

The Acorn, Penzance

3-YEAR BUSINESS PLAN 2016–2018



THE ACORN, PENZANCE IS SUPPORTED FINANCIALLY BY:



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1. Background

In the early 1970s the former Penzance Methodist chapel was donated to a local charity, Penzance Arts Centre, to enable them to run it as a theatre. In 1987 the Trustees of Cornwall Theatre Company Ltd. took over the ownership and management with the aim of increasing and expanding audiences and injecting a new enthusiasm for the arts into the community.

In June 1996 The Acorn was awarded a significant grant from the National Lottery to undertake essential refurbishment of its premises and re-design the internal layout including improved access. Building works were completed in 1998 and The Acorn re-opened as a flexible venue with a 150-seat main theatre and a smaller basement bar/theatre with a 60-seat capacity.

The Acorn is now a vibrant centre for the performing arts in West Cornwall, with a reputation for innovative programming. For over 40 years it has been an ‘incubator’ for the local creative economy. The Acorn has always nurtured regional talent, supporting the development of new work, hosting community events and providing an affordable venue for educational arts activities.

It has also hosted a huge variety of acts, groups and projects including theatre, dance, music, community engagement, comedy, children’s theatre, films and choirs. In addition, The Acorn is a major venue for the annual Golowan Arts Festival and Penzance Literary Festival.

The Acorn is the most westerly, year-round, professional venue for small scale touring companies in the country, and its great facilities and friendly atmosphere attract performers from the regular national and international tour circuits to play in this remote corner of the country.

2. Summary

This Business Plan sets out how we, the Trustees, intend to secure the future of The Acorn and, economic conditions allowing, expand its operation.

Underlying the Business Plan is our vision for The Acorn as a vibrant, creative centre for live arts for all of West Cornwall. In the past The Acorn has been applauded for its innovative and exciting programme, and the Board of Trustees aims to continue that ethos whilst ensuring the long-term financial viability and sustainability of the business.

The Board of Trustees has a shared enthusiasm and passion for making The Acorn the success it deserves to be, but enthusiasm and passion are not enough. As a group we have a wide range of experience, skills and knowledge, as well as local, regional and national connections, that we use for the benefit of The Acorn. We are also committed to engaging our local community, not only as potential hirers and audiences, but also as Volunteers and Friends to support both the strategic vision and the day-to-day operation of The Acorn.

This Business Plan examines the social, cultural, economic and policy context within which we are operating, and in the light of this sets out our objectives and our plans for developing the business through marketing and fund raising.

It proposes a three-year budget which identifies operational income and expenditure and highlights the need for fundraising over the next three years to ensure The Acorn's longer term future. We have identified outcomes against which we shall measure and monitor our progress, while keeping our services and approach under regular review.

The business model that we have adopted is designed to maximise revenue whilst maintaining firm control over costs. Thus we have decided to continue to limit paid staff to a single administrative role which is part-time during the first year of this plan, increasing to full-time during the second and third years as the business develops.

We shall also be making the most of the professional expertise to be found among the Trustees. The Trustees have developed a Functional Lead structure with clearly defined roles and responsibilities for delivering our objectives.

Each Lead liaises with other Trustees and associate Trustees with relevant experience and skills, together with people drawn from the wider community who have relevant knowledge and connections. We are determined that, as The Acorn continues to grow and develop, the additional skills and experience that may be needed will be found through targeted Trustee/Friend/Volunteer recruitment programmes.

This is an exciting and challenging period for The Acorn on its journey to being the creative centre for live arts for Penzance, Penwith and West Cornwall.

3. Introduction

The last Business Plan was written as part of the re-launch of The Acorn in 2011 and was intended to guide the organisation through its first years after re-opening the theatre following its temporary closure. It is now time to revisit the plan and to create a framework in which to operate during the next three years and beyond.

Much has happened in the four years since The Acorn re-opened and, on balance, it has made us more focused in how to achieve our goals:

- From the consumer's point of view, austerity has had a powerful effect in this part of Cornwall. There was a slowdown in ticket sales during the 2013/14 year, but signs now show some renewed discretionary spending.
- From the performer's side, costs have risen, but their ability to generate additional material has been of great benefit.
- This has also led to The Acorn choosing to maintain our rate card for the time being in a bid to maximise attendances, and this is periodically reviewed.
- New ventures and venues have added to the competition for the £ in the customer's pocket but as yet this has had only marginal effect.

- We have developed a better understanding of what events will and will not work and use this knowledge to promote profit making events.

In considering their duties as Trustees, The Acorn Board is clear that we must be able to make our events produce a surplus and that to rely on long term funding is not a recipe for long term sustainability. Having secured our future, we will then be in a position to offer greater support to community groups and ventures at reduced charges.

