

**EXETER CITY COUNCIL**

**SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – ECONOMY**

**18 JANUARY 2007**

**SHAKESPEARE IN THE GARDENS**

**ROUGEMONT GARDENS – 12 JULY – 12 AUGUST 2006**

**1. PURPOSE**

- 1.1 To inform Members of the success of the Northcott's production of Twelfth Night which was supported by the City Council.

**2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 The Northcott Theatre has been producing the annual "Shakespeare in the Gardens" in Rougemont Gardens since 1995. The production involves the creation of a 420 seat temporary auditorium and stage to make full use of the historic and "natural" setting of the gardens.
- 2.2 The event has grown in popularity attracting many people from within and outside Devon, and is now established in its own right as one of the key highlights in the city's growing annual programme of events.
- 2.3 The City Council has supported the event since 1998, with an annual grant of £10,000.

**3. THE 2006 EVENT**

- 3.1 Some 11,236 people attended the five week performance of Twelfth Night, between 12 July and 12 August 2006 achieving 85% of capacity, an increase of 5% on 2005.
- 3.2 Online ticket purchases accounted for 3,337 of sales, the remainder being from the theatre and Exeter Tickets box office on the High Street. 574 tickets were sold to school parties and group bookings and a further 563 were sold to students and under 16 year olds. The majority of tickets, 7,885, were sold at full price. The remainder were over 60's concessions and a limited number of complimentary tickets.
- 3.3 4,390 of the tickets were purchased by city residents whilst 5,733 were taken by people living outside the city but within Devon. A further 710 were purchased by those living outside Devon in the wider South West and across the UK.
- 3.4 Marketing of the production was extensive, with Twelfth Night being included in the theatre's summer brochure, which had a print run of 50,000 copies, distributed widely to households, shops, schools and businesses. It also featured in the Summer Festival brochure which has a 90,000 print run and is

similarly distributed very widely. Additionally posters, advertising and extensive preview and review coverage in regional newspapers and radio ensured that widespread exposure was achieved, helping also to raise the city's cultural profile. The production was also listed in "Pick of the Week" in the Guardian Guide on 29 July 2006.

**4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Council's contribution/grant to the production is £10,000 per annum.

**5. RECOMMENDATION**

- 5.1 That members note the performance of the Northcott Theatre's production of Shakespeare in the Gardens 2006.

**RICHARD BALL  
HEAD OF ECONOMY AND TOURISM**

**ECONOMY & DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE**

**Local Government (Access to information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

Background papers used in compiling this report: None