

Salisbury Playhouse

“Theatre Beyond Expectation”

Business Plan 2011 – 2015



“It is great to find a regional theatre with all guns blazing at a time of cuts and caution” *Daily Telegraph*, November 2010

Registered Charity No. 249169

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VISION, MISSION, VALUES

Our **Vision**:

Salisbury Playhouse – Theatre Beyond Expectation

Our **Mission** is to:

- Create vibrant and original theatre
- Celebrate our national status as a leading producing theatre
- Engage, inspire and entertain our whole community
- Advance and develop the nation's creative talent
- Maximise financial opportunities to deliver our artistic ambitions

Our **Values** are:

- **excellence** and **creativity** in everything we do
- **confidence** in our work and our potential
- **accessible** and **inclusive** in our working practices
- **respect** for the individual
- **environmentally responsible**
- **celebrating** our team's achievements

INTRODUCTION

This Business Plan has emerged from a detailed planning process involving, for the first time, not only the Executive but also the Board of Trustees and all of the Playhouse's staff. It was written in a context of considerable economic uncertainty, nationwide. However, we are determined that we will not be constrained by our scale or the expectations of others – as an organisation, we refuse to stay in the box, or limit our aspirations. Our ideas are larger than our perceived boundaries, and at a time when some might feel it would be easier to consolidate or batten down the hatches, we know that to survive and thrive in this challenging economic climate we must determine our own future wherever possible, punch above our weight in everything we do and be highly ambitious in the areas where we can make change and have an impact. We believe that it is this approach that will put us in the best possible state of readiness to fly when the context in which we work changes for the better, that we will be ahead of the game and with a team that has revelled in utilising every ounce of its creativity for the benefit of all.

Having gone through this thorough planning process, our ambitions have expanded to encompass a four-year timeframe. In turn, we feel this provides greater stability for the organisation in an otherwise volatile environment. This also addresses the Arts Council's interim funding arrangements (2011-2012) and our application for the three-year funding through the new National Portfolio Programme.

Our Vision, **Salisbury Playhouse – Theatre Beyond Expectation**, succinctly encapsulates our aspirations. *Theatre* – because our purpose is to produce and create world-class storytelling, in a vibrant celebration of the act of live performance. *Beyond Expectation* – because we are challenging and innovating, and transcending the anticipations of ourselves, our audiences and our peers.

During the period of creating this plan, critical acclaim – including *The Daily Telegraph's* comment “it is great to find a regional theatre with all guns blazing at a time of cuts and caution” (November 2010) – has demonstrated not only that this process has begun, but that it has been recognised nationally.

What follows is a detailed structure of activity which embodies this ethos – and every action has been shaped to make our ambitions real.



Philip Wilson
Artistic Director



Michelle Carwardine-Palmer
Executive Director

HISTORY AND BACKGROUND

Salisbury Playhouse is one of Britain’s leading national producing theatres with a national reputation for home-grown work of the highest quality. We are a vibrant creative heartbeat at the centre of cultural life in Wiltshire, Hampshire and Dorset, and we are at the very core of our community.

The following comments are indicative of the regard with which the organisation is held:

“The Playhouse is the single most important arts organisation in Wiltshire, providing a very high quality and varied programme for audiences from across the South West of England and beyond.” Jane Scott OBE, Leader of the Council and Stuart Wheeler, Cabinet Member for Leisure Sport and Culture – Wiltshire Council

“Salisbury Playhouse is an extremely valuable community resource for the whole of Wiltshire. It is loved and valued across the county.” John Glen, MP for Salisbury

”Out of Joint tours to theatres all round the world. I can cheerfully say that Salisbury Playhouse is one of the very best-run theatres we visit.” Max Stafford-Clark, Artistic Director, Out of Joint

“Salisbury Playhouse is among the top two or three theatres of excellence outside of London and the great cities. It has achieved admirable success with a bold range of projects and serves a large area with great distinction; as well as a Playhouse it could be called a cultural focal point.” Melvyn Bragg, Playhouse Patron



A Month in the Country – Nominated for a TMA Award for Best Lighting, 2009

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In the past four years under the Joint Executive Directorship of Michelle Carwardine-Palmer (Executive Director) and Philip Wilson (Artistic Director), Salisbury Playhouse productions have become renowned for the quality of performance and production values; from a “superlative” revival of Noël Coward’s *Private Lives* and an “adventurous” and “ambitious” discovery of Philip Massinger’s *The Picture* to an “exquisite” production of Brian Friel’s *Faith Healer* and has raised the bar in terms of quality whilst broadening the Playhouse’s programming.

