community

From running **youth theatre groups** to **backstage schools**, and **dementia-friendly movement classes** to **after-school clubs**,

our Creative Engagement department keeps people of all ages connected with the theatre, their community, and each other.

In 2024/5, they delivered an incredible **1,021 workshops**, working with **3,992 individual participants** and creating **27,057 opportunities** to take part – and there’s so much more work to do.

“I love drama club. In my first year, I performed in the Round in front of 300 people and can’t wait to do it again.”

Drama Club participant



Here at the SJT, creativity thrives through our youth theatre and programmes like **Story Maker** and **FUSE. Story Maker**, in partnership with the **National Literacy Trust**, inspires children to develop their storytelling skills and confidence through fun, hands-on activities. Meanwhile, **FUSE** – our inclusive theatre group for young people with additional needs or in mainstream education – provides opportunities to explore performance and develop technical skills. Together, these programmes give young people a platform to express themselves and build important skills.



Young Company

Launched in 2023, the **Young Company** gives 16–25-year-olds the chance to develop their theatre skills through workshops and annual productions in the Round. Their debut *DNA* and follow-up *Education, Education* earned critical acclaim, drew large audiences, and showcased the talent of emerging theatre-makers. Graduates have gone on to study at institutions such as **LAMDA** and **Guildford School of Acting**, while the programme continues to inspire young people by reflecting their experiences on stage and opening pathways into the arts.

"I hope that the YC is a catalyst for work by young creatives being taken seriously. Young people in the area need to see themselves and their experiences reflected in work that the SJT produces. When this happens consistently, greater opportunities will arise for young theatre makers."

Young Company participant

Projects in Eastfield

Since 2023, we've built long-term partnerships with schools and community groups in Eastfield, embedding creative opportunities that are meaningful and relevant to local children. Our programmes include after-school drama clubs, year-round workshops, and collaborative projects like *Listened To*, connecting students and resident theatre makers. Beyond Eastfield, we deliver drama clubs, workshops, and industry days across **Scarborough**, **North Yorkshire**, and the **East Riding**, reaching communities across a 50-mile radius. This approach really shows

the power of creativity when it feels truly rooted in the community.

Keane Liley, a member of our **Young Company** and former **George Pindar** pupil, created his one-man show *Battleground* to portray life growing up in a community often misunderstood. Performed to Year 9 students at his former school, it combined honesty, humour, and resilience, leaving a lasting impression and earning praise from the principal as "a very special moment".

Keane's follow-up play, *Feral*, premiered at the 2025 **Scarborough Fringe Festival** and went on to win

Best Theatre Production and the **Chris Mellor Award for New Writing**, highlighting the power of creative engagement to nurture talent and inspire communities.

This is just one of the many amazing stories made possible through our commitment to nurturing emerging talent.

With your support, we can continue to invest in young people, amplify unheard voices, and give future generations the confidence and tools to shape their own stories.



Keeping the theatre running

In 1996, we found a new home in Scarborough's iconic Odeon cinema. It's a beautiful, historic building, but like any 90-year-old Grade II listed site, it needs care to preserve its features and remain fully accessible, with ongoing maintenance keeping **lifts, hearing loops, the equipment needed for captioned and audio-described performances, taps, toilets** – and much more! – running smoothly.

Much of our theatre was created in 1996, so everything is starting to need upgrading at the same time! Take our innovative stage lift for example: it's been a loyal workhorse for 30 years, but it now needs a modern control system to keep it safe and reliable. We're also midway through a major lighting transformation, replacing our old tungsten lamps with flexible LED systems that not only make our productions shine even brighter, but also reduce our energy use.

One of our most extraordinary features is above your head in the Round: our incredible mesh, a web of wires that's redefined how we work. Installed when we moved from Westwood, it allows our technicians to reach lighting safely and efficiently – a world away from the old days of ladders and long, tiring shifts.

Pioneering in the UK, the mesh remains a game-changer for productions, but like everything, it needs very careful maintenance. In 2024, we replaced a third of the mesh wires at a cost of £15,000, but after 30 years of heavy use, a full replacement would secure the stage's safety and flexibility for generations to come.

In 2025, we began the sizeable task of replacing our outdated heating and cooling systems – a vital upgrade for the comfort of everyone who visits the theatre. But it's not just the big projects that matter: we also need to focus on the smaller things, like keeping auditorium seats, dressing rooms, the Green Room, bar areas, and toilets in excellent condition. Every element of the theatre needs careful maintenance to ensure a welcoming, safe, and enjoyable experience for audiences, performers and staff.

Your gift can help maintain and improve our beautiful building, so everyone can enjoy the Stephen Joseph Theatre – today and for generations to come.