4. What did we learn during the life of our previous business plan?

1. Prediction of audience numbers should err on the cautious side as it is difficult to predict how economic and other factors may influence our ultimate income.
2. Within our budgets, we will separate operations and maintenance costs from reserves and development funds.
3. Finances require us to be risk-averse at present, so we are a ‘receiving house’ and rarely get involved in co-productions, though this may change over time.
4. The staging of events and audience volumes can place great demands on Trustees and Volunteers in carrying out Front of House duties. Increasing the number of active Volunteers is critical to our future development and expansion.
5. Our operating model is primarily aimed at self-sufficiency and building appropriate financial reserves for a charity of our size. We will need to seek specific external funding to get both building improvement and new artistic projects under way.

The things that we have identified as **going well** include:

- The quality and variety of the programme;
- The positive feedback from performers and audiences;
- We are keeping afloat with minimal grant support;
- The theatre and organisation are generally well regarded;
- The organisation of the Board and Administration.

But we have also identified the following **challenges**:

- Increasing income by increasing our profitable bookings and audiences;
- Increasing our marketing capacity;

- Securing grant income to improve the building and replace the older building maintenance and development to reduce our energy use, carbon footprint and therefore running costs;
- Increasing the number of active and trained Volunteers.

5. Context

The Building

The Acorn's home is a converted Wesleyan Chapel in Penzance. It has been a place for creativity since 1969. The building has two auditoria:

- The main auditorium, which has a balcony with 53 fixed seats and a flexible stage and seating area, allowing seating for up to 150 people.
- A smaller, auditorium downstairs with movable seating (maximum capacity 60 seated) and adjoining bar.

The building also incorporates a foyer area (with self-contained box office), toilets, a small office, dressing room and recording room and a downstairs storage area. It has wheelchair access (balcony not fully accessible) via the side of the building into the main auditorium, and there is a lift giving access to the lower level. There is also an adapted toilet and the building is equipped with a hearing loop. The building was refurbished in 1998 to improve the facilities and upgrade its technical equipment. Since this time, little money has been invested in maintaining the building or upgrading its technical equipment.

The building is located in the centre of Penzance. It is on a side road, so there is no problem with traffic noise. At present it is not well signposted, which makes locating it difficult for people visiting for the first time, but the Trustees are taking steps to improve this. There is good car parking within a five-minute walk.

There are some limitations on the use of the building. It will be difficult and expensive to fully soundproof it and, as it is surrounded by houses and flats, there is a limit on the licensable operating hours. Additionally, it is not always practical to hire out both floors at the same time for different events because noise carries between the floors.

However, the building has many positive features that make it an ideal venue for small-scale performance. It has level access, making for an easy get-in for visiting companies, and because it has high ceilings it is able to accommodate tall sets.

We are currently able to meet most technical requirements, and the flexibility of the space enables us to adapt it to meet a wide range of companies' space requirements. For events that attract smaller audiences the balcony can be closed, making for a more intimate experience for both the audience and performers. If that area is still too large, we can use our downstairs bar area which has a small stage.

Both auditoria have good acoustics, making them ideal venues for music, theatre and the spoken word.

The Acorn has a quirky charm that makes it an attractive place to hire for private parties and lends itself to celebrations.

The building was gifted to the charity and has full responsibility for the maintenance and repair of the 19th-century building, the cost of which is increasing year on year.

The building is not listed but it does lie within the town's conservation area.

Penzance and the Local Area

Located on the shores of Mount's Bay – a body of water dominated by the grandeur of St. Michael's Mount – Penzance is only ten miles from Land's End and is surrounded by an area of Celtic culture and great natural beauty. Majestic cliffs, rocky coves, pristine sandy beaches and crystal clear seas vie with the heather and gorse of the moors and the early Christian and Bronze/Iron Age sites to form a landscape that is the heritage of a proud culture, as well as a source of inspiration for artists, writers and poets.

Named 'Pen Sans' in the ancient Cornish language, meaning 'Holy Headland' and referring to the headland to the western side of the harbour on which a chapel was established by early Christians well over 1,000 years ago, the town received Royal Charters for its harbour in 1512, for markets and fairs in 1592 and was formally incorporated by Royal Charter in 1614.

Today the town of Penzance has a population of approximately 20,000 but, as the main commercial centre for the entire Land's End peninsula, it also serves the towns of St. Ives, St. Just, Hayle and Marazion, as well as numerous villages. The total population of this catchment area amounts to some 65,000.

There are bus services of varying quality to and from the surrounding settlements, while Penzance itself is the terminus of the main rail line from London. The fastest trains cover the distance to and from the capital in five hours.

Penzance is both a market town and a popular tourist destination and features an attractive promenade dating from Victorian times on its seafront, the only town in Cornwall to do so. There are several historic houses in the town, set amongst Regency and Georgian terraces, along with a number of museums and galleries.

