

MEETING: 19/06/2014

Ref: 12055

## ASSESSMENT CATEGORY - Making London More Inclusive

Wilton's Music Hall Trust

Adv: Ciaran Rafferty  
Base: Tower Hamlets  
Benefit: London-wide

Amount requested: £100,000

**The Charity:** Wilton's Music Hall (WMH) is the charitable company responsible for the upkeep of the music hall and related facilities located off Cable St E1 and for delivering its community arts and education programmes. It was established in 2004 although the hall and buildings date back to the 18<sup>th</sup> century.

**The Application:** WMH has recently embarked on Phase 2 of an extensive refurbishment programme which will encompass a range of access improvements for people with disabilities, - such as accessible toilets, upgrading the lift, levelling of floors, widening doorways, etc. This application seeks a capital contribution of £100,000 towards the estimated £230,000 cost of these access-related works and meets your criteria for funding.

**The Recommendation:** Whilst the organisation has significant revenue income targets to meet in the current financial year (see below) audited accounts for the past 5 years show a history of returning an overall surplus in each of those years and it is your officer's opinion that it is suitable for the capital investment as recommended: **£100,000 towards the costs of disabled access works in Phase 2 of the capital project.**

### Funding History

None

### Background and detail of proposal

Wilton's Music Hall is a unique building comprising a mid-19th Century Grand Music Hall (the oldest in the world) attached to an 18th Century terrace of three houses and a pub. Originally an alehouse dating from 1743 or earlier, it may well have served the sea captains and wealthy merchants who lived in neighbouring Wellclose Square. In 1839 a concert room was built behind the pub which became the "Magnificent New Music Hall" in 1859, after John Wilton bought the business.

By the end of the 19th Century the East End had become notorious for extreme poverty and terrible living conditions. Religious organisations tried to help. In 1888 Wilton's was bought by the East London Methodist Mission. During the Great Dock Strike of 1889 a soup kitchen was set up, feeding a thousand meals a day to the starving dockers' families. The Mission remained open for nearly 70 years, through some of the most testing periods in East End history, including the 1936 Mosley March and the London blitz. Throughout that time the Methodists campaigned against social abuses, welcomed people of all creeds and ethnicity, and gave invaluable support to the local community, particularly the needy children of the area.

After the Second World War, the area was subject to compulsory purchase and scheduled for demolition as part of the slum clearance schemes of the 1960s. The Methodists had to leave and Wilton's was scheduled for demolition. A campaign was

started to save the building (with support from people such as Sir John Betjeman, Peter Sellars and Spike Milligan). Although it was Grade II\* listed in 1971 it had been empty from 1956 onwards, suffering much structural damage and decay. It started to reopen as a theatre and concert hall in 1997 and, in 2007, was placed on the World Monuments Fund Watch List.

Over the last decade WMH has been bringing the building back to life. Now this historic Music Hall – described by the Theatres Trust as “*of outstanding architectural and archaeological significance*” - is a thriving arts and heritage venue, entertaining thousands of people each year. As well as staging a regular series of events and performances, the charity also runs a creative learning programme, reaching hundreds of school children and the wider community.

The Wilton's Team has successfully fundraised for, and implemented, Phase 1 (to secure the core fabric of the building). Phase 2 - where the facilities will be brought up to modern standards as far as is possible - has commenced and is estimated to cost c.£2.6m in total. Most of this has now been raised or pledged. The proposed access works (costing at least £230,000) have been informed by a comprehensive, independent, access audit and disabled people will be consulted throughout the refurbishment works to ensure that the best possible outcomes are achieved. Works are scheduled to be completed in the autumn of 2015.

### Financial Information

The large surplus on restricted funds in 2012/13 was largely due to the receipt of £3.11m of grants towards the capital project. If this sum was removed the overall outturn would be a deficit of £48,213.

Year-end at 30 September	2012/13 Audited £	2013/14 Current year Forecast £
<b>Income and Expenditure</b>		
Income	4,388,472	1,329,289
Expenditure	1,326,685	1,280,000
Unrestricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	(55,109)	15,500
Restricted Funds Surplus / (Deficit)	3,116,896	33,789
<b>Total Surplus / (Deficit)</b>	<b>3,061,787</b>	<b>49,289</b>
Surplus / (Deficit) as a % of turnover	70%	4%
<b>Free unrestricted reserves</b>		
Unrestricted free reserves held at 30 September	152,451	167,951
~ how many months worth of expenditure	1.4	1.6
Reserves Policy target (3 to 6 months worth)	663,343	640,000
~ how many months worth of expenditure	6	6
Free reserves over target / (under target)	(510,892)	(472,049)

Of the total forecast income for the current year £235,000 (18%) had been confirmed as of 22<sup>nd</sup> May. Most of the charity's revenue comes from trading (eg bar/food; productions and events; and general donations and subscriptions) and is received/confirmed over the course of a whole year rather than in substantial blocks in advance (as with grant income).