Leaving us a gift in your will – what you need to know

Leaving just 1% in your will to the SJT could make a huge difference and help save tax on what you leave.

What will my gift support?

It's up to you! If you'd like your legacy gift to support a particular area of our work, we'd love you to specify that in a supporting letter and we'll follow your wishes as closely as possible.

If you're equally happy for us to use your gift where the need's greatest, you can write '**unrestricted**' to allow us to focus funds where they're most needed.

Should I let you know I'm leaving a gift?

You don't have to let us know if you've left us a gift in your will, but we'd love you to so we can say thank you! If you wish to be anonymous, let us know and we'll ensure your intentions to leave us a gift remain completely private.

What else do I need to know about leaving a gift?

Scarborough Theatre Trust Ltd is a registered charity (**no. 253606**), meaning your legacy gift will be exempt from Inheritance Tax.

For example, if you decided to leave 10% of your will to charity, the Inheritance Tax rate on the rest of your will may reduce from 40% to 36%. We always recommend you seek advice from your financial or legal adviser, as we can't give legal advice.

If you decide to make a gift to us, you can choose to leave either a share of the residue of your estate (**a residuary bequest**) or a fixed amount (**a pecuniary bequest**).

What kind of gift can I leave?

A **residuary gift** is a share of your estate after all other payments have been made. One of the benefits of leaving a residuary gift is that it maintains its percentage value over time.

If this is your intention, you may find the following wording helpful:

I/We give all/a share of [please state fraction/percentage] of the residue of our/my estate to Scarborough Theatre Trust Ltd, of Westborough, Scarborough, YO11 1JW (Registered Charity Number 253606 and hereinafter called the SJT), to be applied for the general purposes of the SJT, and I/we direct that the receipt of a proper officer for the time being of the SJT shall be a complete discharge to my/our Executors.

A **pecuniary gift** is a fixed sum of money.

If this is your intention, you may find this wording helpful:

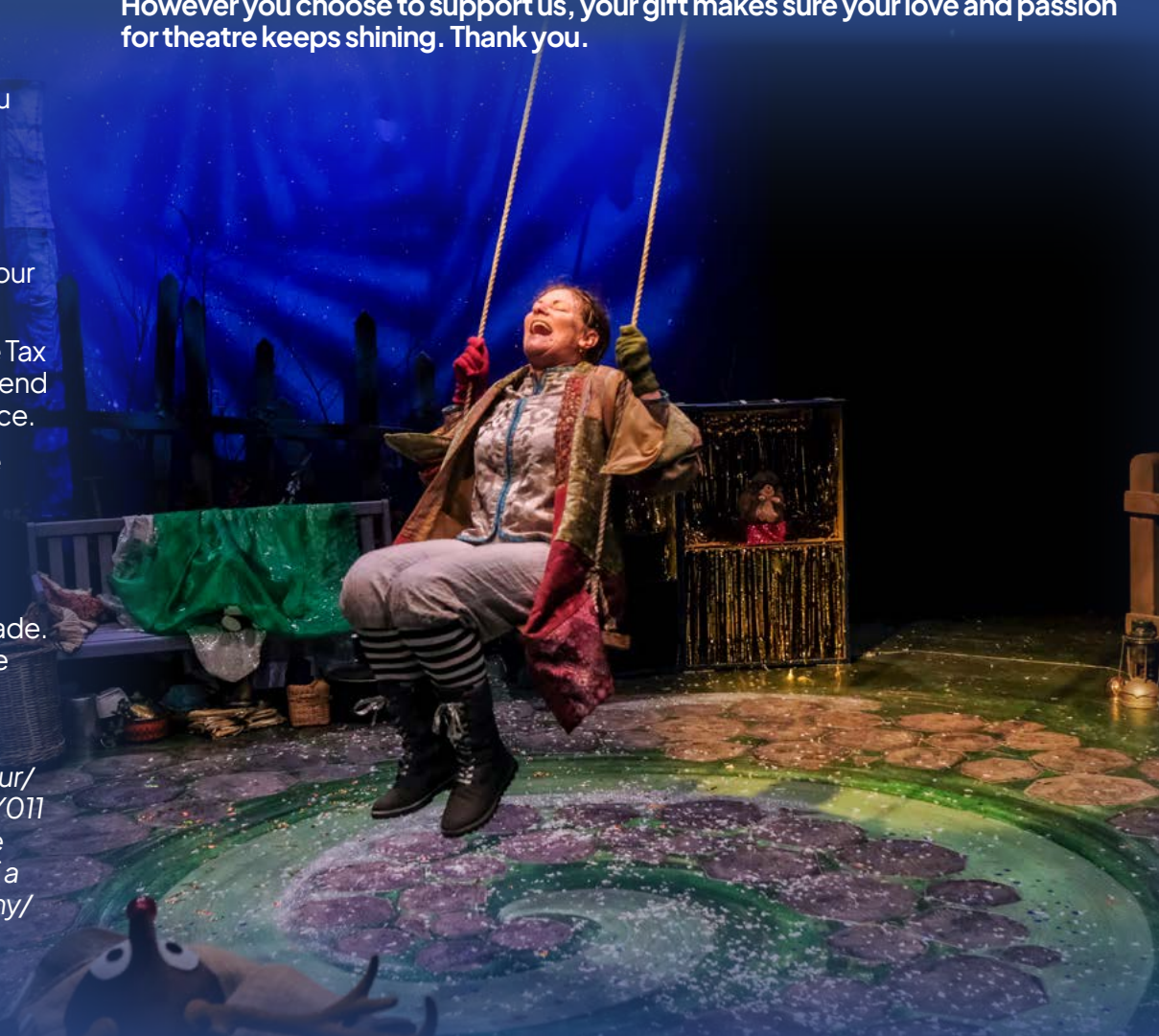
I/We give to Scarborough Theatre Trust Ltd, of Westborough, Scarborough, YO11 1JW (Registered Charity Number 253606 and hereinafter called the SJT), to be applied for the general purposes of the SJT, the sum of [amount in figures, amount in words] and I/we direct that the receipt of a proper officer for the time being of the SJT shall be a complete discharge to my/our Executors.