The town has, in Newlyn, the most westerly major harbour on the English Channel, while from Penzance Harbour itself ferry services operate to the Isles of Scilly, which lie 28 miles west of Land's End.

The Cultural Scene

The Acorn has a vital place in the community as an affordable, accessible and adaptable small-scale performance venue in West Cornwall. The Acorn's programme historically complements programmes presented in other venues and it is not in direct competition with any other dedicated live arts venue in the immediate vicinity.

Other Cornwall live arts venues within 30 miles include:

- The Minack Theatre at Porthcurno (eight miles west of Penzance by road, 30 minutes by bus) offers large-scale amateur (and occasionally professional) drama, music and opera in an open-air, steeply raked cliff-top space seating 730, for 18 weeks of the year only, during the summer months (May-September).
- The Poly at Falmouth (35 miles east, over an hour by bus or train) offers a programme predominantly of film, with some smaller-scale comedy and drama. It has a less flexible space than The Acorn, with a proscenium arch and raised stage. It accommodates an audience of 180 on fixed seating, and has a licensed bar.
- The Princess Pavilion, also in Falmouth, is a larger 300-seat venue primarily used for concerts and ‘gigs’.
- The Hall for Cornwall at Truro (27 miles east, approximately one hour by bus or train), offers large-scale dance, music, drama, comedy and pantomime in an auditorium seating 950.
- The Performance Centre, Falmouth University (24 miles east, approximately 50 minutes by bus or train) is a relatively new theatre (it opened in 2010), which is part of the University’s Tremough campus. It houses the Theatre, Performance and Dance/Choreography courses (following the 2009 merger with Dartington Arts College). It is in the early stages of creating a live arts programme, with a focus on more experimental work, but use is restricted by the need to pay for staff and security on the separately-managed campus site.
- Kneehigh Theatre’s Asylum Theatre Tent for some years took up residence just off the A30 near Truro in the summer, but for a limited six-week season only. For the last couple of years, it has been based at the Lost Gardens of Heligan.
- In Penzance itself, there are two much larger spaces, the Ritz (formerly a cinema/ bingo hall) and St John’s Hall, both of which are hired on occasions for large-scale events, but they lack the full theatre facilities of The Acorn. St. John’s Hall is in the process of being refurbished and within it there will be a 200-seat theatre. Discussions are underway with Cornwall Council to identify opportunities for working together.
- The Tolmen Centre in Constantine (one hour away from Penzance) runs occasional events in its 180-seat theatre together with regular film shows.

- ‘Carn to Cove’, Cornwall’s performing arts scheme for rural communities, offers a programme of small scale performances in village halls and other venues. West of Redruth there are only three venues available, and due to current funding restrictions these venues are allowed to choose and promote only one night’s event per season. Seasons run from January to June and September to December.

Further afield, the large-scale theatres at Plymouth and Exeter are at least two hours’ journey time away and thus only accessible at much greater expenses. Bristol, with a larger number of venues, is up to four hours away via an infrequent train service.

Cornwall is home to a thriving theatre, dance and live arts performance scene. There are three theatre companies which are currently regularly funded by Arts Council England: Kneehigh (mid-scale touring physical theatre and the Asylum (see above)), Miracle Theatre (two shows per year – one mid-scale outdoor touring show and one small-scale village hall touring winter show) and Wild Works (large-scale, bespoke, site-specific works which take place at a variety of venues across the UK and Europe).

There is also a host of established smaller scale touring companies that create live theatre and dance work in the west of Cornwall and tour nationally. These include o-region, Cube, Bedlam, Rogue, Cscape, BishBashBosh and ‘Owdyado Theatre’.

The Economic Context

Penzance attracts a large number of tourists during the summer months. However, this ‘favoured holiday destination’ is also home to some of the most deprived areas of the country. In fact, almost 18% of the Penzance population live in an area that is among the most deprived 10% in England (this is the highest proportion in any South West town or city).

There are high levels of unemployment and under-employment in the Penzance area and as the key industry is tourism many jobs are seasonal and low paid. Experian’s Mosaic data (2010) classifies over 9% of the households in the Penzance Community Network Area (which includes Marazion and St Just-in-Penwith as well as Penzance itself) as made up of ‘Young unattached people living in town centres’ and 13% as being ‘low income families with low educational attainment living on council estates’.

These statistics highlight the need for year-round provision of high quality arts experience and entertainment at reasonable prices. The Acorn Board of Trustees aims to become financially self-sufficient, with minimal recourse to public funding, within three years. However, the Trustees also recognise the vital importance of setting box office prices at affordable levels and of ensuring the availability of concessionary rates, so that economic deprivation is less of a barrier to engaging in the arts and gaining from being involved in the creative opportunities that The Acorn will be offering.

