

Forward Plan 2026 - 2031



South London
Theatre

South London Theatre
SLT Fire Station, 2a Norwood High Street, Norwood, London SE27 9NS
Charity Registration No. 268210

Welcome!

I am delighted to introduce our first Forward Plan for South London Theatre.

SLT is a fantastic community of volunteers who deliver a hugely impressive range of theatre from our Grade II listed home in West Norwood. The energy and commitment of our members is remarkable. Volunteers give up evenings and weekends to run the wardrobe department, star in productions, raise vital funds, safeguard our youth theatre, organise insurance and building repairs, run the bar, rig and operate the lights, prepare the accounts and many, many more things. Without them all, we would not be able to create great theatre and have fun.

This plan aims to help us make sure that we can continue doing what we love into the future.

We asked members what they saw as the areas to maintain and the areas where we could improve. This plan is the response to those excellent inputs. We will use the plan to prioritise work and tell members about the progress that we are making.

SLT celebrates its 60th anniversary next year. That is an amazing achievement. Here's to many more!

Gerri McAndrew OBE
Chair

Our Vision

To support our members in producing quality theatre and enjoying being part of an inclusive and friendly performing arts community.

Our Mission

To create an ambitious and diverse programme of member-led performances from our heritage home which we will preserve and improve for the future.

2025

at SLT in numbers



415



41% up
since 2019

MEMBERS

230



ACTING ROLES

22

SHOWS

£9.8K



BAR TRANSACTIONS



1489

ICE CREAMS

3

37

RAFFLE SALES

£3,295

350

BAR SHIFTS

81%



ALL
FEMALE
CASTS

200 CLUB CASH
PRIZES

3

YOUTH CLASS
WAITING LISTS



TICKETS SOLD

62

WARDROBE
HIRES



£91K

ROOM HIRES

£300K

TURNOVER



Who we are



Susanne Joseph performing in
What If We Were Not Measured by Flora Blissett, directed by David Chappell
(Summer Shorts 2025)

At SLT we are passionate about theatre. We are a proud membership-led organisation whose members commit their time and energy to allow us to deliver a demanding programme of productions, operate a profitable theatre and a well-stocked wardrobe department, and run a members' bar. We also have a large, successful youth theatre group.

Our home is the SLT Fire Station in West Norwood, a listed building from 1881. It is a unique building with a modern, purpose-built professional theatre extension with up to 110 seats. The fire station has rehearsal and training rooms, and a range of rooms and facilities to rent to the local community to cover our costs. We cherish our building and its fascinating history, and work to preserve and improve it.

Come and join us!

Our impact

We support our members in developing their skills, in performance, as well as technical and backstage skills such wardrobe, technical and direction. We support new writing through our shorts programme and our Theatre Committee.

We have a lively social scene in our members' club bar with quizzes and other socials. The bar can become a community social hub during Good Ship Comedy nights, staged quarterly in our theatre space.

Our priorities

South London Theatre has always been driven by the talent, passion and goodwill of its members. Much of what we do already works brilliantly — we produce great theatre, we welcome new members every year, and we've rebuilt a thriving community through periods of challenge and uncertainty. But as our organisation grows and moves into the future, so do the pressures on our volunteers, our finances and our special, ageing building. The world around us is changing too, and we want to make sure we're keeping pace.

This Forward Plan is not about reinventing who we are. It's about making sure we can continue to do what we do well, while strengthening the areas that need more support. It helps us look ahead, make informed decisions, and stay sustainable for the next five years and beyond. **Based on the inputs from our members, we are going to focus on 7 areas:...**

Our 7 priorities

1

Ensure our theatre is **welcoming to everyone** and **that our members have fun**

2

Improve our **volunteer processes** for our brilliant members, giving **opportunities for all**

3

Continue to produce **quality theatre** using feedback to **continuously improve**

4

Safeguard and future-proof our beloved **heritage building home**, managing running costs and reducing our impact

5

Increase **fundraising** and identify ways to generate more **revenue**

6

Strengthen engagement with our **local community**, including through our successful youth theatre

7

Ensuring that South London Theatre **continues into the future** for our members and for our community

What we'll do

1

Ensure our theatre is
welcoming to everyone
and that our members
have fun

We offer a place for socialising and connecting over our shared love of theatre. Our SLT community is friendly and welcoming. We want to make sure that new members experience that when they join.