Can I come and have a chat about it?

Of course! We know family and friends come first but leaving us any amount in your will has a huge impact on our future and the work we can deliver – we're grateful you're even considering it.

You can get in touch with our Fundraising Manager, **Stephanie Dattani**, on **01723 356 645**, or email her on stephanie.dattani@sjt.uk.com

However you choose to support us, your gift makes sure your love and passion for theatre keeps shining. Thank you.



Remember the SJT in your will

If you want the special place you love to thrive for generations to come, please consider leaving us a legacy in your will.

We understand this is an important decision, and family and friends always come first. Once you've taken care of your loved ones, you might want to think about supporting the people and places that matter most to you.

Even a small gift can make a big difference. Leaving just 1% in your will to us could help safeguard our future and may also reduce the tax on your estate.

On the next page you'll find two slips to choose from:

- One lets us know you've kindly included us in your will, and we'd love you to fill in your details on the back so we can thank you personally!
- The other lets us know you've included us in your will, but wish to remain anonymous.

And that's all there is to it!

You can return your completed slip in any of these ways:

- Hand it in at the Box Office
- Or post it back to us for free by writing FREEPOST, Stephen Joseph Theatre on the envelope.

Thank you.

Your generosity will help ensure the Stephen Joseph Theatre continues to thrive for generations to come.

Scarborough Theatre Trust Ltd. Registered Charity Number 253606

CINEMA
THEATRE

I'm leaving you a gift in my will
and I'd love to talk to you about it.

Please fill out your details here so we can get in touch:

Name/s _____

Phone number/s _____

Email address _____

I'm leaving you a gift in my will
but I'd like to stay anonymous. ♥

A few fun facts...

We were the first theatre-in-the-round in Britain! When we opened in 1955 in a room above Scarborough Library, we became the UK's first professional theatre-in-the-round.

We've hosted the world premieres of **more than 80 of Alan Ayckbourn's plays** over eight consecutive decades.

SJT Youth Theatre alumni include *Downton Abbey* and *Coronation Street*'s Joanne Froggatt, movie star Billy Howle, and actor Samuel Barnett.



Our 2022 show *Constellations* featured a breathtaking 1.5 miles of colour-changing fibre optic cables, designed by TK Hay, who went on to win **Best Designer** at that year's Stage Debut Awards.

The Woman in Black was first staged here in 1987 as a low-budget Christmas ghost story for Scarborough audiences, later transferring to the West End, where it became one of London theatre's longest-running plays.

Actor **James Norton** came to the SJT on work experience as a child and has since called it "a beacon of excellence in my home county", crediting his time with us for sparking his love of theatre. In September 2023, he became our patron.

Emmy, BAFTA, and Golden Globe-winning actor Jodie Comer made her professional stage debut at the SJT, starring in Fiona Evans' *The Price of Everything*.



Harold Pinter made his directing debut with *The Birthday Party* at the Library Theatre, our first home, with a cast including a young Alan Ayckbourn.



Other famous names who worked here include **Andrew Lloyd Webber, Tim Firth, Michael Gambon, Janie Dee, Martin Freeman, Tamzin Outhwaite, Lenny Henry, Julie Hesmondhalgh and Claire Skinner.**

We're credited with being the **first theatre in the UK to install a mesh ceiling**, often referred to as a "trampoline" mesh - look up next time you're in the Round and you'll see it!

