

# King's Head Theatre

## **King's Head Theatre Ethical Policy**

*First written: March 2017*

The King's Head Theatre aims to be a responsible and ethical organisation. We encourage practices, and relationships with partner organisations and funders, that operate for the positive benefit of people and the environment.

This Policy seeks to support and embolden difficult decision-making at the King's Head Theatre.

Not every eventuality can be covered by a policy, but this one covers **Ethical Principles** and **Ethical Fundraising**, with an accompanying **Decision-Making Checklist**.

### **Ethical Principles**

It is not possible to predict every situation in which the King's Head Theatre's representatives may find themselves, but below are some Principles to steer decision-making.

These Principles, and the responsibilities of King's Head Theatre staff to abide by them, will be listed in the Company Handbook, which is held as an appendix to their employment contract.

#### **1. The King's Head Theatre's Mission**

When senior management are considering a potentially contentious artistic choice, partnership, or funding opportunity, the King's Head Theatre's mission should be their touchstone.

*The King's Head was London's first and foremost pub theatre. Founded on a shoestring by Dan Crawford in 1970, it has helped launch the careers of stars aplenty, among them Joanna Lumley, Hugh Grant and Anthony Sher.*

*Characterised by an eccentric, anything-goes attitude, Crawford's King's Head Theatre entertained London theatre-goers including work by Tom Stoppard and Steven Berkoff, regularly transferred to the West End.*

*In 2010, Adam Spreadbury-Maher and OperaUpClose took over the reins and the King's Head Theatre was reborn as London's 'little opera house' with affordable, accessible opera at the heart of the programme. Five successful years followed before the company departed, leaving Spreadbury-Maher to steer the venue into the future.*

*Today, the King's Head Theatre is recognised for its unapologetically eclectic approach to programming; new writing, first revivals, musicals, opera, cabaret*

*and queer work sit side by side. Thanks to an in-house agreement with Equity, the King's Head Theatre are leading the way to ethical employment on the fringe whilst their resident trainee director's scheme continues to provide comprehensive, vocational and free training to the rising stars of tomorrow. In the last year alone, they have embarked upon co-productions at the Southwark Playhouse, Park Theatre and Wilton's Music Hall as well as a national and Australian tour of Trainspotting Live and transfers to the Edinburgh Fringe and Dublin Gay Theatre Festival.*

If the difficult decision might undermine or contradict the mission, and so expose the King's Head Theatre to reputational damage, then the decision should be escalated to Trustee level, and the below Checklist activated.

## **2. Public Trust**

In addition to our mission, we also have a duty to the public to be transparent and accountable, and always to act in the public interest. The government endorsed 'Seven Principles of Public Life' form a useful reminder for holders of public office:

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honesty
- Leadership

## **3. Personal Gain**

No individual should use his or her position at the King's Head Theatre for personal gain, or to benefit another at the expense of the King's Head Theatre, its mission, its reputation, or the public that it serves. Nor should any individual act in a way that could be reasonably seen by others as compromising the independence and integrity of the King's Head Theatre.

## **4. Conduct**

In all forms of activity and communication (written, oral, and social media), all King's Head Theatre representatives must:

- a) Conduct themselves in accordance with all applicable national and international laws at all times;
- b) Act to uphold the values and reputation of the King's Head Theatre;
- c) Act with honesty and integrity, and never knowingly mislead any person;
- d) Protect confidential information obtained during their work;
- e) Apply the ethical standards governing their particular profession.

## **5. Conflict of Interest**

Where conflicts of interest arise – actual, potential, or perceived – the duty of loyalty to the King's Head Theatre must not be compromised. All King's Head Theatre representatives must: be impartial, for example to

- a) Declare and make known any personal interests;
- b) Not give or receive any inducements that could, or could be seen to be in conflict with the interests of the King's Head Theatre;
- c) Not provide any services that could or could be seen to be in conflict with the interests of the King's Head Theatre;
- d) Not compete with the King's Head Theatre in any personal activity, unless previously approved at senior management level;
- e) Not accept any hospitality or other form of gift or reward which could be seen as an inducement.

## **6. People and the Environment**

The fair and equal treatment of our staff, artists and audiences, as well as our positive stewardship of the environment, are key values towards which all King's Head Theatre representatives have a responsibility.

### **Ethical Fundraising**

The King's Head Theatre accepts financial support from a wide variety of public and private funders who are willing to support us to accomplish our mission, and we are deeply grateful for their faith in our work.

The King's Head Theatre must ensure that we take our role as a public institution seriously and that we balance the financial needs of the organisation with our wider, ethical responsibilities.