We were also financially recognised during this period for its “artistic excellence and innovation” by Arts Council England (ACE) South West, awarding the organisation the full £400k of *Sustain* funds applied for to continue delivering ACE’s mission of Great Art for Everyone during the recession. The Playhouse also overhauled its financial and operational procedures and increased its unrestricted reserves from zero to the ACE recommended level of £50k, making Salisbury Playhouse both dynamic and resilient during a period of considerable economic and artistic pressure.

The Playhouse is a thriving and increasingly rare example of a high-quality producing theatre with a full compliment of in-house workshop and carpentry team, wardrobe department and props store, consequently we are regularly praised for our extremely high production values.

The Playhouse’s programme is wide-ranging – a deliberately eclectic but well-balanced mix of intelligent and entertaining work, performed in two auditoria. Shows in both spaces receive regular critical and audience acclaim for the choice and standard of artistic programme and the excellence of the acting. Main House productions are almost entirely our own or co-produced, while the visiting work brings the very best of touring companies. The Salberg Studio programme, meanwhile, combines further in-house productions with an extensive range of Theatre for Young People and touring productions of new work. Actors and audiences alike regularly acknowledge the immediacy of both these spaces: one epic but able to embrace the intimate; the other intimate yet able to encompass the epic.



Toro! Toro!
nominated for a 2010 TMA Award for Best Show
For Children and Young People



3 Little Pigs
by the Playhouse’s Associate
Company, Stuff and Nonsense

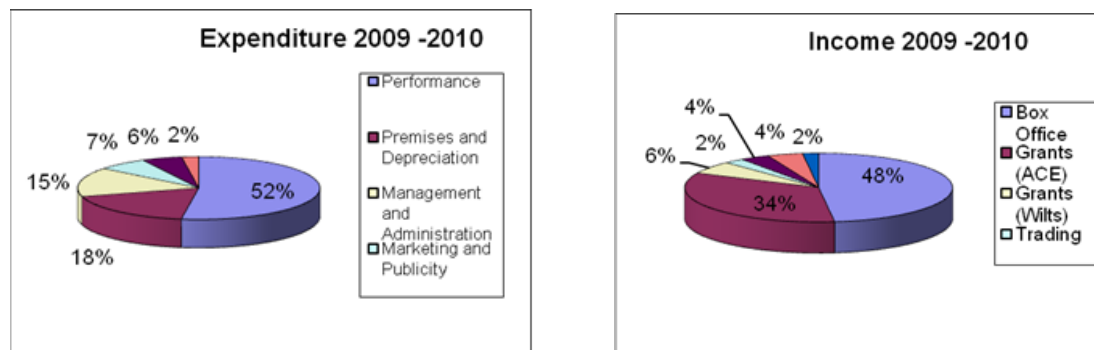
The Playhouse also operates an extensive Participation programme, both within the building and throughout the region, supplementing our main programme of work for our audiences through a variety of accessible projects and educational workshops.

The Tesco Education & Community Space and Rehearsal Room opened in July 2007 - offering our community and Participation Department a safe, accessible and central location to rehearse, run workshops and hold meetings. The on-site Rehearsal Room also enables the Playhouse to run cohesive rehearsal periods and brings the creative teams and process into the building where previously these and the Participation department had to rent facilities throughout the city.

The Playhouse's work draws a combined annual audience of over 100,000, has an annual turnover of almost £3 million of which 60% is earned income; over £1 million of this is generated from box office ticketing and approximately £500k from sponsors and donors.

The Playhouse employs 43 full-time employees, over 160 contractual staff per annum and relies on the generosity of 165 volunteers – making it one of the key employers in the city.

As well as being the single largest arts employer in the county it also provides a major contribution to the local and regional economy, generating a further £9.4 million (2009/10) through Additional Visitor Spend, staff and contractor expenditure in the region and through engaging the services of local suppliers.



The Playhouse has a positive, long-standing relationship with ACE South West and the Head of Arts at Wiltshire Council, both of whom attend our productions, Board meetings and other events throughout the year.

The Playhouse has secured £838,522 of ACE funding for 2011-12 (a decrease of 7% from 2010-11 which was applied to all Regularly Funded Organisations within the ACE portfolio). The Playhouse was successful in securing ACE National Portfolio status for 2012-15, securing a freeze on funding for year one, 2.3% inflationary increase for year two and 2.6% increase for year three. Wiltshire Council has also frozen their funding for 2011-12 at £155,000 and their funding from 2012 onwards is still to be confirmed.

