

## Watford Palace Theatre – background information

Watford Palace Theatre (WPT) was established to promote, maintain, improve, and advance education by the encouragement of the arts. The Participation department of WPT exists to support and implement Watford Palace Theatre objectives' of inclusion, diversity and equality and create cultural opportunities where new and existing audiences can get involved in creating, performing and watch through our programme of activities. In particular we target and involve those who would be typically be less engaged in the arts as defined by ACE 'our definition of diversity covers responding to issues around race, ethnicity, faith, disability, age, gender, sexuality, class and economic disadvantage, as well as any social or institutional barriers that prevent people from creating, taking part in or enjoying the arts and culture'

Our work with young people includes; youth theatre for young people which is open to 5-19 year olds, Hertfordshire County Youth Theatre (HCYT) which offers the opportunities for young people to perform or get involved backstage in a professionally produced production and ad hoc projects which are funded by external funding, most recently it included young people filmmakers festival and musical writing workshop. Work with the local community includes: Community choir, a space for community users, hosting and designing community events with volunteers in the community such as Diwali, Eid, Vaisakhi, Chinese New Year and ad hoc projects.

## The Project

We were awarded a grant from HLF to deliver a heritage project linked to our autumn in-house production [Elton John's Glasses](#), in September 2017. The story features localism and memories of Watford in the 1980s/90s including Watford Football Club reaching the FA final in 1984. Our objective is to bring awareness and highlight this play and engage those who normally would not engage in the work of the theatre and in the heritage of Watford. In delivering this project we are also working in partnership with Watford FC Football Community Sports and Education Trust (Watford Football Trust), Watford Museum and Thrive Homes (resident association).

The outputs of the project include:

- Creative sessions with the community where we will develop creative workshops, inviting participants to share memories in the form of verbal, writing, photographs and objects. Potential oral histories will be identified and captured with the support of an oral history expert from Watford Museum and recorded by volunteers
- A live walking tour based on the reminiscences captured during the workshops. The walking tour will be a platform for participants to share the reminiscences at Watford landmarks, linking the venues mentioned in the Elton John's Glasses to sites.
- A digital podcast including a walking tour. A commissioned podcast, capturing reminiscences during the project connected to Watford venues and memories of Watford. The digital podcast will feature excerpts about landmarks in Watford using participants' oral reminiscences and oral histories, creating a future legacy of the play and the project. The tour and podcast will be available to download for up to 5 years after the delivery of the project.
- A co curated sharing event WPT will showcase talks from participants, and a creative practitioner capturing reminiscences of Participants. A temporary display will be created by WPT's technical team and plinths/display cases will be constructed to showcase participants and Watford Museum's objects and collections.