It is important to recognise not only the need for cultural provision in West Cornwall but also the contribution that cultural activity makes to the local economy. Mention has been made above of the thriving performing arts scene in the area, and the annual fortnight-long St Ives September Festival, with nationally renowned performers, attracts visitors from ‘up

country' in large numbers. Penzance now has its own annual literary and music festivals (many of their events have been hosted at The Acorn these past years), and there is evidence that these too are beginning to attract visitors from elsewhere.

The Golowan Festival runs for a week around the time of the Summer Solstice and The Acorn will be seeking a much closer relationship with both the Festival organisers and making The Acorn a central venue for the Festival goers.

The importance of the 'cultural economy' to West Cornwall is further highlighted by the number and quality of art galleries and museums in the area (Tate St Ives; the Barbara Hepworth Museum and Sculpture Garden, also in St Ives; the Newlyn Art Gallery; and The Exchange Gallery and Penlee House Museum and Art Gallery in Penzance itself), and especially by the remarkable number and range of artists and craftspeople who have made their homes in the area.

As part of 'Open Studios Cornwall 2010', 147 of them across Cornwall opened their workplaces and exhibited their work to visitors. Of those 147, no fewer than 115 were located in West Cornwall (west of a line from Porthtowan to Redruth to Helford Passage). Thus around four-fifths of Cornwall's artists and craftspeople are to be found in just one-quarter of the county.

Cultural activity seems to be too fragmented and small-scale to register in official statistics of economic activity, but cumulatively it is clearly extremely important to our area. The strength and vibrancy of cultural activity in West Cornwall indicates the existence of a resilient 'cultural infrastructure', and The Acorn's Trustees intend to do everything in their power to both build on this and contribute to strengthening it.

The Policy Context

Cornwall Council acknowledges that Cornwall's vibrant and distinctive cultural sector provides unique opportunity to regenerate and grow the economy and tackle social issues at a grassroots level. Included in the proposed five-year programme of investment and change, which the Council hopes will become the main action plan for Cornwall's cultural sector, is the overarching aim of gaining European Region of Culture designation.

The Cornwall Cultural Strategy Evidence report (published in March 2010) highlights that:

- Participation in cultural activities helps to create more cohesive communities and contributes to personal and social development;
- Children and young people in Cornwall have higher-than-average levels of involvement in community sports, dance or multi-skilled clubs but there is a significant variation in levels between the community network areas;

- The 2008 Place Survey reveals that ‘activities for teenagers’ ranks highly in people’s opinion of what most needs improving in their local area. This is considered as much of a priority for improvement as the provision of affordable housing. Children and young people also want more spaces to play and things to do;
- The cultural sector is a key contributor to Cornwall’s economy and helps to attract people to live, work and visit;
- Employment in the cultural sector is rewarding but sometimes competitive due to limited opportunities. Earnings are often not commensurate with qualifications.

Cornwall Council’s statement (18/10/2011) says: ‘Our rich cultural heritage and strong sense of identity provide amazing opportunities to make Cornwall a great place to live, visit or invest. As the second largest unitary authority in England, and the largest employer in Cornwall, we have a responsibility to provide strategic leadership, using our power, resource and influence to protect and grow Cornwall’s cultural assets. This leadership will become more critical as we ride out a period of recession and public sector funding cuts. But even with strong leadership, we cannot protect or develop the cultural assets of Cornwall alone. We need the cultural sector, community and stakeholders to pull together to address the key challenges and to make the most of new opportunities.’

The Trustees of The Acorn welcome very warmly the opportunity to work with Cornwall Council in addressing the key challenges that face the cultural sector in Cornwall, and this Business Plan has been developed with a view to enabling The Acorn to play a constructive part in addressing those challenges.

Current activity

During the last three years, we have consolidated our position at the heart of the Penzance and West Penwith community, developing a wide-ranging and quality driven performance programme, together with strong community engagement activities. We have built up relationships with local community and educational organisations and have supported regional arts practitioners with developmental and rehearsal spaces as well as performance opportunities. We have also built the foundations of an excellent portfolio of regular classes and workshops, to enable people of all ages to engage in the performing arts, a strand which we hope to develop further in the future.

The tables that follow overleaf are a brief overview of what we have achieved. Please note that figures for 2015 are actual, except for the last two months of the year, which are necessarily projections at this time.