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The Playhouse's Development Department actively seeks financial and in-kind sponsorship from both private individuals and businesses. This money is raised through: a capital repairs/investment appeal (the 'House Development Fund'); production sponsorship; a Friends membership scheme (currently circa 800 members); project and revenue funding from corporates, trusts and individuals; corporate patronage; Creative Management Training for corporates; hiring of facilities for meetings and conferences; legacy giving.

We are committed to being accessible and welcoming to all of our customers. The Playhouse is fitted with an infra-red hearing system, and each Main House production has a British Sign Language (BSL) and two audio-described performances. The Playhouse is fully accessible to wheelchair users, has three designated disabled parking spaces and provided 41,071 people some form of ticket discount in 2009/2010. Large print and audio versions of the season brochure are available, along with audio programmes. Additionally the Playhouse provides a bus service within Wiltshire and its surrounding counties offering a facility to those who do not have transport within the regions to attend our productions.

HIGHLIGHTS/ACHIEVEMENTS FROM THE LAST BUSINESS PLAN 2008-2011

To increase the company's national and regional profile as a leading producing theatre

Touched

April 2008

“★★★★ Rebecca Gatward's scrupulous and nicely acted production”
The Guardian

“Beautifully performed and deeply moving”
Audience member



A Month in the Country

October/November 2008 (Premiere)

“Beautiful and moving... you will leave this lovely show with misty eyes and a lump in your throat”
★★★★ Daily Telegraph

“What a wonderful play. So relevant, so well acted and produced”
Audience member

TMA Award for Best Lighting, shortlisted 2009

A Number (re-introduced Studio in-house productions)

October 2009

“Accessible and thought-provoking. Incredible”
Salisbury Journal



Restoration

April 2009 (World Premiere)

“What a buzz there is at this theatre, and an evident passion for creating work of the highest quality”
Rose Tremain, author of *Restoration*

The Wizard of Oz
June 2009 (Stage '65 Youth Theatre)

“Positively fizzes and pops with energy”
Salisbury Journal



Blackbird
October 2009

“How courageous and compelling. The audience were rapt”
Audience member

The Lady in the Van
September 2009

“What a fantastic show! Very funny, delightful touches and something serious to chew on”
Audience member



Romeo and Juliet: Unzipped
November 2009

“Our Year 11 students were gripped. An excellent production that will persuade our young people to see theatre more often”
Teacher

Cinderella
December/January 2009/2010

“A wonderful pantomime. Three generations of the family enjoyed it tremendously”
Audience member



Private Lives
January/February 2010

“Superlative... terrifically enjoyable”
★★★★ Daily Telegraph

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The Glass Menagerie

March 2010

“Splendid”
The Times

“Exquisite”
The Guardian

Co-production with Shared Experience, including a six week UK tour

Low Pay? Don't Pay! (new adaptation commission) **April 2010 (World Premiere)**

“One of the best night’s entertainment I have had. A breath of fresh air that keeps my love of the Playhouse alive”
Audience member



Toro! Toro!

April/May 2010 (Premiere)

“Storytelling of the highest order”
Salisbury Journal

TMA Award for Best Show for Children and Young People,
Shortlisted 2010

The Picture

October/November 2010

“A notably ambitious production for a regional theatre that deserves high praise”
Daily Telegraph

“Philip Wilson double stamps the theatre’s Made in Wiltshire boast with this rare revival”
The Stage



Increase production values on the Main Stage to rival other leading producing theatre within the country

- “A truly fantastic set that deserved a round of applause all of its own”
Audience member on *After Miss Julie*, 2009
- “Society at its picture-perfect Victorian best”
Salisbury Journal on *The Importance of Being Earnest*, 2009
- “Glittering decadence”
Wiltshire Times on *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, 2010
- “This production both looks and sounds exquisite... with stunning sets and costumes and imaginative lighting”
WhatsOnStage.com on *The Picture*, 2010

Engage the finest artists in every field in order to create theatre of the highest quality

