



Information Bulletin 2

19 February 2021

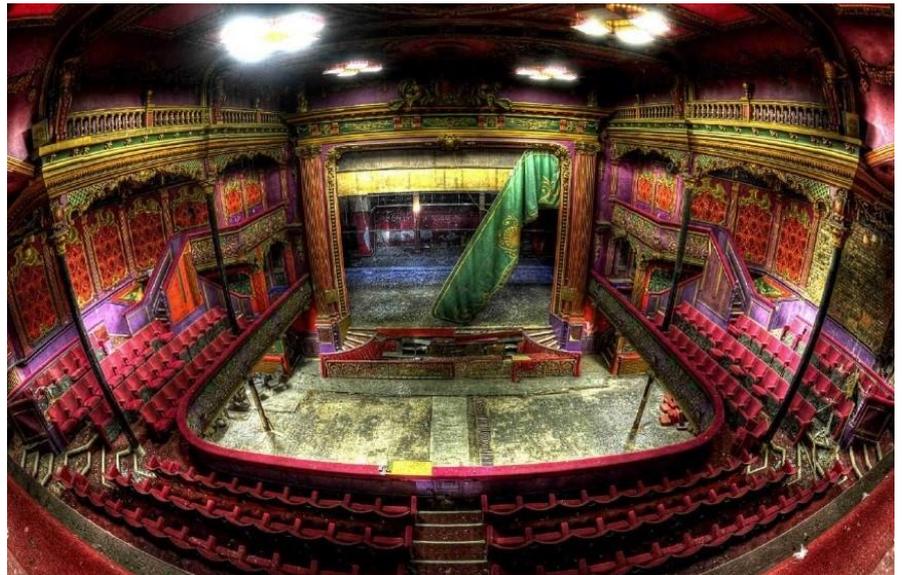
Save Hulme Hippodrome Campaign Steering Group
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Email us: savehulmehippodrome@nia.digital

The Facebook group page:
<https://www.facebook.com/SAVE-HULME-Hippodrome-1532360277003306/>

Twitter - @savehulmehip

News this week

Our crowdfunding has continued its great start. Our initial target of **£10,000 was rapidly achieved with over 330 donors**, and we're on our way to a stretch target of **£25,000 with 18 days still to go**. This seed money will pay for essential early works such as a professional conditions survey of the property, with details below.



Please give if you can afford to, and continue to share this good news with your friends.
<https://www.crowdfunder.co.uk/save-hulme-hippo>

An excellent blog on the **history of Black performers** at Hulme Hippodrome has been written by Sarah Whitfield here – <https://sarahwhitfield.com/2021/02/12/tracing-the-history-of-hulme-hippodrome/> – As she says, “Like many theatres in the UK, Hulme Hippodrome played an important role in the success of touring Black performance practice. Black performers were a regular part of the British variety circuits.”

We have a new **Twitter** account - @savehulmehip – please follow us and retweet our news.

Leading up to the failed auction last week, we now understand that the first attempted transfer of the Hippodrome was on 11 January 2021 to Mr Gassell Charles Gordon. However it appears from public official records that he is connected with “A group of 14 connected property letting, investment-and-development and music companies, primarily based in Catford, South London have been ordered into **liquidation** by the High Court on 4 June [2014] on grounds of public interest for a string of breaches of company law.” (emphasis added to the quote)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/insolvency-service-investigation-leads-to-shut-down-of-multi-million-pound-network-of-south-london-property-and-music-companies--2> .

Also from public official records, it seems he was also **disqualified** from being a company director by Court order on 17 April 2018: <https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/disqualified-officers/natural/VKK6tHCKvfNXpkhCwkzfeC4Ezow>

These attempted sales and the surrounding facts are the matter of a live Investigation by the **Charity Commission**. We support this Investigation, and we have provided evidence in good faith. We urge everyone to similarly support this Investigation. We are fundraising to pay for an independent valuation of the current **fair market value** of the Hippodrome building. This fair value would be the fair price to be paid to the charity (or whoever) if the proper owner was forced by law to hand it over to a more responsible future owner.

As a Campaign Group we are now organising ourselves as a **Steering Group** with a plan to become a Company Limited by Guarantee in the days ahead. This will give us more legal status and protection. We are planning it as a stepping stone towards our long-term structure, but we will take our time to make sure we consult widely with our members, donors and supporters. If the final outcome is to be a Company of Community Benefit (“a BenComm”) then it will be with a Statutory Asset Lock to ensure that the building remains protected as a community resource, and is not for sale.

We plan for the Steering Group to have a number of Working Groups, and we now have vacancies for **volunteers** in the following groups – **all welcome!** More groups may follow as needed.

Vacancies include ...

- ❖ Media and Design WG
- ❖ Fundraising WG
- ❖ Community and Neighbours WG
- ❖ Social Enterprises WG ... email us to join any group: savehulmehippodrome@nia.digital

What we are fundraising for

Our costings have been put together based on the expertise within the group gained on other historic and community restoration projects and on advice of the Theatres Trust.

1. Surveys and valuation – we need to appoint professionals to carry out an initial high-level conditions and structural survey and do an unbiased valuation of the building. This will help us to know the scale of the repair works necessary, and what would be a fair market value for the building now. Based on similar projects the estimated costs of these works will be: a **structural** engineer visit and report £3k, a **conditions** survey £3k, and a **valuation** £1.5k.
2. Organisational advice – as a newly formed group looking to take on a historic building, we need to be able to demonstrate to potential funders and partners that we are a credible, well-run organisation. This will include establishing the organisation with the right legal structure to take **ownership** of the building when that opportunity arises. The estimated cost for legal and accountancy advice is £3k.

Our Stretch Target

We have many ideas for the future of Hulme Hippodrome and there is a wealth of enthusiasm and expertise in our group. Our next step is to build a watertight case for **community** use of the building. We have a great vision document, and this should next be supported by a viability study and economic impact assessment from an external expert that demonstrates to funders that our ambitious business plan is totally **viable** and **sustainable**. This is important to counteract any arguments for the building being redeveloped for commercial use and show that the initial investment for restoration is worthwhile. This phase would cost us approximately £10k.