**Press Release**

**Wednesday 26th February**

**Players Theatre More Energy-Efficient Thanks to Solar Panels**

A major project to install solar panels on the roof of the Players Theatre has just been completed. This is part of Thame Players’ overall journey towards making the theatre more energy-efficient and more environmentally friendly.

The work, completed within four weeks, involved stripping off the tiles on the south-west facing roof, installing 26 solar panels in two rows, and replacing the roof tiles. As the final element, a battery and inverter were installed.

The solar panels will produce a sizeable reduction in electricity costs over the next few years. Electricity is a major cost for all theatres, due to the ongoing need for show lighting and heating. The theatre is an evening venue, so the solar battery will convert and store energy produced by the solar panels by day for later use, offsetting the need for grid-supplied power. This will lead to lower electricity bills and reduced carbon emissions.

As a result, the Players Theatre will not continue to be at the mercy of external suppliers and escalating costs in an uncertain world. Obtaining energy from the sun, a plentiful source of free energy, opens the door to a more stable energy future without price fluctuations. Solar panels also mean the theatre’s carbon footprint is reduced due to the much greener production of energy, enhancing sustainability. Electricity generated from solar panels does not produce greenhouse gases and this helps to reduce the effects of climate change.

Installing solar panels was an expensive project, and it would not have been possible without generous grant funding. Thame Players were fortunate to have received grants from four sources: **The** **Rural England Prosperity Fund (REPF)**, a government-backed scheme which funds capital projects for small businesses and community infrastructure, with the aim of improving productivity and strengthening the rural economy and rural communities; **The** **Westmill Solar Cooperative**, which has over 1,500 members who are passionate about the future of community renewable energy, combatting climate change by financing a reliable source of renewable energy, and helping the local area transition to a low-carbon future economy; **Oxfordshire County Council’s Councillor Priority Fund,** whose aim is tosupport councillor priorities in their local areas; and **South Oxfordshire District Council’s Councillor Community Fund**, which makes awards to projects or services that offer community benefits, such as promoting action on the climate emergency.

Mike Rochford, Chair of Thame Players, said, ‘We are conscious that, as one of Thame’s assets, we need to be responsible custodians, showing our audiences and the wider community that we are an environmentally responsible organisation that cares about our community’s future and that of the planet. This has been quite a journey but, before long, the theatre will be reaping the environmental and financial benefits from its new energy source, as we work towards reducing our carbon footprint. With lower overheads, the theatre will become more resilient, and we can put savings towards other uses, for example improving our facilities and the audience experience.’

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**Notes for Editors**

* Further information about the four grant funders can be found at –<https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/business-and-economy/advice-for-businesses/rural-england-prosperity-fund/>;

<https://westmillsolar.coop/>; <https://www.southoxon.gov.uk/south-oxfordshire-district-council/community-support/grants/councillor-community-grants/>;

<https://www.oxfordshire.gov.uk/residents/communities/councillor-priority-fund>

* Thame Town Council are hosting a community event focused on sustainability in our local business community, **Showcasing Sustainability in Thame Businesses,** to be held at the Players Theatre from 4-6 pm on Wednesday 26th March. For more information and to reserve your free place, go to <https://www.thametowncouncil.gov.uk/community/events/showcasing-sustainability-in-thame-businesses/>.
* Thame Players’ environmental journey has been informed by a Carbon Reduction Recommendations Report produced by Energy Solutions Oxfordshire, <https://www.energysolutionsoxfordshire.org/>, a [service](https://www.energysolutionsoxfordshire.org/about/partners/) provided by Low Carbon Hub in partnership with the Environmental Information Exchange at Oxford Brookes University. This report was funded by Thame Town Council in 2023. The Council have also created a 10-year Thame Green Living Plan <https://www.thametowncouncil.gov.uk/thame-town-council/green-living-plan/>.
* Thame Players celebrated their 80th anniversary in 2024 and are proud of their track record running the only dedicated theatre and cinema facility serving Thame and nearby villages. High-quality, accessible entertainment is available year-round to suit a wide range of tastes and age groups. Every year, Thame Players stage five of their own productions including the ever-popular pantomime, host around 30 visiting shows featuring music, comedy and drama, and over 25 film screenings from Thame Cinema For All. Thame Players is a registered charity, run entirely by volunteers. For more information, visit [www.thameplayers.co.uk](http://www.thameplayers.co.uk) and follow Thame Players on social media –

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