We recognise that we can do more to improve the diversity of our membership and our audiences, and we will.

Our members join SLT to have fun – we can do more to make membership rewarding, including for members not in a production.

We will:

1. Dial up the fun and create more social events for our members, including as part of celebrating our 60th anniversary in 2027.
2. Set out how we will work to improve our diversity, learning from initiatives and experiences of other community theatre groups.
3. Do more to celebrate our productions and improve member communications.

DATES: During 2026 and ongoing. 2027 for 60th Anniversary.

What we'll do

2

Improve our **volunteer processes** for our brilliant members, giving **opportunities for all**

Our volunteers may have varied experiences when they choose to offer their time. We want to make volunteering easier, more accessible, safer and enjoyable for all.

It's important for us to develop clear policies to get this right first time, and to give members the opportunities that they seek on stage, front of house and behind the scenes, clearly and fairly.

We will:

1. Make opportunities clearer for all members, especially for technical roles.
2. Ask for a volunteer to act as volunteer coordinator to improve our processes and experiences. This may need to be a paid role in future.

DATES: Complete by summer 2026

What we'll do

3

Continue to produce **quality theatre** using feedback to **continuously improve**

We want to give our members the best possible environment in which to create memorable performances.

We will:

1. Produce a plan to upgrade and broaden our theatre technical equipment, and bid for grants to implement it.
2. Implement better feedback mechanisms, from the production team and audience, for each production to learn and improve.
3. Review how the Theatre Committee can support the overall strategy of the theatre.
4. Create opportunities for members to learn and improve skills including performance, stage management and technical.

DATES: During 2026 and on-going.

What we'll do

4

Safeguard and future-proof our beloved **heritage building home**, managing running costs and reducing our impact

Running a theatre in a listed building brings its challenges. We have a duty to protect the building, respecting its original features, whilst keeping our members safe, warm and dry.

We will:

1. Complete a long-term maintenance programme for the building and longer-term costs (such as the roof).
2. Establish a plan for improvements to address damp, uncomfortable summer temperatures, and high running costs, and reduce our environmental impact.
3. Explore whether a further building extension better guarantees SLT's future.
4. Cultivate the relationship with Lambeth as freeholders of the building.

DATES: Maintenance programme and plan agreed 2026. A possible further building extension is a longer term project (~2028).

What we'll do

5

Increase **fundraising** and identify ways to generate more **revenue**

SLT's excellent modern theatre was made possible with a substantial loan from Lambeth Council which needs to be repaid (£218,500 remaining). We have also identified a further £200,000 of necessary work to maintain and improve the building.

We will have a stronger focus on fund-raising whilst ensuring our productions remain affordable.

We will:

1. Assign a lead Trustee to identify grant opportunities and fund-raising.
2. Adopt budgets for different revenue areas and propose targets.
3. Develop a strategy for donors that want to support us.
4. Review the marketing strategy for our productions, room and wardrobe hire, membership and sponsorship options, and Members' Bar events.

DATES: 2026 and on-going

What we'll do

6

Strengthen engagement with our **local community**, including through our successful youth theatre

Our love of theatre and its ability to change people's lives means that we can offer something important to our community.

We want to be seen as a part of the wider Lambeth community and neighbouring boroughs, other local charitable and arts organisations, and local residents.

We will:

1. Put in place a strategy for the continued success of the Youth Theatre and its future.
2. Make ourselves more visible in West Norwood, our home, so that we are recognised as a valuable part of the local community.

DATES: 2026 onwards.