### **Commitment to our donors and sponsors**

- The King's Head Theatre is committed to developing a positive relationship with donors.
- All donors are entitled to know how we spend the money they give so we will provide regular updates on how we are investing their donations in our artists' work.
- We will not provide donors' personal details to third parties who intend to make contact with the donor, without express permission.
- We will never harass potential or existing donors to financially support our work.
- We will give appropriate acknowledgement and recognition of donations.
- Fundraising income and expenditure will be monitored and reported in the published audited accounts and available on the Charity Commission website.

### **Responsibilities and Control**

Senior management control the activity of fundraising at the King's Head Theatre, which is carried out by the Executive Director. The senior management act on delegated authority from the Board, who retain overall responsibility for all decisions regarding the acceptance and refusal of donations.

Guidance issued by the Institute of Fundraising, and specifically cited by the Charity Commission, state that Trustees must not allow individual or collective views on

political or ethical issues that are not directly related to the interests of the charity to affect their judgment.

Consistent with the above Ethical Principles, the King's Head Theatre will not accept funds in circumstances when:

- a) The donation is over £250 and is made anonymously through an intermediary who is not prepared to identify the donor to anyone at the King's Head Theatre (Giving anonymous donations prohibit proper risk assessment/research. Of course, gifts can thereafter be credited anonymously to the public);
- b) The donor has acted, or is believed to have acted, illegally in the acquisition of funds, for example when funds are tainted through being the proceeds of criminal conduct; or,
- c) When acceptance of the funds would, in the joint judgment of the Board and senior management, significantly damage the effective operation of the King's Head Theatre in delivering its mission, whether because such acceptance would:
  - i. Harm the King's Head Theatre's relationship with other donors, partners, audiences or stakeholders;
  - ii. Create unacceptable conflicts of interest;
  - iii. Materially damage the reputation of the King's Head Theatre; or,
  - iv. Detrimentally affect the ability of the King's Head Theatre to fulfil its mission in any other way than is mentioned above.

## **Research**

At the King's Head Theatre, we work towards energetic fundraising with the tendency towards acceptance rather than rejection. So, when concerns arise, an appropriate level of research should be the first step taken, to avoid wasted resources or unclear solicitations of gifts.

### Individual Giving - £5,000 or more

The staff team will conduct public record research when soliciting gifts that have the potential to be £5,000 or more, and report their findings to senior management. If circumstances a-c above are subsequently suspected of a prospective donor, senior management will seek a Board decision before any approaches are made, or gifts accepted/rejected.

### Individual Giving – under £5,000

Although gifts worth less than £5,000 may not be subject to detailed scrutiny by senior management, acceptance will nevertheless be considered by the staff team against this Ethical Policy, and may be referred for further scrutiny if there is perceived to be a conflict with any of the principles set out above.

### Corporate Support

All corporate donors, sponsors or partners will be subject to the initial screening of publicly available information, with particular reference to any company activity that might be the source of reputational or ethical risk, such as pending major court cases, links to organised crime or terrorism, and prominent allegations. There should be a distinction between mere allegation, rumour or speculation on the one hand and confirmed fact or legal finding on the other, treating the former with caution although

not disregarding the same if it is considered that public perception alone carries a reputational risk for the King's Head Theatre, irrespective of the underlying truth. Again, if research backs the suspicion that the corporation may be involved in circumstances a-c above, senior management will seek a Board decision before any approaches are made, or gifts accepted/rejected.

#### Charitable Foundations

Donations and grants of any size from charitable foundations registered with the regulatory authorities in the UK, North America and European Foundation Centre (EFC) affiliated organisations will not normally be subject to an ethical review.

#### **Restricted Gifts**

Senior management may accept restricted gifts for particular projects provided those purposes are within King's Head Theatre's objects and capable of being carried out.

If the gifts are too difficult or costly to administer, or for purposes outside the purposes of the King's Head Theatre's, or would have a negative impact on the King's Head Theatre's reputation, then senior management can make the decision to accept/refuse the gift.

#### **Decision-Making Checklist**

This list is designed to help senior management and Trustees address dilemmas and arrive at well thought-through, clearly articulated decisions that are brave, rigorous and defensible.

1. Does the proposed course of action support our vision, mission and values?
2. Is it consistent with our Ethical Policy?
3. Have we weighed the risks against the benefits?
4. Has the course of action been discussed to an appropriate extent across the organisation?
5. Have we done enough research and taken sufficient advice from outside the organisation?
6. Has our governing body been sufficiently involved in the decision-making process, so that it is fully informed and in a position to endorse a decision?
7. If we decide to proceed, do we have a clear articulation of why we are pursuing the course of action and have we logged the decision-making process?