

WATFORD **COLOSSEUM**

WATFORD COLOSSEUM ANNUAL REPORT 2015/16 **CONTRACT YEAR 5**



WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL

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1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

This report is a summary of Watford Colosseum's 5th full year of activity and sets out the Venue's performance against the indicative performance indicators in the agreement between HQ Theatres & Hospitality (HQT&H) and Watford Borough Council (WBC).

The reporting period is 1st September 2015 to 31st August 2016, inclusive.

The basis of the report is the performance, community and corporate events activity as reported to WBC at the monthly meetings held since the commencement of the contract.

The Venue Director for the Watford Colosseum has presented monthly summary reports as follows;

- The live programme, including final ticket sales
- Financial Summary for the wider business
- Creative Learning / Community activity
- Marketing activity
- A summary of future programme challenges and opportunities
- Building related issues and health & safety

In addition, the 'live' programme, broken down by genre against the Operator Agreement KPI's, has been reported at the quarterly review meetings between HQT&H and WBC. This process is concluded each year with the Annual Review Meeting and the presentation of this Annual Report to WBC's Executive and Scrutiny Committees.

2. INTRO & EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Watford Colosseum's 5th year of operation has seen an eclectic mix of light entertainment, music, dance, opera, musicals, comedy, community events and corporate events.

The live comedy presented at the Watford Colosseum has included, Paddy McGuinness, Jimmy Carr, Tim Vine, Dave Gorman, Bill Bailey, Stewart Francis and Sarah Millican. Live music/ Dance has included Diversity, Russell Watson, Bellowhead, The Waterboys, Jason Donovan, Lulu and Collabro

This year also saw the realisation of the Watford Colosseums Classical Season. Globally-renowned artists including Nigel Kennedy, conductor Vladimir Ashkenazy with the Philharmonia Orchestra, the International Tchaikovsky Orchestra and the Czech National Symphony Orchestra have played, or are contracted to perform in the forthcoming months.

Events of this type help to demonstrate the Colosseum's increasing standing within the music and entertainment industry.

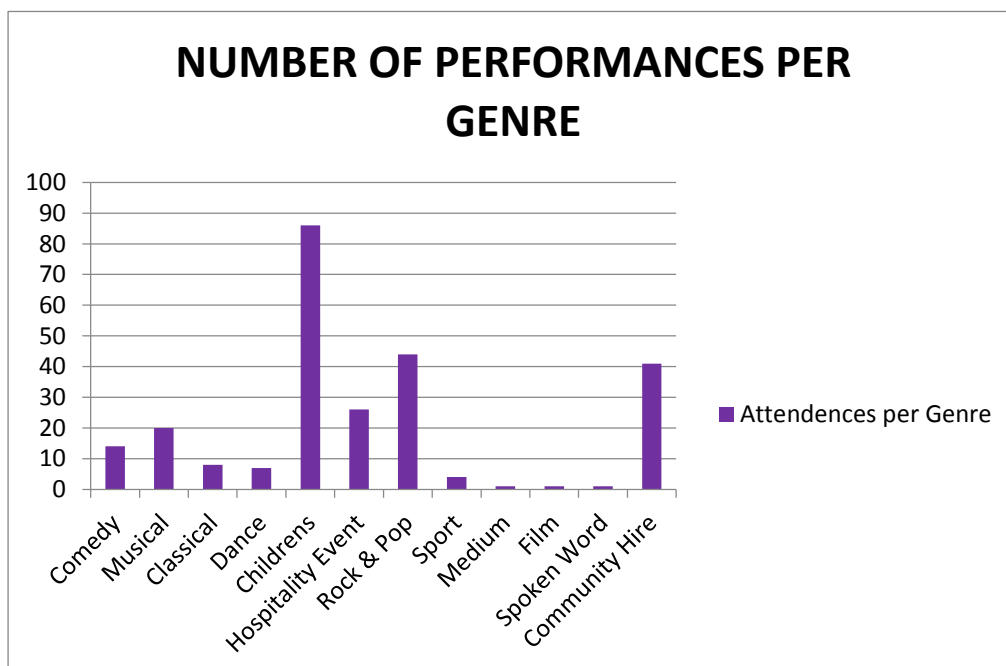
Watford Colosseum continued to work closely with producers in order to circumnavigate potential challenges when programming the content of the main hall

The Venue's headline strategic marketing activity has been reported within the monthly meetings with Watford Borough Council and the within the Marketing Annual Report.

