

Promoter Testimonials

"Old Village Hall Charity has been booking theatrical events through NTA for some years and has built up a regular and enthusiastic audience of 50-80 . The plays are always very well recieved and, through NTA, we are assured of quality in performance and a wide choice of thought-provoking and entertaining subjects to suit a variety of tastes and age groups. It is a joy and privilege for our small local community to widen their horizons and come together to share the experience of live theatre locally - and for most people, at a venue within walking distance and within their pockets.

We are in the process of fund-raising to build a new hall and, to support our business plan, carried out a Village survey which showed one of the most popular activities in the hall would be a theatre/film club. With this in mind we are hoping to install some moveable staged seating (a bleacher system) an induction loop and ensure good acoustics to enhance audience enjoyment.

It helps us to fulfill many of the Quality of Life Indicators, increasing the sense of belonging and participation in the village community and offering an opportunity for culture and leisure within walking distance of the majority of people The topics covered in many of the plays deal with subjects which give rise to much interesting discussion and offer educational experience to us all. Others give pure entertainment value - a chance to escape, be distracted and to laugh.

It would be a sad loss indeed to this rural community to loose such a valuable asset as NTA ."

Katie Lindenbaum, Chairperson, Old Village Hall Charity Trustees.

"We at Badby very much value the help of Northants Touring Arts. We put on two or three shows per year in the village hall, and without the subsidy from Northants Touring Arts, it would not be possible to run these events.

This past twelve months we have had full houses at both events, events which are for the community and which are enjoyed by the community. Without sponsorship from Northants Touring Arts, we could not afford to stage these performances. Our thanks to NTA for their invaluable help and support."

Paul Eales, Badby Village Hall

"Northants Touring Arts is an invaluable support to the Farthingstone Community. With just 80 houses with approximately 170 residents we wouldn't be able to afford good quality performers without a subsidy. I would personally worry about taking on a large financial commitment given the small and varied potential audience. We average audiences of 55 people for our events which I think shows great commitment from the village. This is about the maximum we could fit into our Village Hall, along with performance area and lighting, and without funding we would not be able to afford most performers whilst maintaining a reasonable entrance fee.

We were recently left a bequest and have purchased a stage in the expectation of continuing to hold a performance about once a year. We have been enjoying these community events since the Hall was refurbished in 1999 but this may now be put in jeopardy if funding isn't maintained and increased to take account of rising costs of performers and rising demand.

We make virtually no profit on these events but they are invaluable to the Community as they

- Bring together a changing team of organisers who then get involved in other activities
- Are enjoyed by a cross section of the community, young and old
- Are an opportunity to meet and socialise
- Provide entertainment on our doorstep, open to all – no driving required
- Support the local pub either for drinks afterwards or on occasion we have combined with them to provide a supper afterwards
- Are looked at by potential house buyers on our website who are attracted to the village because they see an active community

I do feel that it would be an end to Arts events in Farthingstone Village Hall if we lost the subsidy as the cost would be too high for the size of the venue and this would be a real shame given the benefits above."

Dorothy FitzGerald, Farthingstone Village Hall

"The use of NTA has enabled Danetre School to access groups that we would normally not gain access to and this is a valuable facility for the school and the local community. The Hopping Mad dance workshop had an excellent feedback from the students and two of my AS students are doing a dance performance to Primary Schools and the found the experience with professional dancers a very good contact. The drama performance of The Legend of Sleepy Hollow was a very good community performance, with an audience of students, parents and staff and enjoyed by everybody.

I would hope that Danetre will be able to access future events through the NTA and Daventry District Council have a community responsibility to support this."

Peter Helliwell, Danetre School

"Byfield is over 20 miles from the nearest regular live theatre - in Northampton - and as such having the opportunity to present good quality professional arts events in the village hall is a godsend to many parishioners, especially those who would not or could not travel to Northampton. Staging these events also brings a necessary income to the village hall and keeps the hall in use. The hall committee was obliged to fund the creation of suitable accesses under the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act - to reduce the possible income to the hall by cutting the grant to NTA would seem perverse. The grant to NTA allows for a wide variety of arts events to be available at an economic price to local communities and this in turn allows a reasonable price to be charged for tickets to these events. The wide range of events offered by NTA allows small communities to experience live theatre that they may never think of attending from Shakespeare to Blues to Comedy."