- Set Design: Mike Britton (TMA Award Best Designer 2008, whose design work also includes the National Theatre and RSC), Colin Falconer (“Colin Falconer’s ravishing designs” *The Guardian* on *The Picture*), Matthew Wright (Tony Award Nomination 2009)
- Lighting Design: Chris Davey (TMA Award, Best Lighting Design 2010), Tim Mitchell (Regular designer for the RSC, including the recent production of *Hamlet* starring David Tennant), Johanna Town (formerly Head of Lighting at the Royal Court)
- Sound/Composition: John Leonard (internationally renowned sound designer and previous Head of Sound at the RSC), Matthew Scott (composer, currently Head of Music at the National Theatre), Paul Englishby (film/soundtrack composer whose recent work includes *An Education* and *Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day*)

Maximise the reach of our Participation Department’s programme - transforming the lives of thousands of Young People

- c43,000 people engaged with The Playhouse’s Participation Department
- c40,000 young people aged between 0-25 attended performances
- Work placements were welcomed for a total of 1,320 days
- 800 young people aged between eight and 21 joined the Stage ’65 Youth Theatre, partaking in 870 workshop sessions amounting to a total of 2,400 hours of extra-curricular activity
- Became the first Arts Award Welcome centre in the South West, 2008
- Secured third year of funding for Mericos Participation Trainee
- Engaged 1,200 primary school children through our three-year START! Project – “You are always an example of best practice” HRH The Prince of Wales, The Prince’s Foundation for Children and the Arts
- Launched our inter-generational project *Mind the Gap*
- Engaged and nurtured regional emerging artists - Stuff and Nonsense children’s theatre company, Salisbury Playhouse Associate Company)

Maximise income via ticketing and other income generating initiatives

- Increased box office income from £921k (2007-2008), to £1,107k (2010-2011), an increase of 17%
- Increased Main House audience attendance by 13% and Studio audience attendance for in-house productions by 12% since March 2008
- 315,378 tickets were sold for Main House and Studio productions
- 37% of our total tickets had some form of ticket discount

Development

- Raised c£300k (Revenue and House Development Fund) since March 2008
- Banked £66k since March 2008 through conference and meeting room hires

Build on professional development via training and peer-to-peer mentoring

- Spent £20k on professional training and development, engaging 164 staff

Seek regional and national recognition for the achievements that the staff reach and develop administrative systems which support and protect them

- TMA Manager of the Year; Mark Powell, Director of Participation (2008 nomination – shortlisted), Alan Corkill, Theatre Manager (2009 winner)
- TMA Employee of the Year; Dave Marsh, Deputy Head of Stage (2010 nomination – shortlisted)

Carry out a Carbon Trust audit to reduce carbon footprint

- Sustainability Action Plan delivered

THE CONTEXT MOVING FORWARD

We enter this new business planning period facing a number of financial, political and social challenges, both nationally and at a local level.

The Comprehensive Spending Review has led to 6.9% Arts Council England (ACE) Regularly Funded Organisation (RFO) funding cuts for 2011-2012 (on top of a 0.5% cut within 2010-2011) and an entirely new application process for future funding. Meanwhile, uncertainty continues as to local authority funding and will not be announced until February 2011.

Other challenges include:

Financial:	Box office, trusts and foundation income
Political:	2012 Olympics, The Salisbury Vision
Capital:	Ageing building, access, energy efficiency, inadequate footprint (workshop), location
Demographic:	Ageing audience, relevance to young people
Social:	Agony of choice, attitude to the arts, pressure on leisure time
Digital:	Technological advances, communicating with our audience

This Business Plan seeks to address as many of these external challenges as we feel is possible and, looking ahead, we are confident that we will continue to produce first-class theatrical productions, even if we may have to deliver them in a different manner or capacity. Although the financial climate – both within the theatre industry and nationwide – is uncertain, during the next four years the Playhouse will not waver from continuing to innovate and to celebrate excellence in our artistic programme, while anchoring all our actions in sound financial management. A balance of the realistic and the optimistic is the only way that we will move forward – being bold but not rash, in order to fulfil our vision, creating ‘Theatre Beyond Expectation’ through work that enriches, surprises and challenges our audiences, both with reflections of their own experience and expansions of their horizons.

To achieve this, we will continue to create productions that are richly diverse in genre but united by excellence in performance and production, in a vibrant and well-balanced mix of plays, from the epic to the intimate, which incorporates both a celebration of multiculturalism and a local, national and international perspective, in an exciting combination of:

- the best of the classic repertoire;
- dynamic new interpretations of lesser-known plays;
- contemporary pieces by our leading dramatists; and
- visiting companies which connect us to different work and ways of working.

