

Cllr Barbara Jones-Williams August 2023 report

New development at Malvern Theatres officially open

The new development at Malvern Theatres officially opened to the public on Saturday, 15 July. The £2.25 million project has seen the development of a 310 square metre extension.

Designed by Worcester based Glazzard Architects with Malvern Theatres, the construction was carried out by local contractors Speller Metcalfe.

The new first floor cantilevered glazed extension creates a fully accessible performance space whilst the new entrance is enhanced with an improved, landscaped public space.

The new performance space is equipped to a high standard allowing the theatre to further deliver a wide range of productions, as well as giving more a flexible space for educational and community use.

The addition will enable the theatre to increase its number of workshop places from around 2,500 to 14,500 per year, with regular weekly classes in dance, movement, drama, music, acting and film-making all part of the initial programme starting from September.

Disabled access to the theatre from the Grange Road entrance has also been improved.

The extension project is funded jointly by us and Malvern Theatres Trust with donations and fund raising they secured.

As part of the new development, a new Changing Places facility has been built in the theatre.

Changing Places toilets are larger, accessible toilets for people with disabilities. The new facility at Malvern Theatres includes a changing bed, shower, hoist, adjustable sink and compliant WC.

The accessible facility was part funded by the Changing Places Grant from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and supported by Muscular Dystrophy UK.

We tendered and managed the project, and also obtained a £20,000 changing place grant and funded the remainder.

I think you will agree, this is a wonderful asset to our district, one to be proud of..

Businesses and communities urged to grab share of Malvern Hills Rural Fund

We are launching a new fund worth £500k to help support rural businesses and communities. Companies, community businesses and social enterprises can bid for a share of the Malvern Hills Rural Fund.

The fund is being made available to support new small or micro businesses in rural areas, including helping farmers to diversify into other sectors, and growing tourism.

The money can only be used to fund physical projects such as new buildings or renovations and not for staff or day-to-day running costs.

It will be released in stages over the next two years, with the first round of funding available to bid for now. Individual grants of between £2,500 and £25,000 are on offer, but businesses will be expected to match 50 per cent of the total cost of a project.

Expressions of interest must be submitted through our website using the online form by 14 August 2023. Shortlisted bids will then be invited to work up a full application.

The funding comes from the Government's Rural England Prosperity Fund and the UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

More information about the qualifying criteria for the fund and how to apply can be found at www.malvern hills.gov.uk/rural-fund

Ward Budget Scheme 2023-24

We will be launching the District Councillor Ward Budget Scheme on Monday 24 July.

· Once again, each ward member has a budget of £500 which can be allocated to one or multiple projects (that meets the stated criteria). I am however disappointed that the amount has not been increased as our member numbers have reduced and Wards got larger..

· This year we have revised the application process, applicants must complete the form in full and send it to the ward member for approval. It then needs to be submitted to Community Services for processing.

Visit www.malvern hills.gov.uk/about-your-council/councillor-information/ward-budget-scheme to read the guidance document and application form. Please ensure you read both documents in full before sharing the application form with your communities and supporting any ward budget applications.

Launch of Malvern Hills Crowdfund to support local communities

We are encouraging individuals, organisations, and businesses to come forward with ideas that could make their area greener, healthier, and connected.

Working with crowdfunding platform Spacehive, we are launching Crowdfund Malvern Hills which gives local people the opportunity to create and deliver projects that aim to enhance the district.

Along with ongoing promotional advice and support, projects that sign up to the Crowdfund Malvern Hills can receive a donation, as well as donations from backers within the community to help reach their fundraising target.

Over the past few years we have worked with Spacehive to support 82 successful projects across the district who have raised a total of more than £500,000 from over 2,100 backers. Projects have ranged from a community transport bus in Tenbury and wildlife conservation on the Malvern Hills, to combatting social isolation in Malvern and providing support for residents in Upton following the Covid-19 pandemic. Visit www.malvern hills.gov.uk/crowdfunding to find out more about Crowdfund Malvern Hills.

Re-launch of support scheme for apprentices

Payments of £500 are once again on offer to anyone starting an apprenticeship or training course as part of a popular support scheme.

The Upskilling Bursary Scheme has been brought back following on from the successful apprentice bursaries previously delivered in 2022, as part of the Community Renewal Fund project.

The aim of the scheme is to encourage the take up of apprenticeships and trainee programmes, which help many people take their first steps in the world of work or embark on new careers.

New apprentices or trainees of any age are eligible to receive a payment of up to £500 if they meet the criteria.

The payment will help cover the cost of travel, equipment, tools and clothing necessary to access training. It can also be used towards the cost of travel equipment such as purchase of a bicycle or e-bike, if cycling to work.

To qualify, the applicant must:

- Live in Malvern Hills District
- Earn less than £220 per week (before deductions)
- Attend a qualifying course and be employed for 12 months, or however long it takes to complete the course (whichever is longer)
- Be completing Ofqual registered training or approved Apprenticeship Standard Framework which leads to a nationally recognised qualification.
- Be employed for more than 30 hours per week For more information people can email Georgia.Brittain@malvernhills.gov.uk or visit www.malvernhills.gov.uk/grants.

Wing Walk for Air Ambulance

Lastly but not least, I have decided to take on a wing walk to raise much needed donations to go towards funding vital lifesaving Midlands Air Ambulance missions across our district, With no support from the Government or the National Lottery for their daily operations, the money you help me raise through my challenge will be hugely appreciated.

I have the privilege of being three times chairman of Malvern Hills District Council, I have chosen 'Midland Air Ambulance Charity' as one of my charities as I have done so in the past..

The picture I have used is of Critical Care Paramedic, Colin Apps. This is from the last time I was Chairman 2015/16. I drove my 1962 Massey Ferguson 35 tractor the length of Malvern Hills District raising £4k. for 'Midland Air Ambulance Charity'

Malvern Hills District is predominantly a rural district, with hundreds of miles of roads and lanes, hard to reach farming areas, rural industrial sites and villages etc..

Like myself, many of you reading this will have known of someone that have benefited from this important service, and would want it to continued in the efficient way that it has done so for many years..

You can find my just giving page

<https://www.justgiving.com/page/barbara-jones-williams-1691585262112>