What we'll do

7

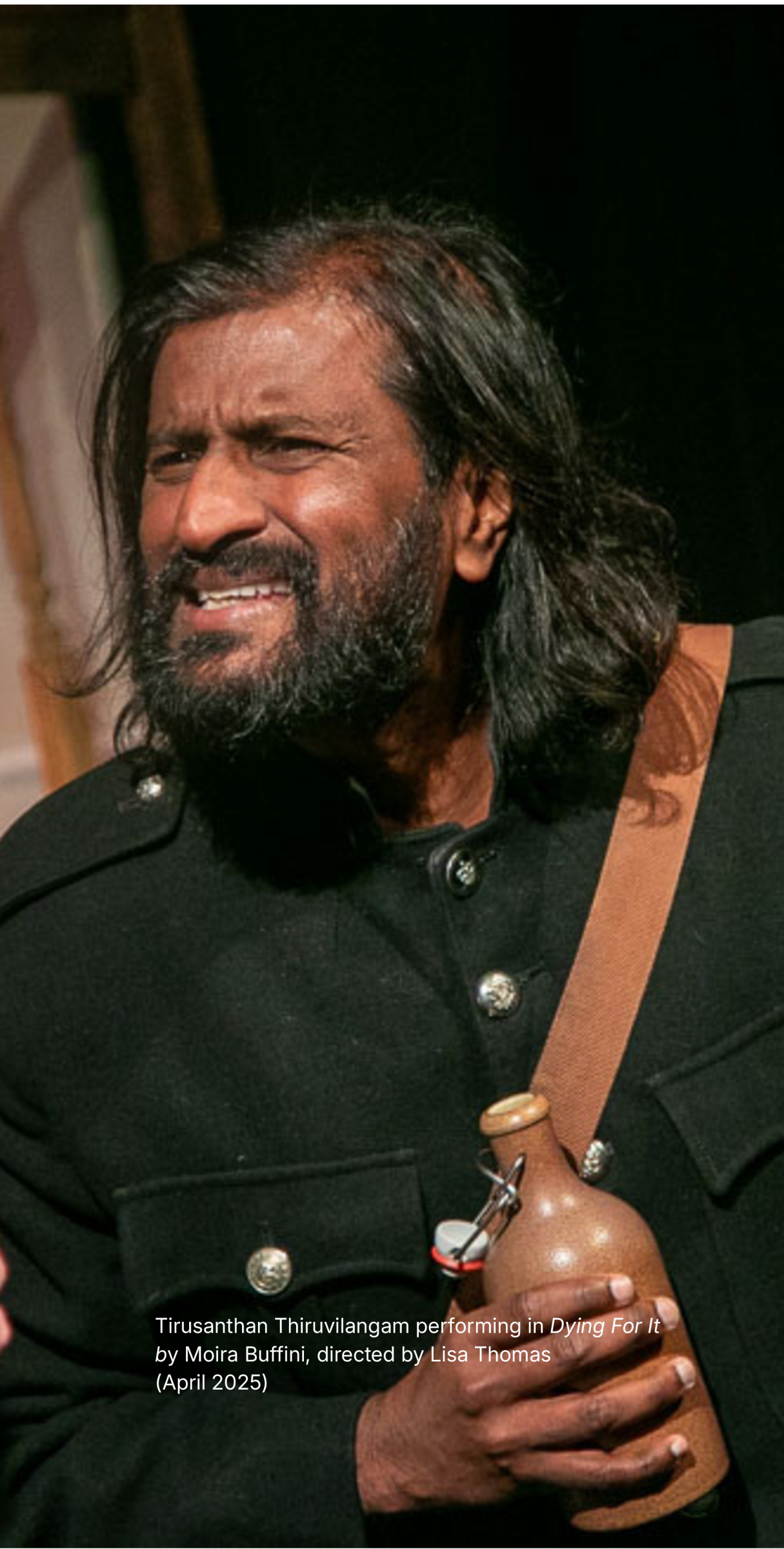
Ensuring that South
London Theatre
continues into the future
for our members and for
our community

Every production requires behind-the-scenes work, and every theatre needs to be safe, financially resilient and well run.

We will:

1. Ensure that we safeguard our members and our youth theatre with training and effective, high-quality protection.
2. Strengthen leadership structures, setting out clearly defined roles and responsibilities, and communicate that to the membership.
3. Establish effective succession planning for key roles to pass on knowledge and maintain organisational stability.
4. Ensure that our policies and procedures are up to date with any legal requirements and operational needs, and that they are followed throughout SLT.
5. Ensure that we produce quality theatre that meets the objectives of the Charity.
6. Review SLT Governance every 5 years

DATES: Immediate and on-going.



Tirusanthan Thiruvilangam performing in *Dying For It*
by Moira Buffini, directed by Lisa Thomas
(April 2025)

Why we are doing this

This Forward Plan is about maintaining what we do well, ensuring that that can continue, and anticipating improvements that could be made or which need to be made to cope with expected changes ahead.

