

Natural Theatre Update



You may have heard that Natural Theatre, along with many other regularly funded organisations, have found themselves victims of the Arts Council cuts. As from April 2012 their core funding will be reduced by £145k, which represents a 100% funding cut, or to look at it another way, one third of the company's income.

The Naturals will shortly be in discussion with the Arts Council re the possibility of one-off project funding, Grants for the Arts and other income sources. The Arts Council

assure us they will do their best to steer us in the right direction, but of course many other cut groups will be fighting tooth and nail for this money!

The Arts Council money is/was to support touring in England and core costs. Many of the 'good works' and community activities carried out locally by the Naturals were/are self funding or supported nominally by use of the company staff and facilities. These activities will be seriously endangered if we now have to concentrate on being more 'commercial' to survive. For instance, any work done by our bookkeeper for Widcombe Rising would have to be paid for. The new studio will not be available free of charge. Lady Margaret's time will be regarded as work time (what a funny job I have!) and so on and so on.

One of the criteria for the cuts would have been 'Can this company survive with reduced or no support?' Obviously with 42 years of experience, a very efficient and businesslike administration and 25 incredibly imaginative performers, plus a gleaming new studio, the answer would have to be 'Yes'. However, even with project funding, more tours abroad and fewer freebies, there is no way we can raise £145k on a yearly basis without a major sponsor, so some serious changes are inevitable.

People stop me in the street and ask me what they can do to help. We are not launching a major appeal as that would only be a temporary stop-gap (but God forbid we refuse any donations!) and we would rather survive thorough our work and a well-thought out business plan. However, any gentle persuasion, lobbying or even threatening looks you can aim at existing or potential members of Bath and NE Somerset Council to make them consider increasing their role as supporters of our work as Cultural Ambassadors for the city (we export more than Stothert and Pitt these days!) would be most welcome.

As would be ideas on any other potential major sponsors, artistic or corporate.

Thank you.

Ralph Oswick
Artistic Director
Natural Theatre Company