



PRESS RELEASE

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In Your Space Circus announces major capital project

Derry-based arts charity In Your Space Circus (IYSC) is today announcing plans to develop the Cathedral School, located at St Columb's Cathedral in Derry's Cathedral Quarter area.

In a unique partnership with St Columb's Cathedral, IYSC has taken a lease on the stunning Cathedral School building with plans to refurbish the building into a Circus School and circus arts venue.

The heritage building is considered 'at risk' and requires significant work internally to make it inhabitable. IYSC has secured initial funding to embark on a major capital fundraising campaign to attract funding, investment and donations to enable the organisation to restore and fit-out the building.

Both In Your Space Circus and St Columb's Cathedral are excited to be breathing life back into the building and reinstating it as a 'school', offering access to children, young people, adults and artists from across the City and region to learn, play and create.

Robert McGonigle, Parish Administrator of St Columb's Cathedral said: '

'St Columb's Cathedral is thrilled to be entering into a new and exciting era in the life of one of the most iconic buildings in the city, with In Your Space Circus. The Old Cathedral School has gone through quite a few years of uncertainty since completion of phase 1 of its restoration, and it is with great expectation that we have agreed this lease with IYSC as our tenant and we're confident it has the potential to secure the future of the building. This is a very important milestone for both organisations and we will give them every support and encouragement as they progress to fundraising for the completion of the works and inject life back into the building. The project will be a marvellous addition to the existing Cathedral Quarter arts family, dovetailing with The Playhouse, CCA and The Newgate Centre.'

The building will be used to deliver circus training and workshops, provide artists with a training and collaboration space, host events, create artistic productions, develop new tourism products, and invite international residencies.

IYSC's ambition is to nurture local talent and attract artists from outside of the City in their new circus arts venue. The project will mark a significant milestone in the history of IYSC and will allow the organisation to reach its full potential.

Cath McBride, Company Director said:

'We have been searching for a suitable home for the past 10 years; which has been challenging due to the unique requirements of circus.'

The Cathedral School is the perfect building to house our work in terms of size, location and historical significance. We are confident that it will mark a significant milestone in our history and will have an enormous impact on our work with local artists and beneficiaries.

We could not be more delighted with this opportunity! We feel privileged to have become the custodians of one of Derry's most stunning heritage assets, and despite the fundraising challenge in front of us, we just cannot wait to get into the building and make it our home!'

The project has already attracted interest from a range of funding bodies. Early investment has been secured to get the first phase off the ground and will be used to develop the project including developing new plans, completing a condition survey, business planning and fundraising.

Sarah Jones from Arts and Business NI said:

'We are delighted to be funding part of this project through our Blueprint Programme which aims to help build a strong, vibrant and financially resilient arts sector in NI.'

IYSC have a brilliant vision for this project which will allow them to both fulfil their potential and be a fantastic asset to the city.'

The project's other springboard funding has been provided by the Architectural Heritage Fund, which provides organisations with seed funding to help shape projects and develop sustainable solutions which tap into core local community needs. Matthew McKeague, CEO of the Architectural Heritage Fund said:

'As a social investor in heritage, the AHF is excited about the opportunity this project represents to bring communities together from across the city and to animate both this special building and the Walled City.'

We are encouraged by the partnership approach being adopted and are pleased to be able to provide a Project Viability Grant to help kickstart this vital early development work.'

IYSC will shortly be launching an online giving campaign and will be inviting sponsorship from local businesses to support the overall fundraising effort.

For more information about the project, feel free to contact cath@inyourspaceni.org.

Ends.