3. PROGRAMME BALANCE AND RANGE – MAIN HALL

Highlights

- This year saw some fantastic, high-profile performances including Blake, Lulu, Jane McDonald, The Rocky Horror Show and Jason Donovan.
- Comedy performances included Jimmy Carr (1,216) Tim Vine (1,244), Dave Gorman (820), Bill Bailey (2,514) and Sarah Millican (1,289).
- 29 hospitality events were held across the year including our popular Tropicana Nights, Tea Dances and Only Fools & Three Courses dining experiences.
- Watford Colosseum hosted 86 children’s performances, the most popular genre in 2015-2016.
- The venue maintained a strong number of community hires (41).
- As a popular live music venue, Watford Colosseum hosted 44 live music events including popular solo singers and bands as well as musical tributes whilst still offering an eclectic mix of spoken word, dance, comedy, sport and cinematic events.
- Watford Colosseum is re-establishing itself as the ‘go to’ venue for classical music by programming our very own classical concert season mixing traditional classical music with contemporary performances to diversify the audience and make it accessible with affordable pricing bands. This season launched in March 2016 and continues into 2017.



4. COMMUNITY USE

SCHOOLS

In November, pupils at Central Primary School were introduced to Elvis Presley's song Polk Salad Annie. Watford Colosseum's Creative Learning Manager encouraged them to consider the tune and lyrics of the song and to create artwork in response to it - whether that be a theme, a mood or the story.

Also in November, Watford Colosseum presented its first ever curtain-raiser. Following the success of #LobbyLive, Watford Colosseum invited students from The Dan Tien to perform in the foyer at Watford Colosseum before performances of Giselle, by Saint Petersburg Classic Ballet, in the main auditorium.

In preparation for Spiceworld: The Exhibition, we worked closely with art students from West Herts College to upcycled disused and broken pianos to act as display cases for the collection. A selection of students were guided by our Creative Learning & Outreach and a member of the Technical team, learning artistic techniques and set building skills.

FAMILIES

On Wednesday 12 April Watford Colosseum hosted a four hour Colosseum Creates workshop, offering families the opportunity to create poppies using recyclable materials to coincide with the opening of The Wizard of Oz. The workshop was supported by students at Central Primary School and Boxmoor Primary School and including face-painting and photo opportunities on the Colosseum's very own yellow brick road. The total participants across this workshop and the visiting workshop to the school directly was 75 pupils.

On 1 and 10 August we hosted an indoor Teddy Bears Picnic in partnership with Watford Big Events' Big Beach & Screen. Watford Colosseum provided a music and dance session at the Sandcastle Club on the High Street followed by an hour and a half of free, furry family fun in our Grand Lobby. The events were very well attended and we worked with Watford Recycled Arts Project (WRAP) to ensure recycled arts featured in the programme and to develop working relationships across the artistic community. The events also included storytelling, facepainting, dance and music sessions and bear themed lunches were available to purchase. These events had over 100 participants.

The team at Watford Colosseum enjoyed welcoming families to the Teddy Bears picnic as free creative activities are an important part of our outreach programme and it has been great to work closely with other cultural providers to ensure quality arts provision for children. We have loved seeing the Lobby packed with families and hope this kind of programming will help to inspire future generations in creative arts and allow us, as a venue, to continue to develop strong links across the community whilst building relationships with our audiences of the future.

Hartbeeps have booked the venue for their baby classes & toddler classes twice every Wednesday for the term. Sessions accommodate up to 40 mother's and their children per week.

WIDER COMMUNITY

Spiceworld: The Exhibition opened on 7 July and ran until 7 August, which was free to attend and had around 1,250 visitors across the month.

Watford Colosseum hosted the Herts Pride launch, which coincided with the Rocky Horror Show first performance. It was attended by special guests of Herts Pride, their sponsors and partners as well as press and marketing contacts from Watford Colosseum.

We continued to host #LobbyLive acts throughout the year with great artists raising their profiles within the community and entertaining our audiences before shows.

Watford Colosseum has actively been engaging with a variety of local organisations within the community. From 10 September, Watford Colosseum has been providing a free rehearsal space to Electric Umbrella. The music sessions for adults with learning disabilities take place at the venue every Thursday in the Deco Bar until July 2016.



5. KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



Increase the percentage of total orders transacted online to an average of 73%

- 2015/16 - 68.31%
- 2016/17 will aim for 72.5% and currently working at 70.73%



Achieve a Hospitality spend per head of £4.49

- Actual average achieved £4.50



Increase the number of database records by a minimum of 10% in 2015/16

- 2014/15 - database 64,124
- 2015/16 - database 77,764



Community events to make up 20% of total events

Actual 26.4%



Number of Dark Days not to exceed 84 per year

Actual 81

6. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

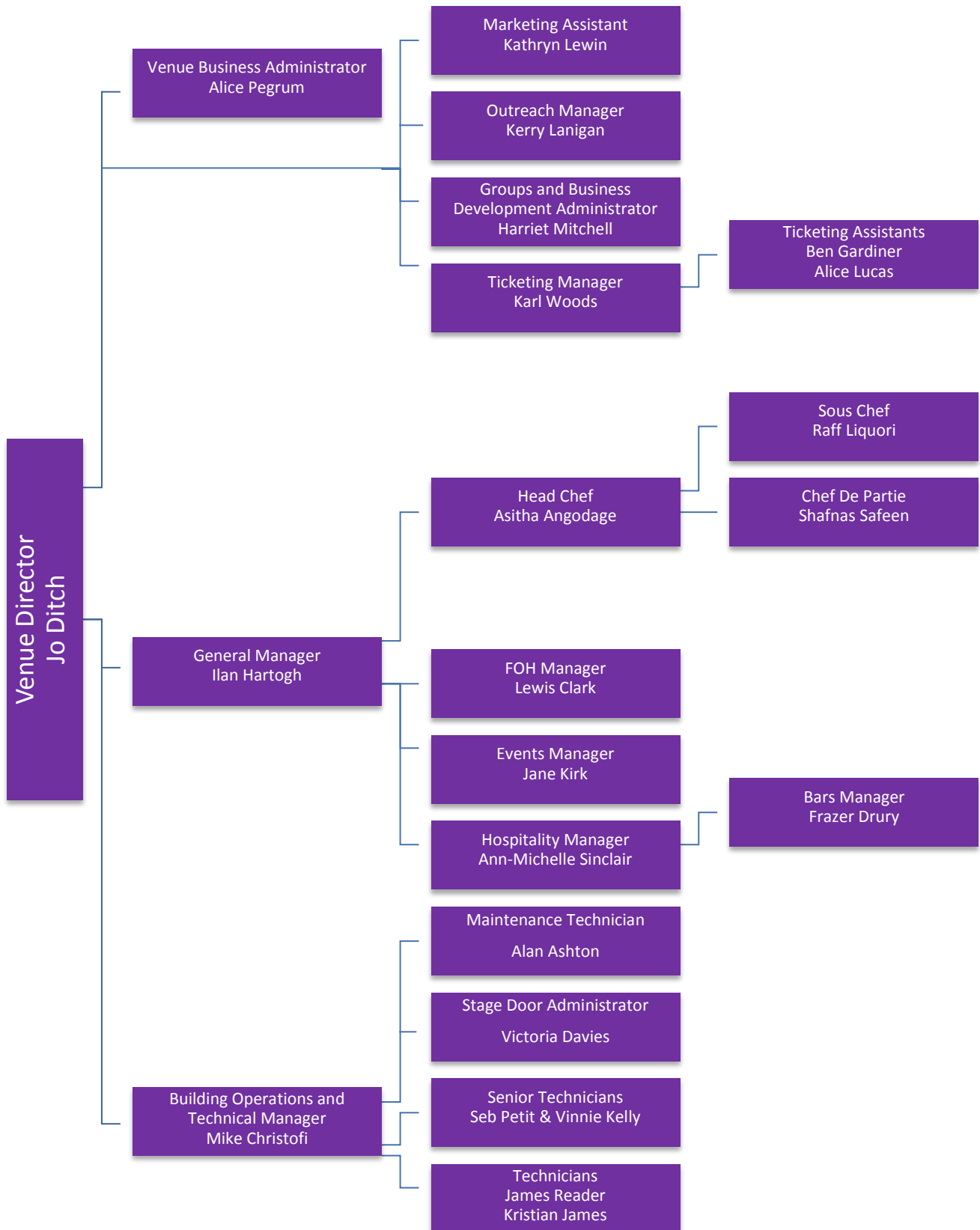
It should be noted that the following HQT&H accounts' summary has been produced for the period of August 2015 – July 2016. The summary produced for this report is not the final audited accounts and may therefore be subject to change.

