



General Manager  
Recruitment pack  
January 2025

**SSC** Stamford  
Shakespeare  
Company

 **Tolethorpe**

## Welcome from the Chair, Natasha Rose

Thank you for your interest in the General Manager position at Stamford Shakespeare Company. It is an exciting time to join this unique organisation and be instrumental in leading all aspects of day-to-day management in a setting like no other.

Although officially Stamford Shakespeare Company, we are known to thousands of visitors every year as simply 'Tolethorpe', the name of the historic estate and house which is our home. A summer night at Tolethorpe, having a picnic overlooking the Hall before watching an open air play in a natural setting from a covered 600 seat auditorium, is a special tradition for many who come from near and far to see the three-month summer season.

Managing the many moving parts of the operation requires someone with management and budgetary experience, who enjoys the challenges of multitasking, and who is equally passionate about the on and off stage workings of the theatre.

At our heart, we are a volunteer-led organisation, with every production being created by people who do it for the love of the theatre. The General Manager will need to be equally adept at managing the parts of the organisation that the employed staff are responsible for, as well as those delivered by the volunteer membership.

This role is a chance for someone to make their mark with us, guiding the essential operations of one of the region's artistic and tourist jewels, ensuring we remain a successful and effectively managed venue for years to come.





## About the Company

The roots of the Company still define our ethos. The stunning Hall, grounds and theatre we occupy today were rescued, restored and built by the original members of the Company. It is a legacy that we treasure and it is part of what makes Tolethorpe unique.

Initially founded in 1968 by RADA graduate Jean Harley, Stamford Shakespeare Company staged plays in the garden of Stamford's historic George Hotel. When building work at the hotel meant this was no longer possible, the Company had to quickly find a new home. Fortuitously, in 1977, the derelict Tolethorpe Hall came on the market, having stood empty for nine years.

Parts of the Hall had no roof at all and the building was unusable, but in the grounds a natural grassy amphitheatre sparked Jean's interest as the perfect location for a stage. Although having just £78 in the bank, a generous loan from a local businessman allowed the Company to purchase the Hall - with just eight weeks left to create a stage, build an auditorium and rehearse two plays.



Fast forward to 2025 and you can now see a restored Hall; gardens landscaped by Bunny Guinness; an in-season restaurant, bar and shop; an Orangery rehearsal room and function space; a thriving youth theatre school; and the theatre itself, the Rutland Open Air Theatre. Capacity was increased to 600 padded seats in 1993, and the high-tensile permanent canopy added at the same time pre-dated similar structures such as the Millennium Dome.

The summer season runs throughout June, July and August, with three plays in rotation. Different patterns have been used over the years, but at least one play each year is by Shakespeare. The summer 2025 season will include *Macbeth*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and Agatha Christie's *The Mirror Crack'd*. They will be joined by a limited run of *Wuthering Heights* performed by the Theatre Makers company of young adults and graduates from the Tolethorpe Youth Drama (TYD) school.

Stamford Shakespeare Company is a Registered Charity, with the stated aim to produce plays and encourage the arts to “*promote, maintain, improve and advance public education*”. In addition to the main season, these aims are achieved through:

- TYD classes and Theatre Makers company
- Opportunities for schools and discounted tickets
- Our local profile in the active arts community
- Our open membership and continued amateur status.





## The Role

The post of General Manager is a new role, reporting to the Board of Directors. It is a varied position that is responsible for overseeing all aspects of operations and the smooth and efficient running of the theatre. It requires someone with experience of different levels of organisational management, from budgets to employees, and someone who can enhance the theatre's reputation and success.

There have been some significant changes and challenges over the past few years, not least due to the Covid pandemic. Financial aid from grants and our 'Save Your Theatre' campaign ensured the theatre's survival, but as costs have risen and audience numbers have not fully returned to pre-pandemic levels, the operating environment is challenging. Audience behaviour and booking patterns have changed in the last ten years and there is a need to develop new audiences for the future, as well as continuing to appeal to faithful patrons who have attended for many years.

The theatre brought the Box Office in-house for the 2023 season and a new website was developed; both projects requiring significant investment in an attempt to secure the future benefits. Spectacular sets and costumes are key attractions for many of our audience members, but have also seen drastic cost increases in recent years.



As the Company and operations have grown, so have the needs to formalise processes, manage employees and ensure a high standard even though we remain volunteer-driven. Financial management, therefore, is essential in ensuring stability, controlling costs, and overseeing opportunities for revenue such as sponsorships, fundraising and grants.

A small team of employed staff work in day to day administration and bigger areas of responsibility such as wardrobe and the estate. The General Manager will lead on managing these staff, fostering a positive and productive work environment, conducting regular performance reviews, and communicating effectively.

The General Manager will serve as the primary point of contact between the theatre and the Board of Directors, preparing and presenting regular operational and financial reports and assisting the Board in strategic decision-making and policy development.

Artistic output is overseen by the Board. The General Manager will play a key part in collaborating with them and the production teams of the different plays to schedule the logistics of rehearsal stage time, performances and events.



The General Manager is a full time position, based at Tolethorpe Hall, with occasional evening and weekend work required and some travel for meetings and events.

Full details of the role can be found in the accompanying job description.

Closing date:

**Friday 17 January 2025**

Applications to be sent to:

**[Recruitment@tolethorpe.co.uk](mailto:Recruitment@tolethorpe.co.uk)**





## You and your experience

- Proven experience in theatre management or a similar role with a successful track record.
- Strong financial acumen and experience managing budgets and using data to inform strategies.
- Excellent leadership and interpersonal skills with the ability to motivate those around you.
- Ability to work under pressure and flexibility to handle multiple tasks simultaneously.
- Passion for the arts and commitment to community engagement.



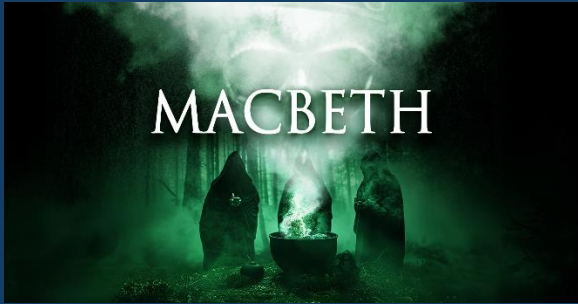
## About the area

Tolethorpe Hall and the theatre are located in the village of Little Casterton, on the edge of Rutland and the Georgian market town of Stamford in South Lincolnshire. Stamford was the first Conservation Area in England, a town steeped in history, regularly used as a film location and named as one of the best places to live in the UK.

Transport links are excellent, with Cambridge, Nottingham and Leicester all within an hour by road, and London under an hour by train from Peterborough.







**Stamford Shakespeare Company**

**Rutland Open Air Theatre**

**Tolethorpe Hall**

**Little Casterton**

**Stamford**

**Lincolnshire**

**PE9 4BH**

[tolethorpe.co.uk](http://tolethorpe.co.uk)

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