Performance Overview	2013	2014	2015
Public Performances	92	82	101
Private Events	9	7	5
Workshops/Rehearsals	7	24	21

Performances by Art Form	2013	2014	2015
Music	40	45	32
Theatre	18	10	31
Film	1	2	0
Community	6	3	14
Children & Education	6	5	6
Comedy	7	2	3
Literature	6	6	6
Dance	2	3	4
Other	6	6	5
	92	82	101

Classes and Other Regular Activities (no. of sessions)	2013	2014	2015
Accolades Drama Group	33	32	24
Acorn Young People's Theatre	35	32	29
Art Class	6	0	0
Bolitho School	9	0	0
Children's Acrobatics Class	31	32	33
John Daniel Centre Drama Group	0	0	11
Penzance Country Market	0	38	48

Public Engagement	2013	2014	2015
Audience for Public Events	10,536	7,871	8,900
Average Class Participation	60	60	65
No. of Volunteers (inc. Trustees)	33	39	29
Value of Volunteer Hours	£10,903	£10,868	£10,847

Income from Activities	2013	2014	2015
Gross Event Income	£30,896.35	£28,177.46	£37,262.08
Gross Bar Income	£40,218.54	£31,225.71	£34,592.94
Annual Turnover	£71,114.89	£59,403.17	£71,855.02

6. Our Vision

We see The Acorn as the vibrant, creative centre for live arts in West Cornwall, self-sufficient, sustainable and integrated with our local communities

The Acorn has a proud past and is much loved by people of Penzance and surrounding areas. The Trustees have set the following objectives to build on that. Specifically:

- To engage with partners both artistic and financial to develop the cultural strategy for Cornwall;
- To enable as many people as possible to experience and be inspired by the arts;
- To build on our community involvement within The Acorn;
- To minimise our recourse to public funding and build a sustainable future;
- To collaborate with other innovative networks of arts organisations across South West England;
- To encourage and support creativity and artistic endeavour within our community;
- To provide opportunities for participation, creative expression and learning;
- To encourage children and young people to develop their artistic capabilities in all aspects of the arts;
- To provide an environment for aspiring performers to grow and develop.

7. Our Priorities and Objectives

Our priorities for the next three years to 2018 are to:

1. Become operationally self-financing and minimise the need for external resources to fund our operations.
2. Make a small surplus on our operations. This is essential to create reserves sufficient to cover risks and see us through difficult trading times and to expand what we can offer to the community.
3. Increase the number of profitable events as well as audience numbers.
4. Maximise the profitability of the Acorn Bar.
5. Access capital funding via grant applications to enable us to upgrade our facilities and thus to reach new areas and groups who can use our facilities.
6. Access funding in order to offer substantial discounts to both unemployed and socially excluded groups.
7. Increase the number of active Volunteers to help carry out Front of House duties.
8. Increase the number of Trustees to a maximum of ten.
9. Increase our Community Engagement and find new ways to use our facilities that can benefit both The Acorn and the community it serves.

To work towards achieving our vision, we have set ourselves the following objectives:

Finance & Budgeting

We will:

- Seek new revenue and funding streams;
- Undertake annual reviews of our pricing policy and bar profitability;
- Continue to review all costs and look to make year on year savings;
- Establish a contingency and renewal fund;
- Maximise the profitability of the bar;
- Establish budgets and monitor performance against those budgets.

Fund Raising Plan

We will:

- Attract commercial sponsors;

- Introduce an Acorn Theatre Fund (£1 per ticket on full price tickets);
- Establish Friends/Patrons/Sponsorship schemes;
- Explore opportunities for tax-efficient donations and bequests;
- Work with ‘BID@ resources’ and the Town Centre Manager’s office to maximise our income;
- Maintain an effective telephone and on-line box office service.

Publicity & Marketing

We will:

- Create a marketing capability and budget;
- Establish a baseline of advertising and promotional activity;
- Use online and targeted marketing tools to communicate with our audiences;
- Actively publicise our accessible venue, especially for social and community events;
- Engage with the Town Centre manager and the BID team;
- Update and maintain our ‘customer’, Volunteers and supporters databases;
- Advertise for more Trustees and Volunteers.

Premises & Equipment

We will:

- Secure building and equipment improvement funds via grant applications (£25,000 target in year 1);
- Improve the signage on The Acorn site and within the town centre;
- Develop an ongoing maintenance and decoration programme for the building;
- Provide high standard equipment with a focus on reducing energy use and therefore running costs;
- Maintain/upgrade our IT infrastructure.

Governance & Operational Administration

We will:

- Produce an Annual Priorities and Action Plan;
- Produce and maintain a risks and mitigations register;
- Ensure that we meet our legal, regulatory, ethical and social responsibilities;
- Maintain an effective lead Trustee system with clear responsibilities and accountability;
- Recruit, train and support a team of active Volunteers;
- Recruit an additional three Trustees with appropriate and complementary skills.

Based on the above objectives and actions, we will develop a prioritised Action Plan with dates and areas of responsibility agreed by the Board for implementation by the lead Trustees.

We will then produce a simple risks and mitigations register which we will keep under regular review at Board meetings.

8. Our Finances

For the foreseeable future, funding will continue to be a challenge, not only for The Acorn but for all regional theatres (and indeed all SME charities) as the current policy of austerity continues. Disposable income will continue to be squeezed and further government spending cuts will hit from both directions, i.e. a reduction in arts funding and of the amount our audiences have available to spend.

