

INFORMATION FOR ARTISTS

This is information for artists and companies who are considering putting themselves forward for work on the LIVE & LOCAL and Shindig community performance schemes.



We also recommend that you read the NRTF publication 'Eyes Wide Open' (available from www.nrtf.org.uk) before contacting us or sending in an application.

THE ORGANISATION

LIVE & LOCAL and Shindig (Worcestershire) is a network of over 200 village halls, community centres, schools and small arts venues in Warwickshire, Staffordshire, Worcestershire and Derbyshire who provide their communities with the opportunity to enjoy exciting and different professional shows on their doorstep.

It is a partnership between the knowledge and enthusiasm of people (mainly volunteers) in these community organisations, combined with the expertise of the professional co-ordinating team that is sensitive to their local needs and aspirations. **The local organisations choose and promote the performances with our support.** So for us to work successfully together we need to know that your ideas and experience fit readily into this existing partnership.

We act as an intermediary between the professional artists and the local promoters by raising funding, co-ordinating bookings and contracts, providing marketing support and by attracting audiences from further afield with direct mail, media coverage and bi-annual What's On Diaries and Newsletter.

Based in Warwick, we have a full-time Director, a full-time Company Administrator, a full time Development Officer, a full-time Marketing Officer, part-time Marketing and Administration Assistants, and part-time Fieldworker for Derbyshire. LIVE & LOCAL is an National Portfolio Organisation funded by the Arts Council, 28 local authorities. We are also part of the National Rural Touring Forum, a network of 40 similar schemes across the country. (www.nrtf.org.uk)

THE LOCAL PROMOTERS & VENUES

The majority are voluntary run organisations serving a distinct local and small rural (and some urban) catchment areas. They usually organise a maximum of three LIVE & LOCAL events per year, and have few resources apart from time, enthusiasm and an unequipped, non-theatre venue with 150 seats or less. Their stages are rarely suitable for drama therefore we are often dealing with flat floor spaces and need to know **how you would overcome the inherent sightline problems.**

We work with a few professionally managed venues (although not usually arts managers) with a small programme of arts events. They serve wider catchment areas and have more in-house resources than the voluntary run venues in terms of staff (but not technical staff), equipment and administrative support, usually with 150 seats plus. Some are partially equipped with "end-on" stages, although a variety of other possible flat floor formats are possible if additional equipment is brought in.

Key Point: The more adaptable you are in terms of your required performing area, the better. If you ask for 20' x 20' then only 30% of our venues can even consider you – and some of these will have to lose quite a few seats and some of them historically don't book drama.

If you ask for 16' x 16' the number of potential bookings goes up considerably... and so on.

There are often height restrictions in these type of venues as well.

THE PROGRAMMING PROCESS

Each year we select suitable shows, compile these into a 'Menu' describing the events on offer. The information includes a description of the show, availability, target audiences, running times, and technical requirements and get in times. It is then distributed to the local promoters in February and covers the year through to the following May/June.

Therefore we need information by mid January to make decisions about who is to be included but we start to shortlist companies from December onwards.

The promoters request show(s) from the menu by mid May. LIVE & LOCAL co-ordinates the dates, negotiates the fees, contracts and pays the companies for the performance(s).

Generally, inclusion in this menu does not guarantee bookings. We will either (a) agree pencilled dates or weeks with companies, who reserve those dates for Live & Local and which would be confirmed or otherwise in mid May. (b) Say the company is generally available 'Sept onwards' (maybe with some extra detail about excluded periods) or (c) and this is rare, with certain companies we will book (i.e. contract) dates before getting requests from our local promoters.

We pay the artists the full negotiated fixed fee. The local promoter usually pays a guaranteed fee or a percentage of the gross box office receipts to LIVE & LOCAL.

THE PERFORMERS

Theatre Companies

Companies included in the menu are well established and generally, but not exclusively, with experience throughout the company of touring into community venues - i.e. administration, marketing and technical experience - as well as offering appropriate artistic product. Shows should be self-contained, including lighting, sound and staging as required and with an experienced technician or stage manager.

Companies should be able to supply good quality print in appropriate quantities (**Minimum - 30 x A3 or (much preferred) A4 posters, 500 x A5 leaflets or equivalent per venue suitable for overprinting – this means that they should go through a photocopier - and be available to Live & Local at least 10 weeks before**), and a marketing pack (ideally 3 to 4 months in advance) containing - background information, target markets, brochure copy, sample press release and direct mail letters, photographs, information on any mailing lists, local contacts etc.

NB: The need for print to be delivered on time and of the appropriate quality and quantity is written into our contracts with penalty clauses. Guidelines for our publicity needs are available on request.

A very few (larger) venues have some equipment which is generally for use on their traditional "end-on" raised stage area. However the format of the audience/performing areas is adaptable and suitable for self-contained companies. (Technical specs available) Companies should normally provide a technician. As these venues cover a wider catchment area, have more local competition, we undertake a more sophisticated marketing campaign so **a comprehensive marketing pack is vital** (see above) with a **minimum of 1,000 A5 leaflets and 50 A3 or A4 posters.**

Musical Groups, Bands and other Artists

LIVE & LOCAL expects musical groups and other artists to be experienced in touring to community venues. We do not expect them to provide lighting (although this is a definite bonus towards your inclusion in the Menu) but we would normally expect them to tour their own sound system if required for larger halls.

The ability to provide appropriate amounts (see above) of good quality print is also a plus point towards inclusion in the Menu. If not available, a well designed leaflet/poster template is useful. At the very least good information for publicity such as biographies, photos (suitable for print) and target market details. (I.e. preferably a marketing pack as above)

WHAT WE NEED FROM YOU

We get loads of information all the time about shows on offer to **LIVE & LOCAL**. We recommend that you talk to us before sending in any information and that you read the *Eyes Wide Open* document available from www.nrtf.org.uk.

It is a great help to us in sifting through information if in addition to your standard pack, we can have the following information about the company and the show you are proposing on our **fully completed Artists & Companies Information Form**:

- ✓ Basic Company details
- ✓ Basic details about the show on offer, who its for, 'selling' points etc
- ✓ Basic details of your Marketing support
- ✓ Technical specifications (please note the earlier comments on sightlines and performing area)
- ✓ Financial information

Please include the following information as well and any other materials that you feel are appropriate:

- ✓ Information about the group, its' previous work and other work in progress
- ✓ Any forthcoming dates in the Midlands
- ✓ Samples of your leaflets/posters

For more information please call us on (01926) 402173

We can also provide Fact Sheets on our Marketing and Print requirements as well as our Artistic and Equal Opportunities Policies.

We do not give out venue or promoter contact lists.

If you are an organisation based within the West or East Midlands Arts region then we are also more than happy to arrange a meeting so that you can come along and find out in more detail about our aims and objectives and about how we work.

"LIVE & LOCAL actively encourages unexpected, exciting and different programming by local promoters that meets the needs and desires of their target audiences and provides a real entertainment alternative - performances that are unmistakably "live" and positively exploit the environment in LIVE & LOCAL venues."

From the **LIVE & LOCAL** artistic policy