This plan will mean that we will have:

- A plan for long-term maintenance and significant building costs, with a view to future-proofing the building;
- Better support for our members and volunteers by making roles clearer, easier and more rewarding;
- Improved diversity, inclusion, a sense of belonging and the overall experience of being an SLT member;
- Stronger connections with the local community which should bring more people into our work; and
- A way of running ourselves (our governance model) that helps ensure continuity as different members take on leadership roles.

How we will get there

We will track our progress on all the elements of this Forward Plan through our different boards and committees and will report regularly to the members through our newsletters and other communications, and our Annual General Meetings.

The plan is consciously realistic in its objectives given how much time and effort our members already contribute.

The cast of Roald Dahl's James And The Giant Peach
by David Wood, music by John Trent Wallace, directed
by Simon Gleisner
(July 2025)





Chantal Gregory performing in *Round and Round the Garden*
by Alan Ayckbourn
(March 2025)

Our financials

After a difficult period during the pandemic, SLT is back in a sustainable financial position with our revenue exceeding our costs. That means that we have enough funds to pay a fair working wage to our paid staff, cover our debt with Lambeth Council, and maintain and improve our home.

Our outstanding debt with Lambeth Council is £218,500, so we need to generate enough revenue to pay the interest and the debt itself meaning that everything we do needs to generate a surplus.

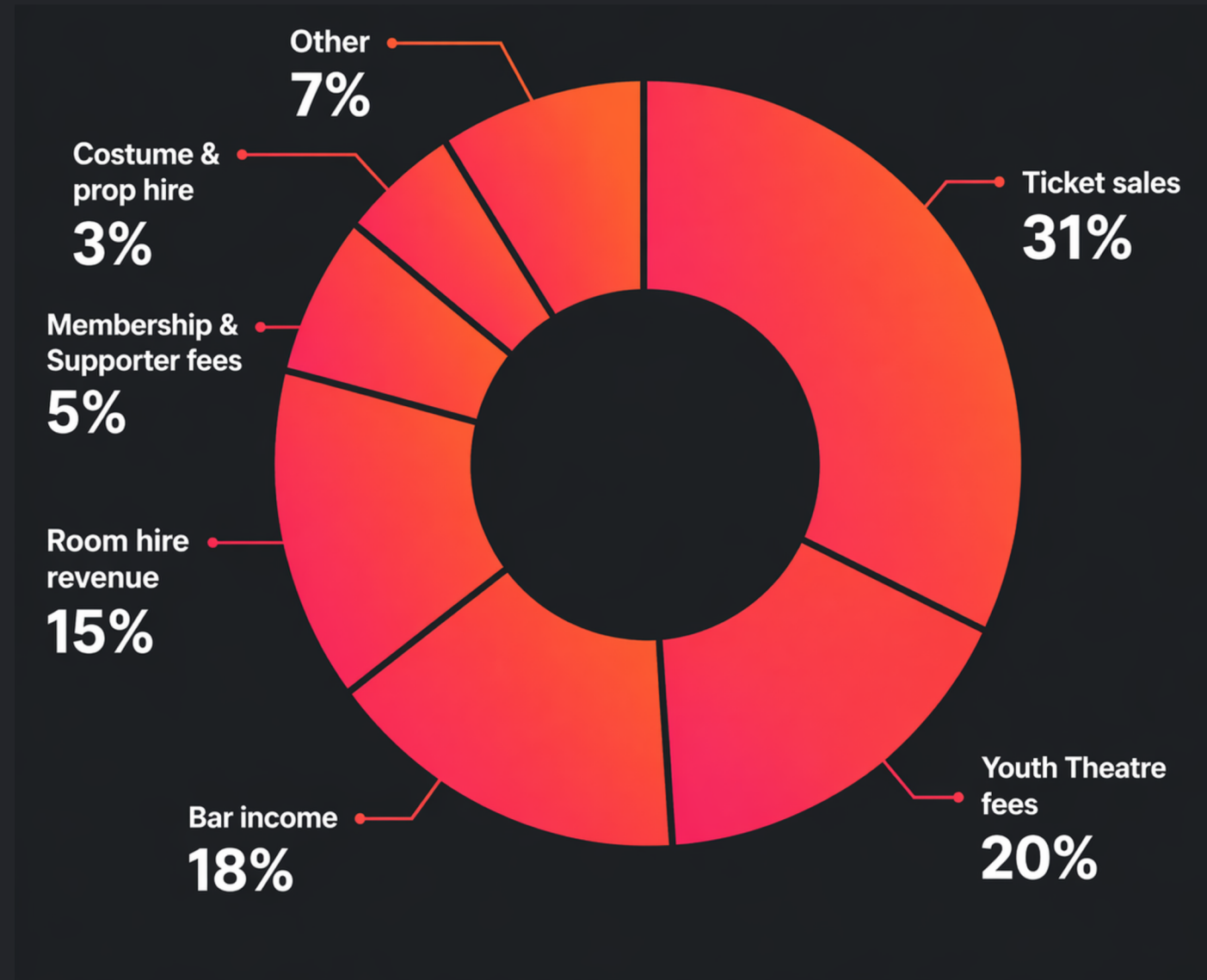
On top of that, we need to raise funds for significant improvements to our building or our facilities, for example our technical equipment. Around £250,000 of work is necessary to maintain or improve the building over the next 5 years. The Trustees will seek funding opportunities such as charity grants for this work. We will also develop new ways to work with potential donors.

