

ITEM 6

Crisis in Community Theatre in Derby

We, the undersigned, being the chairs of amateur theatre groups in Derby, ask Derby City Council to take urgent action to help our groups survive a crisis in community theatre in Derby.

Performance venues in Derby are either too expensive to hire, or not available at appropriate times, or both. Most groups have to organise fundraising to cover losses on their main productions. Some Derby-based groups can only stage viable productions outside the city. Our concerns are set out in the attached Key Briefing Document 2007.

The actions we would urge the Council to take, in conjunction with other organisations where necessary, are as follows:

- Reduce hire charges for amateur groups at the Assembly Rooms and Guildhall, or provide grants towards meeting ever-increasing costs
- Apply pressure on Derby Playhouse to make its Main House accessible to amateur groups at reasonable times and at an affordable hire charge. Reasonable times means not just when the theatre is 'dark' in July/August but at appropriate weeks throughout the year
- Honour its commitment to reconvene the Steering Group on performance spaces in the city to decide on a way to take forward the proposals in the Locum Report jointly commissioned by the Council and Arts Council England
- Actively pursue ways to ensure that Derby's last remaining traditional theatre building – The Hippodrome in Green Lane – is preserved and brought back into use as a theatre for use by amateur groups and touring professional theatre companies.

This petition is signed overleaf by the chairmen of 23 local amateur theatre groups.

Hon. Secretary: Helen Cornfield, 64 Royal Hill Road, Spondon, Derby, DE21 7AG