OPERATIONS FOR THE YEAR AUG 2015 - JULY 2016	ACTUAL £	ORIGINAL TENDER £	VARIANCE £
<u>REVENUES</u>			
THEATRE SALES			
Theatre Rentals	270,537	299,500	(28,963)
Ticket Sales	970,830	2,305,202	1,334,372
	<u>1,241,367</u>	<u>2,604,702</u>	<u>(1,363,335)</u>
FEES			
Artists Fees	739,855	1,807,094	(1,067,238)
Royalties	29,364	704	28,660
	<u>769,219</u>	<u>1,807,797</u>	<u>(1,038,578)</u>
THEATRE GROSS MARGIN	472,148	796,905	(324,757)
GP %	38.00%	30.60%	
Credit card commission	13,194	28,440	(15,246)
PRS	12,243	23,052	(10,809)
GROSS MARGIN	446,711	745,413	(298,702)
TOTAL OTHER INCOME	323,265	204,250	119,015
<u>EXPENDITURE</u>			
TOTAL STAFFING COSTS	432,005	470,400	(38,395)
TOTAL ADMIN COSTS	16,909	24,500	(7,591)
TOTAL BOX OFFICE PURCHASES	4,398	10,000	(5,602)
TOTAL IN-HOUSE HOSPITALITY	1,796	7,500	(5,704)
TOTAL MAINTENANCE COSTS	129,930	119,750	10,180
TOTAL MARKETING	122,070	165,000	(42,930)
TOTAL SERVICES	72,438	115,000	(42,562)
TOTAL TECHNICAL COSTS	-7,940	29,000	(36,940)
TOTAL ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS	194,415	154,900	39,515
TOTAL THEATRE OVERHEADS	966,021	1,096,050	(130,029)
GROSS MARGIN	446,711	745,413	(298,702)
EXPENDITURE	966,021	1,096,050	(130,029)
OTHER INCOME	323,265	204,250	119,015

Contract Year 5

DEFICIT	<u>(196,045)</u>	<u>(146,387)</u>	<u>(49,658)</u>
SUBSIDY	159,854	159,854	-
NET SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)	(36,191)	13,467	(49,658)

7. PEOPLE AND STRUCTURE



6. PEOPLE AND STRUCTURE *CONT.*

This year we welcomed the following to our team:

Jo Ditch as Venue Director

Ilan Hartogh as General Manager

Jack Bowman as Marketing & Business Development
 Manager

Alice Pegrum as Venue Administrator

Harriet Mitchell as Groups & Business Development
 Administrator

James Reader as Technician

Ann-Michelle Sinclair as Hospitality Manager

Frazer Drury as Bars Manager

**This year we congratulated the following promotions
 and role changes:**

Vinnie Kelly from Technician to Senior Technician

Kathryn Lewin from Senior Box Office Assistant to
 Marketing Assistant

Lewis Clark from Technician to Front of House Manager

Ben Gardiner from Casual Box Office Assistant to
 permanent Box Office Assistant

Alice Lucas from Casual Box Office Assistant to
 permanent Box Office Assistant

Employee Highlights

TALENT TOOLBOX

This year we introduced a group wide employee monitoring and development system called Talent Toolbox. This online portal enables employees to express their strengths & weaknesses and development aims, which is discussed with their line manager in a focused discussion. The notes made by line managers and employees go towards the appraisal system and encourage regular catch ups to ensure employee satisfaction and retention.

GREAT ORMOND STREET HOSPITAL

Since 2009 Qdos Entertainment and HQ Theatres & Hospitality have been generously supporting the Theatres for Theatres appeal, in aid of Great Ormond Street Hospital Children's Charity. This year we have raised a significant amount towards the cause through our post-show bucket collections, charity raffles at hospitality events, cake sales as part of #BakeItBetter week and moving forward we hope to raise further money over the festive period. Kathryn Lewin and Alice Pegrum visited GOSH to discuss future fundraising ideas with their fellow venue fundraisers.

HQ THEATRES & HOSPITALITY SUMMIT

This year Watford Colosseum attended the group wide annual summit in Southend where we were shortlisted for the following awards:

Team Award - *Spiceworld: The Exhibition*

Innovative Food & Drink Award - *Asitha Angodage (Irish Menu)*

Community & Education Award - *Kerry Lanigan (#LobbyLive)*

7. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INFORMATION

4 star rating on Trip Advisor and #4 venue to visit in Watford

- Out of 208 reviews on Trip Advisors 78 of them have rated Watford Colosseum as Excellent and 4 as Poor

Examples of complaints include sound issues, lack of car parking awareness and show content

- Staff are continuing to address all matters of complaints and taking action where required

Examples of compliments include customer service, food, acoustics and variety of shows

Examples of compliments

"Brilliant alternative to the West End - Comfortable seating and restaurant food is really good value too"

"Had a great meal in the restaurant and then enjoyed an evening watching Yolanda Brown"

"Very good place to hire" "Hired for a wedding occasion and it was a very good atmosphere"