SLT is a large organisation, with income and expenditure of £300,000 a year, but we don't have much margin and any significant reduction in revenue, or any unexpected major costs, could have a real impact. SLT has policies in place to ensure that we have at least 3 months of funds in reserve in case something unexpected happens.

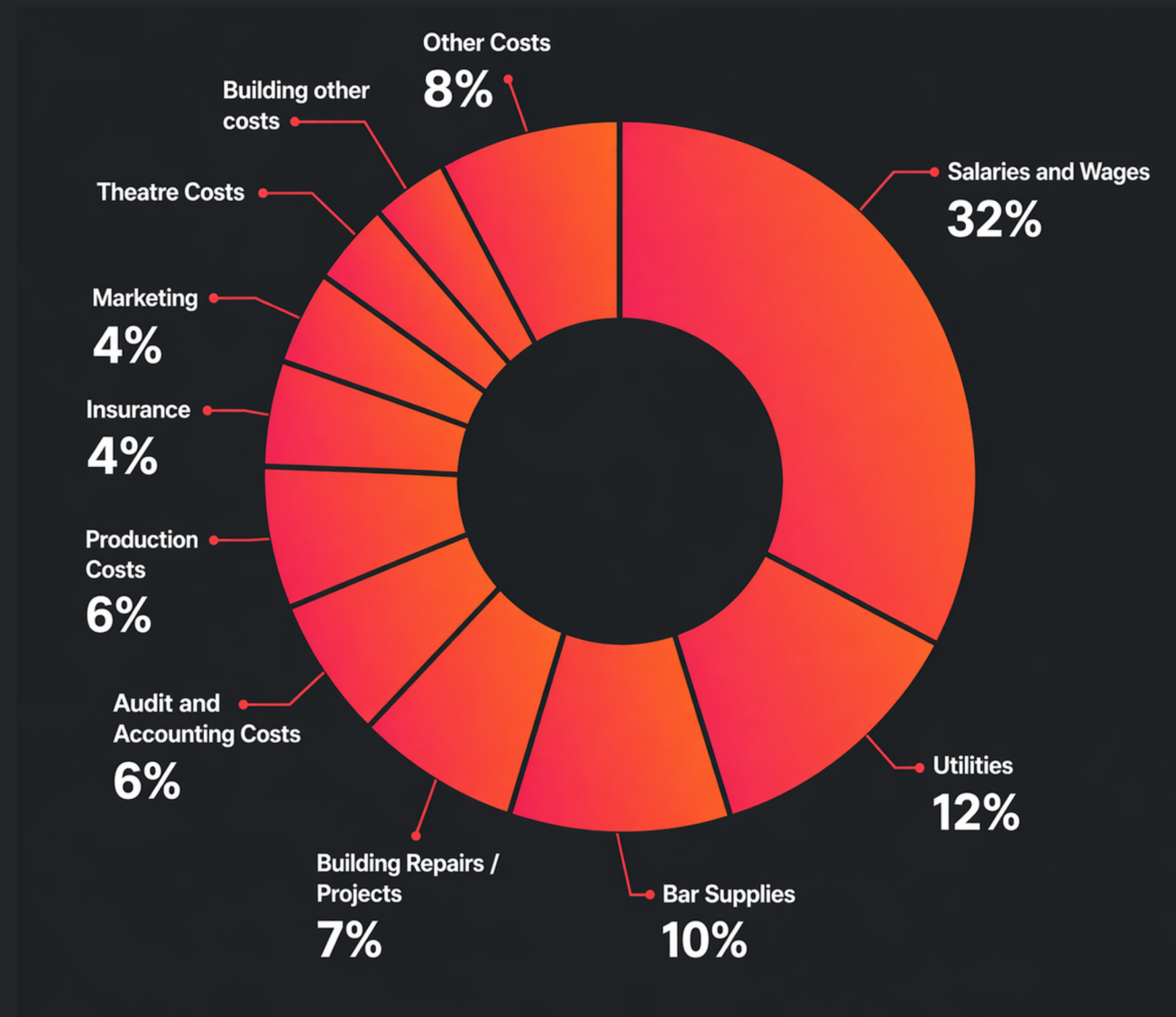
The following charts show how income and expenditure relate to SLT's activities, based on 2025.