With these factors in mind, it is imperative that we aspire to as self-sufficient a business model as possible.

Income Assumptions

Our Accounting Year runs January–December.

We have assessed net income from a range of differing categories of events in the past two years and increased it by 5% per annum each year, to reflect the positive impact of our marketing activities.

The creation of the South West England Community Theatres Network should also help us attract more ‘bigger names’ and therefore increase ticket sales.

We have also factored in the Acorn Fund and the impact of the Friends Scheme, to be launched in February 2016.

Expenditure Assumptions

We have estimated our average running costs as shown below based on 2015 and included the salary and on-costs of a part-time administrator for the first year and a full-time administrator for the subsequent two years.

The Expenditure figures also include a budget to cover the cost of contracting for cleaning and caretaking and a £250 per month insurance premium, among other necessary expenditure.

We have a Bank loan of £13,394.35 (balance at 31/12/15) against the asset of the building which currently secures our cash flow. The capital and interest payment of £200 per month is included within our monthly expenditure budget.

The annual cash flow forecasts are shown overleaf.

Draft budget: 2016–2018			
Indirect income	Forecast 2016	Forecast 2017	Forecast 2018
Cornwall Council	£10,000	£10,000	£10,000
Funding Agency 1	£5,000	£5,000	£5,000
Funding Agency 2			
Penwith Council	£500	£500	£500
Direct income	Forecast 2016	Forecast 2017	Forecast 2018
Events	£25,000	£28,000	£31,000
Building hire	£6,500	£6,500	£7,500
Bar	£32,000	£35,000	£38,000
Acorn Fund	£4,500	£5,000	£5,500
Friends scheme	£2,500	£2,500	£2,500
Misc	£500	£500	£500
Total income	£86,500	£93,000	£100,500
Direct costs	Forecast 2016	Forecast 2017	Forecast 2018
Event costs	£10,000	£11,200	£12,400
PRS	£1,750	£2,000	£2,000
Bar stock	£16,000	£17,500	£19,000
Bar staff	£8,000	£8,750	£9,500
Total direct costs	£35,750	£39,450	£42,900
Net margin	£50,750	£53,550	£57,600
Expenses	Forecast 2016	Forecast 2017	Forecast 2018
Staff, NI, Pension	£19,976	£23,250	£25,700
Office costs	£2,000	£2,000	£2,000
Communications	£5,391	£6,000	£6,000
Utilities	£9,050	£9,900	£10,350
Maintenance	£3,500	£3,500	£3,500
Financial	£7,833	£7,650	£7,850
Total expenses	£47,750	£52,300	£55,400
Surplus/deficit	£3,000	£1,250	£2,200

9. Fundraising

We will produce a simple, prioritised and targeted fundraising plan. We trust and need Cornwall Council to continue to support The Acorn in future years, as it has done in the past.

We shall also maintain a watching brief over Arts Council England and other lottery and public funds that from time to time open for grant funding applications, and apply when and where relevant.

There are also a number of national funds dedicated to specific activities (film, dance, visual arts, historic buildings etc.) and we shall submit applications to them as appropriate.

A number of other potential grant funding sources are already identified and are under a watching brief.

We will prepare and submit funding applications to a number of Funders to specifically help in the following areas:

- Marketing and communications capacity;
- Modern apprenticeship;
- Building refurbishment, fixtures and fittings;
- Equipment replacement;
- Social Deprivation – subsidised ticket scheme.

We recognize the value of our Volunteers, including our Trustees, and will evaluate the financial value of the time and skills that they bring. We will use this value as match funding where appropriate, together with donations from individuals and commercial companies, and we will work hard to attract both financial gifts and gifts in kind to support our work.

10. The Acorn Team: Administrator & Trustees

Jeremy Holloway, Theatre Administrator

The Acorn was very fortunate to have Jeremy join the team on 1st January 2016. Jeremy has been in Arts Management since gaining a first class honours degree and then a Master's degree at Dartington College of Arts. In addition to a career in the Arts Administration spanning the length and breadth of the Country over 20 years (including East Midlands Dance, Loughborough; Made in Wales Stage Company, Cardiff; Theatre Foundry, Darlaston, West Midlands; Cumbernauld Theatre, Glasgow; Torch Theatre, Milford Haven; Palace Avenue Theatre, Paignton; Caricature Theatre, Cardiff; Library Theatre, Manchester; Mercury Theatre, Colchester.), he has been a tutor in both further and higher education colleges for Arts Management and Arts Business, teaching students up to degree level. Amongst his more unusual achievements, Jeremy conceived, set up and ran 'Keeko the Clown', which meant teaching himself juggling/unicycling, magic, and the psychology of clowning. His experience is extensive and his passion for the arts remains as strong as it always has been.

