



Funded by
UK Government



St. Ives
Town Deal

Visit to St Ives Theatre project

25 July 2024

With work on the second phase of the Town Deal funded project to refurbish and extend St Ives Theatre now well underway, it was great to have the opportunity to host a visit from representatives from the St Ives Town Deal Board and Cornwall Council to see the progress which is being made.

Planning permission for the £1.5m St Ives Theatre Regeneration project was granted in January 2023, with work on the first phase – the roof and façade of the converted Wesleyan chapel - beginning later the same month. Work on the second phase began at the beginning of this year, with the transformed building due to re-open with a brand-new production in Easter 2025.

Home to award-winning youth theatre company Kidz R Us, the project involves providing an extended auditorium and new cafe / bar and reception area to support the future sustainability of the theatre. As well as saving a historic building, the project will help to develop the existing theatre into a leading tourist attraction for the town, lengthening the season with more performances, daytime workshops and outreach programmes for schools.

Welcoming Cornwall Council Leader and St Ives Councillor Linda Taylor, portfolio holder for the economy Louis Gardner and the newly elected Chair of St Ives Town Deal Board Andrew Baragwanath, architect Claire Mackness said **“It is a massive privilege to be able to work on a beautiful old building like this. During the past few months we have been focusing on taking the interior of the building to bits and now we have begun the wonderful task of putting her back together.”**

“We have been able to retain a lot of the original features, including the granite walls, some of the wooden panelling and the iconic chandeliers, at the same time as bringing the building up to date with modern equipment and technology to create a more vibrant space. With elements we have not been able to retain, such as the organ, we will be repurposing parts in other areas of the building. We have also worked with a specialist contractor to protect and restore the stained glass windows.”

St Ives Town Deal Chairman Andrew Baragwanath is delighted to see the focus on retaining as many of the historic features as possible. **“This is such an exciting project which will see the transformation of an iconic, much loved building in the centre of St Ives”** he said.

“As well as saving a historic building, the improvements will give the theatre a new lease of life, creating jobs and providing local children

and families with a fantastic venue for many years to come. This is a real demonstration of the benefits of the Town Deal programme for the local community.”

Originally formed by Phil Barnett in 1994 to encourage young people to get involved in the performing arts and support their development and the wider community, Kids R Us now work with around 100 children, teenagers and young adults a year. During the past 30 years they have staged more than 1500 performances and won numerous awards.

Councillor Taylor, who remembers the former Wesleyan chapel being converted into a venue for Kidz R Us, is looking forward to seeing the improved building used by the next generation of young people in St Ives.

“Kidz R Us provides an amazing service, not just for the children in the town, but for children from all the surrounding areas ” she said. “It shows them that life can be happy, and what things they can achieve. This is going to be an incredible building and I will be really pleased when it's brought back into the community.”

This enthusiasm is shared by Councillor Gardner who said **“It's fantastic seeing a building like this, a historic building in the heart of St Ives which is now used for community use, being revamped to provide better facilities for everyone.**

“A lot of work has gone into all the Town Deal projects in St Ives, not just by Cornwall Council, but most importantly by the members of the community. They've said what they wanted, they've said what St Ives needs, and it's the members of the community that have driven it forward. So to be here today, to be able to see things actually happening and know in a few short months the development will be finished, that's absolutely brilliant.”

Ends

Notes to Editors

About the UK Government Town Deals programme

Part of the government's plan for Levelling Up the UK economy and the wider Towns Fund, the Town Deals programme aims to regenerate towns and deliver long-term economic and productivity growth. This is through investments in urban regeneration, digital and physical connectivity, skills, heritage and enterprise infrastructure. As of July 2021, DLUHC have offered Town Deals to all 101 places that submitted proposals, committing over £2.35bn of investment across c.700 projects nationwide. [See the press releases associated with Town Deals on gov.uk.](#)

About the St Ives Town Deal

In June 2021, St Ives secured a Town Deal of up to £19.9 million following the successful submission of its [Town Investment Plan](#) for a range of regeneration projects. For more information about St Ives Town Deal visit www.stivestowndeal.org.uk

Cornwall is the only area invited by the Government to submit proposals for four of its towns: Camborne, Penzance, St Ives and Truro. After conducting extensive public consultations, each Town Deal Board submitted their Town Investment Plan in collaboration with Cornwall Council. As a result, the Government announced in spring 2021, that Cornwall will receive up to £88.7 million from the Town Deals programme.

Cornwall Council is the Lead Authority for the Town Deals in Cornwall. Cornwall Council supports the governance role of St Ives Town Deal Board and is responsible for administering the Fund on behalf of the Board.

For more information visit: www.cornwall.gov.uk/business-trading-and-licences/economic-development/towns-fund