

THE WATERMILL
West Berkshire Playhouse



**CUSTOMER CARE
POLICY**

CUSTOMER CARE AT THE WATERMILL

Our customer commitment

Our staff are committed to promoting the visions and values of our organisation and to delivering the standards contained in this policy.

A customer is anyone who comes into contact with The Watermill and includes: current and potential audience members, actors, creative teams, sponsors and business supporters, the media, suppliers, contractors, members of staff, volunteers and board members.

Our key customer service objectives

- To ensure that all public contact with The Watermill, from hearing about our work to leaving the theatre after a performance or event is met with the highest standards.
- To provide clear and efficient lines of communications to all.
- To provide accurate information and promotional material about our work and to publicise and market our work to the widest possible audience.
- To be active in the promotion of customer feedback, listen and respond accordingly and monitor standards.
- To encourage customers and the local community to enjoy a closer relationship with The Watermill.
- To provide suitable and adequate staff training.
- To exceed customers expectations and encourage repeat visits.
- To be an example within the arts for excellent customer care.

Consultation and feedback

If you wish to contact The Watermill regarding matters about the service the theatre provides you should, in the first instance, contact the head of the relevant department either in writing, by phone or email. Contact information for all staff is available on The Watermill website www.watermill.org.uk, in our show programmes and from our administration secretary on 01635 45834.

The theatre's main telephone number is 01635 45834 and calls will be directed to the relevant person.

Alternatively, please contact:

Clare Lindsay, General Manager, The Watermill Theatre, Bagnor, Nr Newbury, Berkshire RG20 8AE or email admin@watermill.org.uk

Feedback cards are available in the theatre foyer and bar. You may also feedback your comments online at: http://www.watermill.org.uk/contact_us_and_directions.html and you can post comments on our website message forum:

<http://pub11.bravenet.com/forum/914035928>

The Watermill consults its customers through questionnaires and front of house staff encourage verbal feedback during the interval and at the end of a performances. Feedback forms are distributed at the end of workshops delivered to schools, businesses and groups. We will monitor our standards of service through evaluation of customer comments, complaints and surveys.

The theatre meets with focus groups representing different groups of users. They are invited to discuss all aspects of the theatre's work and any implemented changes and improvements made to our customer care procedures.

Complaints

Whilst we take great care to ensure that we provide all our services efficiently, courteously and to a high standard, we accept that complaints may be made. A complaint is a valid expression of dissatisfaction and however it is made, by email, letter, telephone or verbally, we will investigate it and use it as a means to improve our standards of service.

If at any time during your visit you are not happy with the levels of service you experience, please ask to speak to the duty front of house manager and we will try our best to resolve your complaint straight away so your visit is an enjoyable one.

You can register your complaint in person, by telephoning the theatre or by writing. All written complaints will be dealt with by our General Manager or the person they feel can best respond to your concerns. We will acknowledge all written complaints within 5 days of receiving the letter, at which point your complaint will be investigated. If you are not satisfied with the way in which your complaint has been dealt with, we have an appeal procedure which the General Manager will activate at your request.

Any action taken that will affect members of staff as a result of a customer complaint will be conveyed to all concerned before a response is given to the customer.

Access

The Watermill's Inclusivity Policy

We are committed to equality of opportunity and access for all irrespective of their age, gender, class, marital status, nationality, ethnic origin, disability, religious belief or sexual orientation. We aim to create a working environment which values and respects the variety of life styles and cultures found within theatre and within our local community.

We will strive to ensure that no employee, audience member, or any other person connected to the work of The Watermill Theatre, experiences unlawful or unfair discrimination or harassment. We are committed to equality of opportunity in which individuals are selected for employment and treated on the basis of their relevant merits.

Physical Access

Public Transport

The theatre is located two miles from Newbury town centre in the small, rural village of Bagnor, which has no public transport facilities. The nearest bus stop is approximately fifteen minutes walk away at Station Road, Speen. Please be aware there are no pavements for approximately half of this route and no street lighting. Buses run every two hours. A community bus service (Handybus) is operated by West Berkshire Volunteer Centre and manned by voluntary drivers.

Handibus operate in the following areas:

Basildon/Beenham/Bradfield/Pangbourne/Purley/Streatley/Theale Tel: 0118 930 4837

Burghfield/Mortimer Tel: 0118 983 6611

Chieveley/Compton/Downlands Tel: 01635 202519

Hungerford Tel: 01488 682045

Newbury Tel: 01635 37111

Thatcham Tel: 01635 874666

The nearest railway station is in Newbury with a taxi rank outside. The theatre is approximately five minutes from Junction 13 of the M4. Both Cabco (01635 33333) and Newbury Taxis (01635 877777) have cars that are accessible but these must be pre-booked.

Parking

A car park is available alongside the theatre buildings which can accommodate approximately 60 cars with an additional parking area for thirty cars available for use when required.

It is usually possible to drop passengers close to the main entrance to the theatre (approx five metres away). Up to five reserved disabled parking spaces are available which should be booked in advance through the box office. Your name will be written on a sign in the space that has been allocated to you. Two of the spaces have been block paved to allow for easier transfer from car to wheelchair. An additional three spaces are alongside a ramp alongside the restaurant. These spaces are on a gravel surface and may not be suitable for those who use a wheelchair. Coach and mini bus spaces are pre-booked via the box office on 01635 46044.

Wheelchair Access

The Watermill premises are 90% accessible to wheelchair users and people with mobility difficulties. The only inaccessible public area is upstairs in the auditorium which has stepped seating and is reached via a spiral staircase that is not suitable for those with mobility problems. There is no lift, so if you need to be seated downstairs, please let our box office staff know at the time of booking. Ramps around the site allow easy access to the theatre, the lily pond area, the bar and restaurant, accessible toilets and the gardens. We can accommodate two people in wheelchairs per performance, subject to space availability. We also have two wheelchairs of our own on request that can be used for transfers.