"Excellent Service as always. We were spending a first visit with a 2 1/2-year-old. Thought it might be too much but it wasn't and he loved it"

Examples of complaints

"Poor sound, Ken Dodd mumbling"

"Other patrons being rowdy, price of the bar too high"

"Disappointed with poor condition of the face of the stage"

"Raked seating creaking if people moved disturbing concert"

7. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INFORMATION *Cont.*

Categories:	Description:	Performance Measures:	Jul-Sept	Oct-Dec	Jan-Mar	Apr-Jun	Jul-Aug	Total
Policy	All matters relating to Policy issues including Programming	No of compliments	3	-	6	3	4	16
		No of complaints	-	8	5	9	5	27
Service Delivery	Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Failure to deliver services ➤ Poor quality of service ➤ Delay in the delivery of service 	No of compliments	7	10	7	10	5	39
		No of complaints	20	3	9	6	1	39
Customer Services	Including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Incorrect information given ➤ No response to customer enquiry ➤ Unfair treatment of customer ➤ Staff attitude ➤ Car park 	No of compliments	1	4	3	1	-	9
		No of complaints	15	3	7	-	-	25
		Total no of compliments	11	14	16	14	9	73
		Total no of complaints	35	14	21	15	6	97

7. CUSTOMER SATISFACTION INFORMATION *Cont.*

GEM (Great Experience Management) is a mystery shopper report that is a monthly audit of a customer journey. It covers two areas; one being the customer journey from liaising with the box office and booking tickets to their arrival, greeting, venue signage, cleanliness, the show itself and exit flyering. Alongside that is a restaurant report going into further detail of the customer experience when dining with us. From entrance, table set up, ordering, upselling, staff knowledge and food quality and presentation as well as billing and overall experience. Each topic has a score rating culminating in a percentage score alongside the customer's comments.

Gem Branch Scores

October 2015	74%
November 2015	84%
December 2015	97%
February 2016	94%
March 2016	82%
April 2016	94%
May 2016	94%
June 2016	82%
July 2016	94%
August 2016	87%

"We were impressed with how quickly the dishes were delivered to the table and found them to be extremely well presented, generously portioned and very tasty. The drinks were beautifully presented and served in polished glasses. The manager appeared in full control of the operations and we were impressed with how competent and helpful the staff members were. We would have no hesitation in recommending this venue to others."

"The team displayed energy and enthusiasm and seemed to communicate well together. We felt relaxed and comfortable at all times."

"I was able to pay efficiently when ordering, and the drinks were given to me within seconds. I was advised that we would receive our food in 10 minutes, but it took 15 minutes"

"We were pleasantly surprised with the quality of the food we sampled at the restaurant. The dishes looked incredibly attractive when they arrived. The crab cake was hot and the additional claw meat added texture to the starter. The chicken was well cooked and moist, with the sauce adding extra flavour. The mains were extremely generous, with smart presentation. The lamb was rich and full of flavour and both the potatoes and the lamb bon bon were cooked perfectly. The fish was accompanied by a lovely sauce with perfectly steamed samphire and delicate mussels. The mango pudding was very refreshing and we particularly liked the addition of popping candy to go with the theme of the show."

"To achieve a score of 10, we could have been engaged, the team could have been more knowledgeable about the menu"

For year 2016/2017 Hospitality and Front of House teams will undergo customer journey training, steps of service training with new and existing staff in November and upselling training prior to each shift. Team incentives will be in place for upselling and Team Supervisors will receive additional support of mentoring with Hospitality Managers and Bars Managers.

8. BUILDINGS AND HEALTH & SAFETY

Watford Colosseum's Building and Technical Manager leads on Health and Safety of the Venue. RB H&S Ltd are our retained external H&S consultants who provide an annual audit, alongside quarterly inspections. Subsequent delivery of a prioritised action plan is then managed and actioned by the local on site.

Within the annual and quarterly inspections, a thorough review is undertaken of all operational areas from staff training records; for example, Manual Handling and First Aid, to documentation held within the HQT&H group H&S portal pertaining to risk assessments and compliance with legislation for Legionella, COSHH, Accident and Incident reporting and electrical testing etc.

"A very positive audit with ongoing improvements clearly visible in this venue"

RB H&S Ltd

Building and Plant Machinery updates are provided at the monthly and quarterly meetings. Below is an overview from RB H&S Ltd audits. Column A is the priority order; Column B is the number of actions required; Column C is the number completed; Column D is the number outstanding

Priority Order	Number of Actions Required	Number Completed	Number Outstanding
High – 1 Month	0	0	0
Medium – 3 Months	26	26	0
Low – 6 Months	2	2	0