Paul Mullin, Chairman of the Board and Fundraising Lead

Paul worked in management in the NHS for over 30 years, including 17 years at board level, before retiring to set up his own coaching and consultancy business. His career included seven years as Chief Executive of a Mental Health Partnership Trust. Paul has a Postgraduate Diploma with the ILM in Executive and Leadership Coaching and has practised for over ten years. He is a qualified Psychometrics Practitioner, Inter-personal Mediator and Team coach. Educated in Social Research and Social Policy to Master's level at Oxford University, Paul's subsequent development included training in system improvement methodologies and Managing Successful Programmes.

Gillian McNeil, Programming Lead

Gillian has a professional background in Arts Education and Management, involving teaching Drama at all levels, managing a team of performing and visual arts specialists and organising arts and performance events. She has also directed Youth and Community Theatre, including taking productions to the Edinburgh Festival. Prior to moving to Cornwall, Gillian was involved in Arts Centre Management in North London as Chair of The Bull Arts Centre in Barnet for eight years and as Chair of Programming and Education at arts depot, North Finchley, for three years. She has significant skills and experience which she believes can benefit The Acorn in terms of its revival and future management. Locally, Gillian has taught A-level Drama at Penwith College, run adult drama workshops there and at The Acorn, directed two small-scale community theatre productions, and presented an Arts Round-up show on Penwith Radio.

Andrew Edmonds, Finance Lead

Andrew has a background in Business Studies including a work history of establishing companies and getting them into profit in a hands-on style and moving on within nine months. Andrew is involved with associated work with The Poly in Falmouth. Locally, Andrew is a Trustee of The Royal Cornwall Polytechnic Society and of Miracle Theatre. He is also a Director of Media Centre Cornwall and co-founder of Cornwall Film Festival and a member of its Steering Panel. Andrew is also a Business Mentor of The Prince's Trust and as a current filmmaker Andrew brings awareness of many cross disciplines which engender understanding of an arts venue.

John Brolly, Joint Volunteers and Community Engagement Lead

John has 20 years' experience gained as an arts professional. He has skills in arts administration, marketing and event management. He is Artistic Director of Umbrella Arts Theatre Company and Associate Director to The Minack Theatre. John has been Education Officer for the Hall for Cornwall and sat on the board of Greenwich and Lewisham Young People's Theatre Company (GLYPT). He has strong connections to the education sector in Cornwall.

Steve Revill, Estates & Equipment Lead

Steve has experience of running small/medium-sized enterprises in the professional audio industry for nearly 20 years; as Finance Director then Managing Director of The Edge Technology Group with its leading companies being Turbosound and BSS Audio. They designed and built high-end sound systems for the touring and installation market. Artists such as Pink Floyd, Oasis, Peter Gabriel, Rod Stewart, events such as Glastonbury and many top concert halls and arenas around the world used Turbosound/BSS systems. Steve was also Managing Director of Quedsted Monitoring a designer and manufacturer of sound systems for recording studios. It was at the top end of the market with Abbey Road having Quedsted systems in two of its four studios. Many other top studios around the world have Quedsted systems installed. Steve also has financial, systems and computing expertise and still has links to people in the pro audio industry including acoustic experts, equipment manufacturers and system designers.

Sue Turner, Joint Volunteers and Community Engagement Lead

Sue brings a long-standing commitment to the creative arts and to The Acorn in particular and is determined to see The Acorn not just survive but thrive! Her 40 years as a GP mean that she is a real ‘people’ person with great communication skills.

Andy Hazlehurst, Health and Safety Lead

Andy has a degree in Art and Design, and after a brief career as a teacher in special education 33 years ago set up his own business as a commercial artist. With a keen interest in music and community arts Andy was a founder member of Penwith Music Centre, and Cornwall Music Industry Forum. He has been involved in the Golowan Festival for 18 years, ten of those in serious managerial roles and three as Director. His involvement with Golowan led to the establishing of a successful winter festival, and he has put on a number of large events for Penzance Town Council. Through these he has built up links with a large network of people and organisations involved in the arts, education, local government, and the media.

11. Governance

Board Chair & Governance Lead – Paul Mullin

- Ensuring the effective running of the Board;
- Ensuring legal compliance at all times, including meeting the requirements of Companies House, The Charity Commission and HMRC;
- Ensuring compliance with the Data Protection Act;
- Providing support to Lead Trustees as necessary;
- Agreeing priorities and targets with the Lead Trustees in order to deliver the Business Plan;
- Ensuring the appropriate level of insurance and licences are obtained and maintained;
- Identifying potential trusts and foundations for grant applications;
- Identifying possible sponsors.