Angela Weller, Byfield Scout Group / Village Hall

"This year is the first time we are presenting a performance in conjunction with the NTA. I have been to several of the plays and music performances at the Flore Village Hall where they are always well attended. If it wasn't for the touring arts many people would neither be able to see some of these shows or afford them. People who live out in small villages very much appreciate seeing the touring performances which they wouldn't have a chance otherwise.

We are looking forward to having Fred's Flying Circus visit our Playing Field this Summer. We are a trust funded solely by volunteers fund raising. There is no way we could afford anything like this without it being subsidised."

Jill Hodgkinson, Brodie Lodge Playing Field Trust, Flore

"We have been extremely fortunate in promoting some of your Touring Arts groups and without question every single one has been terrific success. We have promoted various groups catering to all age groups and the latest show "The Snowman" gave over 40 young children the opportunity to go "on stage" and interact with the performers. It was a magical event and greatly appreciated by the children and perhaps more so by the parents, who saw their children grow in self confidence and work together as a team to act out, sing and dance a classic Christmas Tale. We also promoted a Calienta Salsa dance evening and never have we seen over 100 people learning to dance and then dancing the Salsa at Weedon Village Hall. All those who took part enjoyed the evening tremendously and gained great self confidence, physical exercise and a new ability to dance the salsa.

I could retell many stories from those who have enjoyed and benefited from events we have been fortunate enough to have promoted with your help. Help, not to be found anywhere else, help to make the events a great success, help with advertising and promotion, help in bringing the community of Weedon together. As you are aware we have recently refurbished the Hall to continue its use as a vital amenity to the village and the community. The Big Lottery Fund gave our Hall a "reaching communities" award to help with the refurbishment because they have recognised the need to bring communities together and were particularly impressed with our plans and projections for the future and how we would be promoting community relations, fitness, health and education. In our progress reports to The Big Lottery we commented very positively about the help we were getting from Northants Touring Arts and the shows we had promoted and how the residents of Weedon and surrounding villages had supported all events and the wonderful community spirit that was being formed. This was confirmed by The Big Lottery as a very positive "outcome" from the refurbishment and recognised the not only the efforts put in by the management committee but also Northants Touring Arts in building that elusive "community spirit".

To think that we shall be limited in our efforts to continue building our community and promoting the Hall as a vital amenity available to all is frustrating and deeply disappointing.

The committee agreed that we should write immediately to Tim Boswell local MP, Gina Ogden Northants. county councillor and David White and Kevin Perry Daventry District councillors all of whom have been involved in our refurbishment and plans for the future, and "put them in the picture" and ask them to see if they can help us

In conclusion, it must be emphasised that without your help in all areas of promotion we would not have the skills or perhaps more importantly, be able to afford to "put on" shows of the high calibre and entertainment value that you offer. This indeed would be a great loss to the village and community of Weedon."

Catherine Worth, Weedon Bec Village Hall

"Since the construction of the new Village Hall at Yelvertoft we have been fortunate in holding two performances with the support of NTA and a third is scheduled for March this year. The average attendance has been 100 people with ages ranging from 10 to 80. The success of the performances staged has meant that villagers are already requesting tickets for this year's event and many people have asked me what other NTA performances are being staged in other venues. The quality of the acts is amazing and as a promoter I can confirm that not only would we have difficulty in finding acts of this calibre without the help of NTA but would almost certainly be unable to afford the fees that the acts and their agents would charge. As a village we are fortunate in having our own Concert Party and also Drama in Yelvertoft group both of these groups are in the early stages of their development and whilst they offer considerable entertainment to the village it is a real pleasure to see live, professional performances and this in turn offers inspiration to our budding thespians."

Jane Walker, Yelvertoft Village Hall

"I do hope you continue to receive funding for the NTA as it is obviously a huge success in our district. As we have yet to enjoy our first show it makes it harder to comment on the production but I can say that our community is very much looking forward to our event and I'm sure we will consider using the NTA again."

Sarah Favell, Cold Ashby Memorial Hall

"Without the help of NTA we would not have been able to fund professional events bearing in mind the capacity in our village hall is for 55 seating. We have held a number of functions over the last 4 years supported by the NTA - all have been supported by the village community and have either been at capacity or near capacity. We have also noticed that other regular events we hold are now over subscribed because of the enthusiasm generated by the villagers mainly by bringing back professional live entertainment to the village hall after a lengthy absence of many years with the fantastic support and help of NTA. It appears that we have "discovered" our community spirit!"

