



**Press release embargoed until 11am, Tuesday 22 November 2022**

## **Eden Court tackles the Cost of Living crisis head on**

**Eden Court has today announced a range of measures to support audiences, artists and residents of Inverness to access the arts, while also laying out measures to protect the organisation for the long-term.**

A series of measures designed to help as many people in the Highlands as possible to continue enjoying the arts this winter has been shared by Eden Court today.

Eden Court has registered with the Warm Welcome campaign and a warm welcome awaits everyone who wishes to spend time at Eden Court - use it as a warm space to study, read a book, let your mind wander, get warm, or just be around others.

**In addition, and in recognition of the increasing financial stresses being felt by so many, a number of measures for audiences and communities are being put in place.**

- A new low-income cinema ticket price of £5.50. This is available to those who feel Eden Court's standard ticket price is unaffordable for them. This is based entirely on trust with no requirement to show proof of any kind and can be purchased online or at the box office, no questions asked.
- A new low-income ticket price of £5.50 for most of the OneTouch Theatre performance, based on the same principles as the low-income cinema ticket. This is limited to an allocated number of tickets per performance.
- A pay-it-forward scheme for the classes programme. Customers purchasing a classes subscription can opt to pay a higher priced subscription and this additional cost is then added to a fund that can be used to subsidise subscriptions for those who cannot access a full price subscription. This scheme has proven to be successful and a number of participants have already benefitted from it.
- Eden Court's Community Table – a free, allocated meeting space for community groups.

The impact of inflation and the slow return to full houses across the UK theatre sector following the pandemic also impacts the charity as well as audience members and artists. Following a period of planning and consultation, the arts organisation has recently taken moves to ensure that it will remain a viable and financially stable business for the long-term.

With staff costs accounting for approximately 50% of expenditure, Eden Court has undergone a staff consultation and voluntary redundancy process, and regrettably has just concluded a compulsory redundancy process [losing in the region of 10% of staff from the 143 strong workforce].

Moves to ensure the future health of Eden Court will also include a reduction in **building opening hours** by 20% from 9 January 2023, opening an hour later Wednesday to Sunday (at 11am), and at 4pm on the traditionally quieter Mondays and Tuesdays. These proposed hours enable the venue to stay open as a community space seven days a week, whilst also allowing a reduction in running costs.

The daytime café offer of soups, sandwiches and cakes will continue, but in **a new development, Eden Court will be working with food and drink partners** to provide audiences and diners with a regularly rotating food offer. Each residency will be two to three months long and will seek to bring a variety of culinary offers to audiences.

Eden Court will continue to present a thriving live performance programme, covering the breadth of opera, ballet, drama, musicals, comedy, orchestras and much more - with many fantastic shows to look forward to in 2023.

Eden Court is deepening its support for **local creatives** with the launch of **Eden Court Connect** which offers artists, producers or creative industry professionals living or working in the Highlands a new, free membership scheme which offers benefits including discounted tickets to live performances, networking opportunities, access to creative space, hot desk space, one-to-one producer surgeries with the Eden Court producing department and more.

Eden Court's key funders are aware and supportive of the actions being taken to manage the charity through this period.

**Rebecca Holt, Chief Executive, Eden Court, said:**

“Eden Court, along with many others in the UK theatre sector, is facing significant financial challenges.

“In order to protect Eden Court to best serve artists, audiences and our community into the future and to ensure its financial stability, we have carried out a detailed financial modelling process looking at every area of the organisation, which regrettably has included staff roles. The team here at Eden Court is incredibly creative, kind and hard working. Whilst we've been able to preserve the majority of jobs, any redundancy is painful and my sincere thanks and respect goes to all the team for their grace and understanding in this difficult time.

“We are proud of the vital role that Eden Court played for so many through the pandemic, operating as a humanitarian aid centre, and we once again want to ensure

that we can be a place of solace, relief and escapism during this crisis. Not just for audiences but for artists too. We hope that the initiatives we have announced today will keep our building bustling and allow a little relief for as many as possible this winter.”

**Don Robertson, Chair of Eden Court’s Board of Directors, said:**

“Eden Court faces enormous financial challenges due to significantly increased operating costs and lower ticket sales revenues. This is a common issue across the arts sector and has unfortunately resulted in the closure of some key Scottish venues.

Eden Court trustees have approved a decisive plan of action to avoid us incurring a financial deficit which would have threatened the long term sustainability of the charity. Through these actions and with the continued support of our audiences, staff and funders we believe that we can secure the future of this vital and highly valued Highland asset.”

**ENDS/**

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## **ABOUT EDEN COURT**

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[www.eden-court.co.uk](http://www.eden-court.co.uk)

## **NOTES TO EDITORS**

- Eden Court is a registered charity and is the largest multi-arts venue in Scotland housing 2 theatres, 2 cinemas, 2 dance studios plus conference and meeting spaces. It presents live performances, film screenings and a weekly classes programme. This activity attracts an audience of over 300,000 people annually.
- Eden Court runs an extensive creative learning and community engagement programme. As well as the building-based programme of weekly classes, youth theatre and youth dance, Eden Court also works with schools across the region. It is the only theatre in Scotland to offer Scottish Qualifications Authority (SQA) courses in Drama and Dance and an AS Level in Moving Image Arts. These qualification courses are open to pupils from across the Highlands.
- Eden Court is also a Scottish Government partner for Cashback for Communities, delivering its flagship CashBack Highlands programme, where seized criminal assets are redistributed to provide meaningful artistic activity for young people at risk.
- Eden Court is a registered charity and is grateful to receive regular funding from Creative Scotland and the Highland Council.