The responsibilities of the Functional Leads are as follows:

Programming – Gill McNeil

- Deciding the programme of artists and events throughout the year to meet the financial plan;
- Ensuring a balance of different events to appeal to a wide cross section of the public;
- Maximising the profitable use of both spaces;
- Liaising with other venues and companies to encourage residencies by professional companies;
- Supporting and encouraging entrepreneurial practitioners including participatory activities such as workshops, masterclasses for both adults, children and young people;
- Encourage and support ideas for special needs groups, especially adults with a learning difficulty;
- Keeping within the financial guidelines recommended by the Finance Committee;
- With the administrator, ensure appropriate marketing & PR for each event;
- Encouraging and developing the provision of a range of arts education classes, courses and workshops targeted at a mixture of ages, interests and art forms;
- Exploring and developing links with schools, colleges and other educational groups through specific group offers and provision; e.g. curriculum support, work experience opportunities etc.

Marketing and PR – Gill McNeil, Paul Mullin and Jeremy Holloway

- Keeping up-to-date with social networking and other web-based marketing opportunities including email-marketing;
- Establish and maintain good press relations;
- Generate ideas for press stories, writing reviews and press releases;
- Producing a simple marketing strategy and action plan;
- Conducting periodic audience surveys;

- Compiling statistical data for reports including attendance figures;
- Producing posters/flyers/newsletters as required.

Estates and Equipment Lead – Steve Revill

- Ensuring the building complies with health and safety standards;
- Identifying and prioritising necessary capital expenditure;
- Conducting periodic maintenance audit;
- Conduct an eco-survey to ensure the building maintenance helps with energy efficiency;
- Liaising with Volunteers to organise ‘painting parties’ for basic decorating;
- Carrying out basic maintenance and plumbing jobs;
- Obtaining quotes for more complex maintenance and plumbing jobs.

Community Engagement (Volunteers) Leads – Sue Turner and John Brolly

- Devising and implementing the Friends of The Acorn scheme;
- Recruiting and supporting Volunteers;
- Ensuring Volunteers are provided with training and have the appropriate skills and attitude;
- Ensuring effective distribution of posters and flyers via Volunteers;
- Providing Front of House stewards.

Health & Safety Lead – Andy Hazlehurst

- Ensuring that the environment meets health and safety requirements and fire regulations at all times;
- Ensuring that appropriate testing is undertaken and records are kept;
- Ensuring Volunteers are provided with appropriate training and have the necessary skills and knowledge.

Finance – Andrew Edmonds (with Nick Navratil)

- Ensuring that appropriate accounts are kept;
- Preparing regular management reports for the board;
- Preparing financial forecasts, indicators and cash flows;
- Advising the Board on financial risks and reserves;
- Ensuring the accounts are prepared and audited;
- Review the operation of The Acorn Bar with a view to profit maximisation.

Front of House & Event Management staffing (All Trustees)

- The box office;
- Ticket collection;
- Ushering and seating;
- Liaising with the Administrator on audience health and safety procedures; compliance with fire training and first aid requirements.

Volunteers

The Trustees know that for The Acorn to survive and thrive, it needs a strong, diverse and energetic team of effectively co-ordinated Volunteers. The Volunteers' roles and responsibilities/tasks are wide ranging and cover the needs of the venue, the events programme and the workshop activities. Volunteers' duties include:

- Welcoming audience members at front of house;
- Selling programmes and refreshments;
- Displaying posters;
- Targeting marketing and sending out flyers;
- Assisting with cleaning the venue during performances;
- Maintaining all the areas including the changing space and the outside areas;
- They are also responsible for ensuring:
 - that drinks taken into the auditorium are in glasses not bottles;
 - that health and safety regulations are complied with;
 - that the general wellbeing of the public in the venue is maintained;
 - that there is no photography during performances.

Volunteers receive training in dealing with the public and acting as effective and efficient front-of-house representatives.

12. Summary

We have set out in this document the detail of what The Acorn intends to do and how we intend to do it. However, when it comes to securing financial and practical support for a venue like ours, there is another dimension which rarely features in funding applications and business plans. This is the “emotional” need that a community has for such an asset. A previous director, when asked why public funding should go to The Acorn, said simply, “Because everyone wants to live in a town that has a live arts venue”. This special place is part of the beating heart that makes Penzance and its wider community somewhere good to live in, good to work in and, perhaps most important of all, somewhere good to grow up. At a time when wider and wider access to more solitary forms of entertainment and education are limiting the opportunities for human interaction within communities, the availability of live theatre, music, dance and other artistic experiences is a resource to be protected and nurtured. The Acorn’s Trustees and other Volunteers will do everything they can to ensure this but, at a time when almost all national funding for the arts outside London is limited to performance and creative projects, there is a need for basic financial support to maintain open and affordable access to much-needed community venues like ours.

Paul Mullin

Chairman

On behalf of the Board of Trustees

Cornwall Theatre Company Limited

February 2016