Sue Nichols, Everdon Villlage Hall

"I have been promoting events at Hannington Village Hall since May 2003. NTA enabled me to put on eight musical evenings of a wide variety of content. All have been extremely good and have been enthusiastically received. Most events have been sold out or very nearly. The hall seats 65 but the village is only 200 in number.

The Village Hall in Hannington, apart from the church, is the only social gathering point in the village. There is no pub and no shop and so the main purpose of putting on a musical evening is to get villagers together. There is a strong following from within the village as well as regulars from the neighbouring village of Walgrave.

The evenings are held in such away that there is plenty of time before during and afterwards for people to catch up with each other. Often the last time some might have met was at the last musical evening.

Without the subsidy offered by the NTA there is no way our village could hold such evenings, they really are of great value both socially and culturally. I hope the Agency will be able to continue offering such a valuable resource."

Christina Hilts, Hannington Village Hall

"As part of the team that puts on events at Staverton Village Hall I would like to say how valuable we find these events – not just for the event itself, be it play, workshop or musical evening, but because it brings the community together and helps to promote and forge friendships and understanding.

Our Village Hall was in a dire state of repair several years ago and we undertook a huge fund-raising task to be able to transform it into the bright, up-to-date building it now is. Visitors often take a sharp intake of breath when they enter our premises these days! Many events we put on to fund this were through NTA, but without the subsidy available we would not have been able to afford them.

Apart from the wonderful musical events such as Shoo Shoo Baby and Daniel Smith, and plays such as Tonight this bed is Poland, and the plays and puppet shows for children, the Willow Weaving Workshop stands out in my mind as one of our more successful days which brought together a wide selection of people, not just our community, but from villages around us. Also watching the children's faces during a recent puppet show was magical.

On a personal note I have learned such a great deal about putting on events – from designing and printing posters, flyers and tickets to the "air hostess" bit before an event, which has given me great confidence to do other things in Staverton and even in Daventry.

Judith Hurst – Minutes Secretary and Events Organiser. Staverton Village Hall

"Last year I took my family to see a production of the The Legend of Sleepy Hollow at Charwelton village hall. We had a great time as the intimacy of the hall allowed us to feel we were very much part of the play. The performance was of a high standard and everyone thoroughly enjoyed the evening. After the performance my children were able to speak to the actors and get their autographs, something that they probably may not have been able to do at a large theatre in a city.

Having seen this performance I thought that the idea of live performances coming to rural villages was an excellent idea. I could see at this small village hall performance that there was a real sense of community as it brought together people from the local area. I also thought that it was great that people could attend something right on their doorstep without the need to travel great distances. There are many people, particularly the elderly who do not want to travel at night to places like Northampton or Milton Keynes to attend the theatre and the lack of public transport at night and the fear of travelling in the dark would leave professional performances out of reach for many. The Northants Touring Arts scheme enables them to enjoy a professional performance in the their own village community.

After the performance I felt that I would love to have professional performances come to my own village of Woodford Halse and I could see the benefits for our own community. There are no bus services to Northampton, Milton Keynes and other towns where there are theatres and as all buse services stop at 6pm it is impossible to reach any town after this time. We are a large village and there would be many who do not have the opportunity to see a professional performance due to travel constraints. I recently had a meeting with Kate Williams from Northants Touting Arts to discuss the idea of having some professional performances come to Woodford Halse. I have already spoken to the Head Master of the village school and he is very keen to be able to host performances in the school hall for the community. We also have the Social Club with a wooden sprung floor ballroom (a rarity these days) and a full size stage. This venue would be ideal to host professional performances of dance, music and theatre. We also have two village halls that could be used. We therefore have a number of venues that could hold performances of different genres appealing to a wide ranging audience. By hosting the performances the local community would also benefit by raising funds for various village groups.

I would love to work with the Northants Touring Arts to provide live performances for this corner of Northamptonshire. They have the contacts and the experience of puting together a varied performing arts programme that allows isolated rural communities such as Woodford Halse to enjoy professional performances which are made accessible by keeping things local and helping to build and maintain a sense of community."

Michelle Smith, Parish Councillor, Woodford Cum Membris