Running through this work is a desire to celebrate the unique power and resonance of the live event to transform lives, bringing both individuals and communities together to share and extend identity, culture and heritage and engaging our audiences on an intellectual and emotional level, with work of a bold, innovative and unashamedly theatrical nature.

ORGANISATIONAL OBJECTIVES

Within this Business Plan, it is our intention to achieve five major strategic objectives springing from our Vision.

Mission 1: Create vibrant and original theatre

Objective: To create 15 home-grown productions/events a year by the end of March 2015

Mission 2: Celebrate our national status as a leading producing theatre

Objective: To secure a minimum of 15 national press reviews and at least two award nominations per annum in recognition of any aspect of our work by 2015

Mission 3: Engage, inspire and entertain our whole community

Objective: To increase the creative engagement of our audience and participants (120,000 in 2009/10) by a total of 20% by the end of March 2015

Mission 4: Advance and develop the nation's creative talent

Objective: To create a training model that nurtures the personal and professional development of 500 practitioners and participants a year, increasing to 750 a year by the end of March 2015

Mission 5: Maximise financial opportunities to deliver our artistic ambitions

Objective: To increase reserves by at least £75k per annum by March 2015 to cover three months of operation

Our Business Plan sets out how we intend to build upon the talent and artistic excellence which already thrives and is celebrated in our organisation – the focus of this will be on our unique selling point as a fully operational producing theatre.

The following is a summary of the key outcomes we plan to achieve from our Strategic Action Plan which deliver against our five key objectives:

Mission 1: Create vibrant and original theatre

We will increase the number of home-grown productions/events from 12 to 15 by 2015 by seeking performance spaces outside the building – especially for an off-site summer production – and by securing either sponsorship, co-production status or a commercial producer for every home-grown production. As a result, the life of our productions – across Wiltshire, and further afield through co-productions, tours and transfers – will be increased, and in doing so we will maximise the financial opportunities for these shows and reach new audiences.

The physical quality of our work is key to the above and we are justly praised for our extremely high production values, as a result of having an on-site workshop and carpentry team, wardrobe department and props store. To further this, we will increase the capacity of our production operation by establishing either an off-site or an enlarged on-site workshop – to allow us to maintain excellent production values and to celebrate Salisbury Playhouse craftsmanship, while offering the potential to create sets for external companies.

Mission 2: Celebrate our national status as a leading producing theatre

As part of an ongoing effort to analyse and improve our artistic output, we will embed into our artistic policy a model of self-reflection, which will draw not only on the Arts Council England's (ACE) Artistic Assessment and Peer-Review systems but also the Australia Council for the Arts' 'Artistic Vibrancy' tool. We aspire to this model becoming a national exemplar.

We aim to increase media coverage and raise the regional and national profile of Salisbury Playhouse Productions, to ensure that the Playhouse continues to be recognised as a vital part of the 'National Grid' of UK Arts by both peers and critics. Our 'Made in Wiltshire' stamp is already a well-established mark of quality, but we seek also to increase recognition of our craftsmanship and our team through awards and press features.

Mission 3: Engage, inspire and entertain our whole community

We will increase our reach and engagement by sharing our productions with audiences beyond Salisbury and Wiltshire – through touring, transfers and co-productions.

In addition, we aim to work alongside leading digital organisations such as 59 Productions to expand our offer to the digital market, and to establish ways in which

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we can 'live stream' our productions through a Pay As You View system, thereby offering the viewer the opportunity to watch a performance, view the rehearsal process or download our curriculum-based productions – such as our 'Barebones Shakespeare'. In turn, this would address the region's mission to tackle rural isolation and social mobility, open up our art to new audiences and engage in new ways of working.

We are also actively seeking alternative performance spaces, within our building and beyond – notably to create an off-site summer production, tapping in to the tourist market as well as engaging new audiences in a less formal environment. And we are keen to work with ACE and Wiltshire Council to identify target group 'cold spots' and to broaden our geographic spread.

Work on engaging the amateur sector has already begun through our 'Amateur Forum' and 'Creative Communities' workshops; we are linked to the RSC Open Stages, through which we are in the early stages of planning a Community Play. These strands supplement our existing range of Theatre Days, Talk Outs, Tours and Open Days, offering a variety of different ways to experience and be inspired by the arts. Research is also planned to establish methods of breaking down the perception that "theatre is not for me" and to find ways in which we can reach and engage with audiences reluctant to experience theatre.

