

Bretforton Theatre Barns

Alive with possibility

A new vision

A theatre for everyone

The vision for the newly re-launched Theatre Barns is to create an exciting rural hub where artists and audiences will meet, create, have fun and be entertained. We will create experiences that inspire, engage, entertain, empower, inform, and challenge our audiences.

We want to build happier, healthier, and more inclusive communities by creating the space and opportunity for people to share ideas, engage in conversations, and enjoy a broad perspective and understanding of the world.

We will have a big reach and a big heart.

Our role in the community/key objectives:

- To create an accessible arts venue that is welcoming, inclusive and for everyone.
- To create an arts hub which is a vital part of the public and cultural life of the area.
- To host work that is of the highest quality, and both entertains and challenges the theatre's audiences.
- To work with partners to develop work which is high profile to enhance both the theatre's reputation and expand the boundaries of what is possible on the site.
- To host local groups and societies that encourage the participation in, and appreciation of, the performing arts.
- To play an active part in local arts festivals and events, such as Broadway Arts Festival and the Bretforton village music festival.
- To build partnerships to support the older generation in our community
- To develop business acumen to ensure and enhance both the efficient running and financial viability of the organisation.
- To make a safe and stimulating place for young people through the provision of tours, talks and workshops and the nurturing of young talent.

Our History

The theatre was founded by actor James Wellman and his partner, David Swift, an Escoffier trained chef. The couple owned Bretforton Grange, a monastic medieval grange (formerly part of the estates of Evesham Abbey) with a long gallery and a vaulted stone undercroft. The theatre started life in the long gallery within The Grange, known as The Theatre Room in 1979. The Theatre Room could accommodate audiences of up to 100 and great banquet style dinners were held in the undercroft following performances.

In the late eighties, the group of barns behind The Grange was purchased, including one of the finest surviving medieval tithe barns in the area. With the support of generous founding donors, the tithe barn was converted into an intimate 180 seat theatre. Adjoining Georgian & Victorian agricultural buildings were cleverly linked to become the theatre foyer, restaurant, and backstage areas.

James and David ran the theatre from their kitchen table, helped by friends and volunteers. The theatre has always been a labour of love and a not-for-profit enterprise since it was founded. James and David were keen to present notable professional actors alongside emerging talent, drawing artists from all over the UK to perform for audiences in the Midlands.

The charitable trust took over operation of the Bretforton Theatre Barn estate in 2017 with the determination to keep the creative passion and charitable vision alive, as a legacy to the memory of the founders.