

**LUF3 Investment Plan – Project Descriptions**

**VICTORIAHALL**

The refurbishment of Victoria Hall into a multiuse arts and community hub located within the Norfolk Square Conservation Area in Glossop town centre. Refurbishing this flagship community asset will create an energy efficient, accessible and inclusive multiuse arts and community hub, bringing a cherished building back into use as a community focused performance and flexible space.

Victoria Hall is a Grade II listed Victorian library and concert hall that opened in 1888. The Hall is held in trust for charitable purposes by High Peak Borough Council.

Derbyshire County Council closed the public library in the Hall in 2018, leaving the building virtually empty and the Council looking for new uses. In April 2019, the ground floor of Victoria Hall came back into community use, managed by the voluntary 'Friends of Victoria Hall' group.

In 2018 Purcell Architects were commissioned by the Council to review options for the future of the vacant Victoria Hall and Public Library with a view to it becoming an Arts Centre. These findings were reviewed in 2022 in light of the changing environment and the demand demonstrated through the meanwhile uses managed by the Friends of Victoria Hall. An updated preferred option, focused on making the building accessible and usable for a range of different uses, has been identified.

The refurbished Victoria Hall will offer a range of cultural, creative and health and wellbeing activities. The primary users will be local residents participating in cultural activities around arts, music, live performances and craft fairs, makers markets and art for wellbeing sessions. It will be the final piece in the overall Glossop Halls project, anchoring the creative scene in the town centre and catalysing the creative industries in Glossop.

By summer 2024, the Victoria Hall Glossop Charitable Incorporated Organisation ('CIO') will have been established and, upon completion of the capital works, be in a position to assume responsibility for the day-to-day operations of the building.

In summary the proposed capital works are as follows:

- Ground floor - general fit out, refurbishment works and alterations, including general strip out, full installation of WC's, creation of changing place provision, new kitchen/café, circulation (repairs, decorations) and a multi-use space (window overhaul, new finishes and sprung floor).
- First floor - general fit out and refurbishment works, including full installation of WCs, updated changing rooms, theatre space (window overhaul, new finishes and sprung floor) and kitchen/café fit out.
- Condition based works – asbestos removal, repairs to roof, parapet, rain water goods and remedial work due to water penetration, redecorating all windows and repairs to external ramps and stairs.

The intended benefits from this investment include:

- The improvement of existing cultural space
- The creation and improvement of office space

- The installation of new Wi-Fi hotspots
- The creation and facilitation of permanent jobs, and creation of volunteering opportunities
- Investing and sustaining in community organisations
- Increasing footfall and dwell time in the town centre
- Improved EPC rating, resulting in carbon savings

## **BUXTON OPERAHOUSE**

As part of a wider refurbishment programme, this project will assist in restoring the Buxton Opera House, a cherished and much-loved landmark arts venue which serves the local community and wider region. The modernisation will enable the Opera House to attract more customers and visiting companies/artists, assisting to secure the asset's long-term sustainability and maximise the health, wellbeing, economic and environmental benefits associated with a modern and thriving arts and culture offer.

The Opera House is an exquisitely beautiful Edwardian theatre and one of the country's finest examples of Frank Matcham theatre design. Benefitting from major restoration in the 1970s and the 1990s, the 901-seat Opera House is considered a wonderfully preserved heritage asset that occupies a landmark location within Buxton. A grade II\* listed building, it retains much of its original fabric and fittings.

The Opera House is owned by the Council and operated by High Peak Theatre Trust, which also operates the Buxton Pavilion Arts Centre. It plays a key role in the heritage of High Peak, a unique 'theatre in the hills', loved by, cared for and supported by its trustees, executive team and 130+ volunteers.

The Opera House is a busy receiving house with around 450 performances each year including dance, comedy, children's shows, drama, musical concerts, pantomime and opera as well as a lively Fringe Theatre and Community and Education Programme. The theatre is also home to the renowned Buxton International Festival.

However, the theatre is in urgent need of modernisation. It now falls short of the modern standards expected by both customers and visiting companies/artists. Access and participation are severely limited due to the inadequate facilities and many modern productions simply cannot be accommodated. The visitor experience is being negatively impacted, as evidenced by visitor feedback (see response re: stakeholder engagement).