Our financials

Revenue for 2025



Expenditure for 2025



How we're organised

Board of Trustees

Theatre Committee

Executive Committee

Youth Theatre

Building Committee

Bar Committee

We have a wide range of policies and procedures in place including for complaints.

How we're organised

Board of Trustees

Elected by, and accountable to, the membership. A team of between 7 and 9 Trustees is responsible in law for ensuring the two charitable organisations (South London Theatre Centre (SLT) and the Building Preservation Trust (BPT)) are functioning well and that they operate within the laws and rules that apply, and meet their charitable objectives. The Board meets a minimum of 4 times a year, but usually much more often. The Trustees are listed on Company's House.

Executive Committee

Handles the day to day running of the theatre and the building. It is made up of representatives from teams and committees that run all SLT and BPT functions and is accountable to the Board of Trustees. The committee deals with any issues and conflicts that arise with our different activities.

Building Committee

Handles the day-to-day running of the building, including the renting of space to the local community. The team manage building restoration and improvement projects.

How we're organised

Theatre Committee

Responsible for the artistic output of SLT. It selects the season of productions and works with directors to make sure they are successful. It oversees auditions and rehearsals. It will organise workshops, training and other creative learning opportunities for members.

Youth Theatre

Run by individuals employed to create learning and development opportunities on behalf of SLT and deliver its very popular youth classes. The Trustee Board ensures that safeguarding procedures work effectively with trained and cleared staff.

Bar Committee

Runs the theatre bar which is a private members' club available to SLT members, and also to ticket holders on show nights. It also oversees member social events.

Get involved



Come to an Open Evening

Find out more in person every month



Audition for one of our Productions

Open auditions with a friendly welcome



Direct a Production

Shape and polish one of our shows



Join as a Full Member

For performing, volunteering and holding a stake in SLT



Support us

Help keep our lights going up and gain ticket benefits



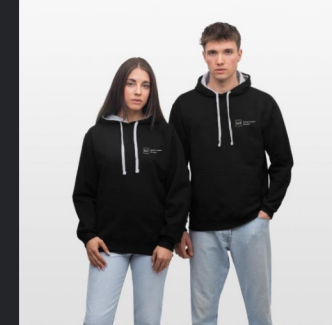
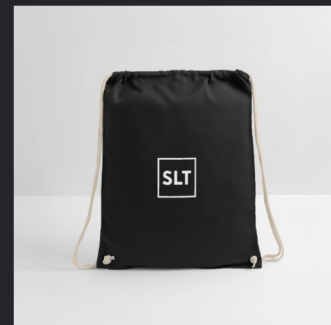
Join our Youth Theatre

Personal development and creative fun for 6-18yr olds



Scan this QR code to see all the ways you can get involved at SLT

Or visit: [southlondontheatre.co.uk/join-in](https://www.southlondontheatre.co.uk/join-in)



Scan this QR code to buy our merchandise



Or visit: <https://www.southlondontheatre.co.uk/slt-merchandise-spreadshirt/#!/>