Our planned Participation projects during this period all centre on the needs of our audiences and community. 'Mind the Gap', is a ground-breaking, three-year dance and drama project which addresses the divide between our Under 18s and the older population, specifically those living with Alzheimer's. 'See Me', is a partnership project with Wiltshire Council and Wiltshire Music Centre, celebrating cultural diversity, focusing on life-story testimonies from black and minority ethnic elders across the region. 'Beginners Please', our nationally lauded project as an industry leader for primary school engagement, will continue during this period, and will be supplemented with 'Engage', which uses a similar template for secondary schools. Our work also connects to the commercial and business community through our Creative Management Training courses – enabling participants to overcome common issues and challenges in the work place using creative processes.

In the years ahead, we will further extend theatre opportunities for, with and by Young People through performance and participation – for example by establishing and supporting a Theatre for Young People company-in-residence; by nurturing links through schools and Local Authorities, by providing regular out-of-school drama activities for non Youth Theatre members; and by programming at least two Stage '65 productions a year, alongside one which explores non-traditional ways of working, such as multimedia and site-specific work. This programme will be underwritten by sponsorship; support which will enable the Playhouse to offer a number of bursaries for participants who are financially disadvantaged.

We will also continue to improve the customer experience: a Capital Upgrade Priority Policy will enable us to update access facilities, signage and all Front of House and backstage areas, ensuring that everyone who wishes to engage with the Playhouse, can do so.

Mission 4: Advance and develop the nation's creative talent

Within this Business Plan one of our main drivers is to work towards national recognition as a training beacon for artists and arts practitioners. We will formalise and extend our current offer of work placement (secondary, further and adult education) and youth theatre development – particularly via our regional status as the South West's training provider with the National Association of Youth Theatres (NAYT). We will broaden our mentoring scheme via Bath Spa University and offer it to other further education establishments who specialise in arts practice, such as Wiltshire College and the Conference of Drama Schools. We will introduce Creative Apprenticeship opportunities, internships and secondments, and expand our bursary programme. We will work with national organisations such as the National Skills Academy, Creative and Cultural Skills, Skillscene and the Association of British Theatre Technicians, to provide vocational and on-the-job experience for any aspect of theatre-making or administration, and introduce skills-based training and nationally recognised qualifications. We will continue to invest in the best possible working environment in which staff, practitioners and participants can work, and ensure sufficient training budgets are maintained to nurture our own staff's development and career progression – implementing the Investors in People framework and our in-house Equalities policy.

Our *Cultivate* programme specifically addresses the development of emerging and mid-career artists, offering the opportunity for actors, stage management, technicians, directors and designers to experience their first professional production in the Salberg Studio. Our facilities and in-house expertise to mentor and guide these artists provides the perfect environment in which they can hone and develop their skills, and has led to them later securing contracts for productions on our main stage.

Our Participation Department will also continue to nurture young talent and artistic excellence by delivering programmes across Wiltshire which teach every aspect of mounting a production; not least through our 'Drama Days', 'Summer Stage' and 'Play in a Day' strands, alongside many projects in schools and with youth groups.

All of the above will contribute to developing and formalising a training model to nurture new, emerging and mid career practitioners and participants, with the aim to offer this to our peers as a national exemplar of best practice.

Mission 5: Maximise financial opportunities to deliver our artistic ambitions

In all our activities, we will take advantage of VAT tax breaks, and the implementation of a new box office system will enable us to increase online sales, introduce 'seat selection' functionality and vastly improve our membership giving and maximise online giving opportunities and gift aid. The new system will also reignite the Salisbury ticketing partnership with other venues, thereby creating a Salisbury cultural network which can explore cross-selling and collaborative marketing initiatives for the City and beyond.

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Our Development Department will introduce at least one major new income-generating initiative such as legacy giving and endowment funds per annum, and aims to bring in a further £1m by 2015 in additional funds through production sponsorship (corporate, individual and the Playhouse 'Show Business' lottery draw), trusts and foundations, individual giving, events and membership activity.

We will also increase our net profit from our Trading operation by maximising cross-over opportunities between trading, productions and participation to include up-selling and linked deals; increasing our conference and facilities hire income; capitalising on themed events, birthday party offers and external catering contracts for other organisations. We will implement a Playhouse Purchasing System and continue to improve stock control for all departments, while securing 'best value' from all of our suppliers.

Our sustainability policy, based on a Carbon Trust Survey, identified over 200 long-, medium- and short-term actions to reduce our carbon emissions which will be implemented during the 2011-15 Business Plan period.