As such, the council, High Peak Theatre Trust and trustees recognise that we must modernise the building to secure its long-term future. The scope of works proposed focus on addressing the source and damage caused by water ingress, and should be seen as a project within a wider longer-term programme to fully refurbish the Opera House:

- Replacement of flat roof and rainwater goods
- Replacement of drains and improvement to drainage system
- Damp works to upper floor to address damage from water ingress
- Replacements of alarms and improvement to fire safety arrangements

The theatre currently operates at c65% capacity; the ambition is to increase this to 75%. The intended outputs and outcomes from this investment/project will be created by improving the current visitor experience, increased visitor numbers and repeat visits, and the attraction of the venue to visiting performers:

- Increase in the number of events held
- Increase in the number of visitors/audience members
- Percentage of customers/visitors/users who report a positive experience
- Creation, facilitation and safeguarding of permanent jobs
- Creation of additional volunteering opportunities

The wider refurbishment programme will realise improvements to backstage facilities to enable larger and more diverse programming, further enhancing the benefits that would be derived from this initial project/investment.

## **ROCK MILL CENTRE**

Investment in an existing visitor and community centre run by and for the New Mills community. Building on the recent success achieved by this valued community asset, the investment will be used to creatively engage visitors and the local community with their environment, establishing a positive sense of what can be achieved through collective action. As the number of visitors to the centre grows, so does the number of local organisations that are collaborated with; this investment will help the centre to expand the scale and scope of our community education, engagement and physical health projects

Additionally, the intention is to invest in securing the future viability and sustainability of the centre; reducing the energy usage and carbon emissions, and showing residents, community groups and other local stakeholder how they can do the same.

The Rock Mill Centre occupies what was formally the Heritage and Information Centre. When the Town Council moved the Heritage Centre into High Lea Hall in 2022, a group of volunteers took on the lease and organisation of the Centre to keep the building as a visitor and community centre for the town and surrounding area.

They aim to serve our local community. They host events, meetings and activities run by local groups and are a registered Safe Place and a Warm Welcome Space. They run a small friendly cafe where all are welcome. Displays are intended to encourage a positive and collective response to the future and the changes we can all make. Throughout their activities they intend to creatively celebrate what is special about New Mills and the surrounding area.

Since opening in 2022, the visitor numbers have increased tenfold; they now regularly have over 100 people a day with up to an additional 50 just using the external toilet. The Council has recently agreed to fund the refit of the toilet to improve its accessibility for all users.

The proposed scope of works is summarised below:

- Various displays - celebrating and engaging the local community with regards to local nature, artwork, artists and natural environment
- Lost Species external mural - highlight the centre with a piece of public art of value that links with other river themed murals down the length of the Mersey.
- Lighting refit - complete the redesigning of the centre's lighting to make our basement space more welcoming, adaptable and energy efficient.
- Lighting desk - enabling their Littlest Theatre to receive nationally touring companies and be a destination attraction, as well as completing the redesigning of the centre's lighting to make the basement space more welcoming, adaptable and energy efficient.

- Active Travel Support - promoting bicycle use and installing bike racks and a installing a fixed community bicycle pump

The intended benefits from this investment include:

- Increased audience numbers at cultural events
- Increased visitors to cultural venues
- Increased footfall, dwell time and economic activity across New Mills

## **MILESTONE STUDIOS**

Milestone Studios is a creative study, workshop and gallery in New Mills. The studios provide local residents, artists and community organisations with freedom to create, share ideas, encourage others and exhibit their art. Milestone Studios is seeking capital funding to expand their offering, becoming a fully equipped, accessible teaching workshop, contemporary exhibition space and artist studio. Their aim is to broaden our offer, with a view to increasing accessibility, inclusion and inspiring current and new creatives.

Since their inception in July 2022, they've empowered over a dozen High Peak based artists to run their first public workshops, with resources and support they would otherwise have been unable to access, and provided much needed studio space to 6 local artists. These workshops, alongside our programme of exhibitions and cultural events have attracted a diverse audience of 500+ attendees.

However, their current capacity limits their reach. So far, the studio has been solely funded by their founders, studio holders and patrons. With this capital funding, they aim to expand their offerings, transforming into the High Peaks' premier open-access specialist printmaking and painting studios.

In summary, the funds will be used to improved signage, fittings and equipment for use in expanding the studio facilities and reach.

Having the necessary equipment to set up an open-access membership scheme will bring in a sustainable revenue stream, allowing them to continue their cultural programme and provide facilities of the same quality to those on offer at city-centre printing and painting studios. Their commitment to merging traditional techniques with modern, environmentally conscious practices drives their mission, and this investment will enable them to procure eco-friendly equipment, elevating their studio's sustainability practices.

The intended benefits from this investment include:

- Increased numbers attending cultural events
- Increased number of visitors to cultural venues