

**Q. Why has Bridport Arts Centre sold the building to Alasdair Warren, owner of Bridport Electric Palace?**

**A. To ensure a viable future for Bridport Arts Centre.**

**Like most arts charities around the country, BAC is dependent on both grants and activities with variable income such as the Bridport Prize, to enable it to continue. Its status as a charity has not protected it from an uncertain future with rising costs and the likelihood of diminishing funding.**

**Q. Why is the funding for BAC an issue?**

**A. Grants from both local and central government have become more closely fought over and the continued level of support cannot be guaranteed. Increased competition for the prestigious Bridport Prize for literature has also resulted in fluctuating levels of income for the charity.**

**Q. How will this affect Bridport Arts Centre?**

**A. As part of the sale, the Board of Trustees have agreed a long-term lease with the new owner that allows Bridport Arts Centre to continue as an independent charity. It will retain its autonomy and continue to deliver the current year-round programme of theatre, dance, music, the spoken word and selected film within the Theatre and visual arts within the Allsop Gallery.**

**Q. What differences will customers see when they visit BAC or go online to buy tickets?**

**A. The Bridport Arts Centre will continue operating in the same way. Visitors will receive a warm welcome, as always. Longer term changes will include investment in retaining and enhancing the building's character and building improvements. Customers will have an improved experience when they come to BAC events or go online looking for information/to buy tickets from the BAC website.**

**Q. Who is the new Director of Bridport Arts Centre?**

**A. Mick Smith joined BAC at the end of August. He is the new Director replacing Curtis Fulcher.**

**Q. Who do I contact if I have a question about the Bridport Arts Centre?**

**A. If you would like to speak to someone, please call Mick on 01308 01308 424204 ex 205 (Mon-Fri, 10am-5pm). Alternatively you can email Mick at [mick@bridport-arts.com](mailto:mick@bridport-arts.com) or Alasdair Warren (Owner Bridport Electric Palace) at [alasdair.warren@icloud.com](mailto:alasdair.warren@icloud.com)**

**Q. Are BAC ticket prices likely to increase because of the reduction in grants?**

**A. No. Ticket prices are set to reflect the requirements of the performing artists with an uplift set by BAC to cover overheads and an operating margin assessed in relation to the local commercial market. Our pricing will continue to reflect the cost of putting on the show and will remain competitive.**

**Q. Why were members not asked to provide funds so that the building could remain in BAC ownership?**

**A. The timescale to prevent permanent closure was too short to raise the tens of thousands of pounds needed. The future of some of our grant-related funding is still unclear going forward due (amongst other issues) to the local County Council restructure still being underway. Predicting income from activities such as the Bridport Prize is also tricky as the financial outcome is**

**sporadic, variable and only apparent once entries close, yet ongoing running costs for the building in which the charity operates continue regardless.**

**Q. Why could BAC not have taken out a loan against the building which members could then have paid back over time?**

**A. The Grade II Listed Building has become increasingly demanding in maintenance terms as years go by and would have put further and greater strains on the limited income of the charity if the asset were to be retained, diverting resources from the core mission of the BAC charity, to deliver a high-quality varied arts programme and engage audiences and participants in richer cultural experiences.**

**Q. How much was paid for the building?**

**A. The amount paid is not disclosed, but as part of the sale process the Board of Trustees appointed an independent commercial real estate valuer, and the price paid was the same as the valuation provided by the independent valuer and in accordance with Charity Commission requirements.**

**Q. What will change?**

**A. In terms of programming, going forward the enhanced cooperation between the two venues will ensure a more rounded offer, aiming to avoid clashes and allow both venues to play to their strengths. Some of our more popular shows, including mainstream cinema, will move to the EP, which has greater seating capacity. BAC will deliver a wide ranging programme of live events aiming to challenge and delight our audience and help us deliver our vision as a charity, 'To be a unique and inspiring venue, at the heart of the Bridport and Dorset community, reaching out to engage and entertain.'**

**We also anticipate improvements to the building, including the Allsop Gallery, which will greatly enhance both the visitor experience and the visual arts offer (though there may inevitably be some short term disruption).**

**Q. Will the café re-open.**

**A. Yes. Following refurbishment. We hope that will be in the first half of 2020**

**Q. Will we continue to be open 6 days a week ?**

**A. No decision has been made but once the café is open we expect opening hours to increase.**

**Q. How long is the lease and what will happen when it ends**

**A. The lease is initially for 10 years. Assuming the new arrangement works for both parties it can be extended by mutual agreement.**

**Q. What will happen to the Allsop Gallery.**

**A. The Gallery has suffered from lack of investment over many years. We expect access , lighting, atmospheric controls and security will be improved, in order to be able to deliver a more ambitious visual arts programme.**

**Q. What about hirers ?**

**A. We are planning on having conversations with all our hirers in the very near future.**