

# STORYHOUSE

Local community groups and over 300 school children welcomed Her Majesty The Queen accompanied by The Duchess of Sussex, as they formally opened Storyhouse on Thursday 14 June 2018, creating a momentous occasion for the city and region.

Storyhouse is a library, theatre and cinema. It is one of the country's most successful cultural buildings, with one million customers in its first year.

During a tour of the building Her Majesty The Queen and The Duchess of Sussex met members of Chester's community, hundreds of local school children and enjoyed a performance in the theatre by Storyhouse's repertory company.

Groups included:

- Storyhouse Young Leaders: local young people aged between 14-25 who work across the organisation to develop new skills, were coordinating arts and crafts (including slime making!) with pupils from Chester Blue Coat CE Primary School.
- Syrian Refugee Women's Group: supported by forfutures, were engaged in needlework. The group meets weekly at Storyhouse.
- Digital Buddies: a free IT intergenerational skills workshop and drop-in for anyone over 50, led by younger volunteers.
- Improv Gym, a weekly drama workshop for the over 50s, performed a short series of improvisations.
- Fallen Angels Dance Theatre: A Storyhouse Associate Company who work with individuals in recovery from addiction, performed an extract from their latest piece *Hooked Angels*.

A choir of over 300 primary school aged children, from 11 schools across Cheshire West and Chester performed the song: *Drop in the Ocean*. Schools included: Kelsall Primary School, University Church Free School, The Queen's Lower School, Chester Blue Coat CE Primary School, Upton Westlea Primary School, St Clare's Catholic Primary School, St Werburgh's R C School, Newton Primary School, Dee Point Primary School, Cherry Grove Primary School and The King's Junior School. Storyhouse's company of actors led the performance with a scene from *Swallows and Amazons*.

Police Community Support Officer Eva Williams read the popular children's stories *Freddie and the Fairy* by Julia Donaldson and *The Moonbird* by Joyce Dunbar to nursery children from Ash Grove

Farm Nursery in Chester in the storytelling room. Erica Jones from Deafness Support Network signed using British Sign Language.

In the theatre, Storyhouse's repertory company performed a medley of songs from their latest critically acclaimed production, *A Little Night Music* by Stephen Sondheim. Songs included *The Miller's Son* and *A Weekend in the Country*.

The audience in the theatre included Storyhouse's volunteers, staff, representatives from Cheshire West and Chester council, Arts Council England, the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, the University of Chester, and members of the design and build team of Storyhouse including architects Bennetts Associates. Plus, community groups Brightlife, Canal Street Day Centre Service Users, Chester Adult Phab and Storyhouse's charity partner, Passion for Learning.

The visit was concluded when HM The Queen unveiled a plaque commemorating the day. Posies were presented to Her Majesty and The Duchess by two members of Storyhouse's Youth Theatre: Lilja Fagan, age 7 (Newton Primary School) and Nye Egan-Simon, 6 (Oldfield Primary School). The posies, prepared by Fresh in Hoole, were made up of traditional English country garden blooms, including roses and peonies.

Andrew Bentley, chief executive of Storyhouse said: *"This amazing visit was made possible by the tremendous support we have in Chester and in the region and is testament to the degree to which our community has taken us to their hearts and for that we are immensely grateful and proud."*

Alex Clifton, artistic director of Storyhouse said *"it's a great honour to introduce our royal guests to so many of the wonderful communities we host here at Storyhouse"*

ENDS

For more contact  
Nancy Davies  
Marketing and PR Manager  
Storyhouse  
01244 747 417 / 07886 743 531

## **Storyhouse**

### **About Storyhouse**

Storyhouse is a library, theatre and cinema. It is one of the country's most successful cultural buildings, with one million customers in its first year.

The pioneering new library within Storyhouse, where members of the community work alongside city librarians, boasts the longest opening hours of any UK public library and is open every day until 11pm.

The company also runs a highly successful theatre company which has gained national acclaim for its new stage adaptations, including the first ever version of Enid Blyton's *The Secret Seven*. Storyhouse also runs the country's most successful regional open-air theatre company, in the city's main park.

Website: [www.storyhouse.com](http://www.storyhouse.com)

To subscribe, visit <https://www.storyhouse.com/subscribe>

Twitter: @storyhouselive

Facebook: [www.facebook.com/storyhouselive](https://www.facebook.com/storyhouselive)

Address: Hunter Street, Chester, CH1 2AR

Designed by Bennetts Associates and featuring an 800/500 seat-theatre; a 100-seat cinema; a 150-seat flexible studio theatre; library spaces; digital production and broadcast facilities; a café bar and restaurant. Storyhouse is carved from the Grade II listed art deco 1936 Odeon cinema and a brand-new state of the art glass extension. Cheshire West and Chester council committed an inspirational £32.5 million to fund the creation of Storyhouse.

### **Funding**

Storyhouse's £37m build cost was made possible by an inspiring investment from Cheshire West and Chester Council, with generous support from Arts Council England and major local employer MBNA. Funding was also attracted from major national charitable trusts and foundations.

A Seat Appeal and public campaign will allow local audiences to contribute, however large or small, and feel personally invested in Storyhouse.

In June 2016 Storyhouse received its first revenue funding - a multi-year 6-figure donation from Manchester-based Oglesby Charitable Trust to kick-start a major element of the community programme.

The production of *The Tempest* (in July 2018) has been kindly supported by Megan Gwynne-Jones Charitable Trust