

# MAKING SUSTAINABLE THEATRE

Alright, darlings, gather close! Auntie Rosie's here to spill the tea on a fabulous new chapter in theatre—the Theatre Green Book! Now, this little gem is the theatre's guide to creating shows in a way that's gentler on our precious planet. It's all about making thoughtful choices: using greener materials, rethinking old habits, and working magic to waste less and reuse more. Now let's find out about how they did it.

## Have you been reusing anything old and fabulous for these props? I do love a bit of upcycling—tell me all about it!

Yes, websites like Facebook Marketplace and Gumtree have been really useful to find second hand items in the local area which I've then had lots of fun jazzing up for the panto this year. You'll spot a very glam pram which I upcycled from one found on Gumtree! We're also very lucky that the Wolsey keeps lots of props from previous shows in storage. I've taken things and given them another life as something completely different - for example some old shackles have been turned into extra-large binoculars! – *Jodie Jasmin Hicks, Assistant Stage Manager*

## Have you had any sticky moments trying to find eco-friendly materials? How did you make it work? Magic wands don't grow on trees, after all!

It has been challenging thinking of alternatives to harmful materials or aerosols, as when making props for pantomimes in the past, I relied heavily on glitter and spray paint to make the props dazzle audiences! Often substituting this for shimmery fabric or non-toxic paint has been a solution to this. – *Jodie Jasmin Hicks, Assistant Stage Manager*

## Have there been any thorny challenges with making a Green Book production?

Space to store items, such as big flats here at the New Wolsey Theatre is limited, so that presents challenges. You want there to be useful set elements at your disposal, to adapt and create with what already exists. This year, we didn't have a lot to reuse as not a lot was saved from the years before. So we've focused on making sure parts of this year's set can be stored and re-used for years to come. We've also made sure we have built the set with sustainable materials, such as good quality timber, rather than virgin steel.

It's always a rush trying to make a show in 4 weeks, so deliveries can add up. We've tried hard to plan in advance and combine lots of small orders into one big one where possible, to reduce the carbon footprint.



There are more challenges, big and small, throughout the process but by questioning everything we do and thinking outside the box we've made some great changes. For example, we have adapted some design elements to reuse things we have in stock, swapped PVC tapes for a more eco-friendly option, changed what we use for special effects to a more sustainable option, and used a compressor and spray gun instead of aerosol spray paints to achieve the same effect. It's a real team effort, and it's great when you see all the little changes start to add up. – *James Dawson, Production Manager*

## Now, tell Auntie Rosie, what's sparked this fabulous journey toward a greener theatre?

Well, Rosie, it's all about two key ideas: first, recognising that we all need to step up and help tackle the climate crisis, and second, understanding that we can share our journey and inspire our audiences and partners to envision a brighter, greener future. Recently, we were thrilled to receive the Suffolk Carbon Charter Silver Award, which acknowledges our efforts to make our building more energy efficient. Now, we want to take that same eco-friendly approach to our productions. Once we dove into the Theatre Green Book, we discovered that we could create the magic of theatre while also reducing our environmental impact. This shift in how we think, and work has not only been necessary, but it's also sparked a wave of creativity! It's not just about how we make theatre, but also the stories we choose to tell, the characters we create and the messages they convey. – *Douglas Rintoul, Chief Executive/Artistic Director*

## And between us, what's in store for the future? Are there any grand plans to keep the theatre sparkly-green for many more shows to come?

We're just getting started with the Theatre Green Book, and we're eager to incorporate more sustainable practices in our upcoming productions. Another goal is to work towards the Suffolk Carbon Charter Gold Award, which will help us further our commitment to creating a sustainable theatre. We're excited about what's ahead and can't wait to share it with everyone! – *Douglas Rintoul, Chief Executive/Artistic Director*