We have some seats allocated that are suitable for wheelchair transfers and these should be requested at the time of booking your theatre tickets. Our staff are not trained to lift you into your seat, but will do what they can to make your transfer as easy and comfortable as possible.

If you are unable to get to the bar, we are happy to bring refreshments to you in the auditorium during the interval. Please let the front of house staff or ushers know what you would like.

There is a reduction of £2 off each ticket for both a person with disabilities and their companion. Because of the size of our auditorium and the need for us to sell as many seats as possible to remain financially viable, we are unable to offer free seats for companions.

Accessible Toilets

There are two accessible toilets for use by the public – one as part of the main toilet block situated alongside the restaurant, access is via an external ramp in the car park. The other is accessible from the lily pond, bar and restaurant.


Seating Requirements In The Theatre

If you would like to be seated at the end of a row to allow you to leave the theatre during the performance if necessary, let our box office staff know at the time of booking. Or you can choose an end seat if one is available, when you book online. Row E in the stalls offers good leg room.

Please be aware rows O and P are galleried with two posts on either side. These seats in the Circle Slips offer a side or overhead view of the stage and are priced according to visibility.

Please feel free to bring a cushion or back support with you if required. If you find you need a cushion when you're here, either in the theatre or in the restaurant, please ask a member of staff and we will do our best to help you.

OUR RESTAURANT

Our restaurant and bar both have flat access from the theatre. If you are planning to eat in our restaurant and have specific dietary, seating or other requirements, please call the box office and let them know. We always offer a vegetarian option () for both pre-show buffet and post show meal, indicated on the buffet table and in the post show menu, but it is difficult for us to be able to accommodate all dietary needs without notice. Please note, we cannot guarantee that our food will not contain traces of nuts.

OUR BROCHURE IN DIFFERENT FORMATS

Large print brochure

There is a large print brochure at the front of house desk for you to borrow to look at whilst at the theatre. If you require a large print brochure to be sent to you we can provide a black and white photocopy.

Audio brochures

We will mail out to you free of charge an audio copy, on cassette, of our season brochure. Please call our administration office on 01635 45834 or email admin@watermill.org.uk if you would like to be added to our mailing list.

FACILITIES FOR DEAF AND HEARING IMPAIRED PATRONS

We have an infrared Sennheiser hearing assistance system for boosting the signal to hearing aids. Please ask for a headset to be reserved for you at the time of booking your tickets. These are issued on a first come, first served basis. You can also ask at the front of house desk for a headset when you arrive at the theatre and will be given one if they haven't been allocated. To ensure you are seated in areas where this is effective, please let us know that you would like to use the system when booking. Please note: Digital hearing aids do not work with the Sennheiser necklaces. Sennheiser headsets should be used.

INTERPRETED PERFORMANCES

Some performances are British Sign Language interpreted. We also offer Audio Description for some performances. Look out for details on the show information pages of our brochure and website. Please call the box office to book so that we can ensure that you are seated in seats that will give you the best view and are easily accessible.

When a show is Audio Described, we offer a Touch Tour an hour before the performance. These are free of charge and last no longer than half an hour. Please let the box office know that you would like a touch tour when you book your tickets.

ASSISTANCE DOGS

Assistance dogs are welcome, but please let us know when you book so that we can allocate appropriate seats for you and tell you about any special effects that might affect your dog's comfort.

ACCLIMATISATION VISITS

If you have not been to the theatre before, we will be happy to arrange for you to come to have a look around to get your bearings when it is not too busy.

If you would prefer to go into the auditorium just before the rest of the audience, or when everyone else is seated, please let the front of house staff know when you arrive at the theatre.

OUR WEBSITE

Our website has been designed so that you can change the default view to text only. The text only view can be selected from the panel on the left hand side of the web page. Our font is scaleable, and its size is determined by the settings of your browser. You can check this setting by selecting 'Text size' in the 'View' drop-down menu of your browser toolbar. The setting should be 'Medium' for a normal text size resolution. There is guidance for resizing font when using Microsoft Internet Explorer, Firefox or Safari. Our website is W3C/WAI Compliant.

In order to help us help you when you visit The Watermill, please tell us about any special requirements you, or anyone in your party, may have when you book your seats.

BUYING TICKETS

In Person

Our box office is situated in the foyer of the theatre. It is open 10am to 7pm Monday to Saturday and 10am to 6pm on non-performance days and the last Saturday of a run.

By Telephone 01635 46044

The phone lines are open between 10am and 6.30pm Monday to Saturday, 10am to 6pm on non-performance days, and 12 noon until 6pm on Bank Holidays (6.30pm if there is a show that evening). Tickets can be paid for by credit or debit card, or they can be reserved for up to three days while you send a cheque or gift vouchers.

Please collect your tickets from the box office 30 minutes prior to the performance. We can post your tickets to you for a charge of £1.30 (postage and handling) or you can collect your tickets from the box office. Cheques should be made payable to The Watermill Theatre Ltd.

During busy times, you may hear a recorded message. Please leave your name and number and we will call you back as soon as we can.

Online

When you book your tickets on line there is no booking fee.

Go to www.watermill.org.uk where you are able to select your seats. If you are booking for interpreted performances, or need to use our infrared Sennheiser hearing assistance system, please call the box office on 01635 46044 so that they can ensure you are in the best seats to enjoy the performance.

Exchanging or Re-selling Your Tickets

All tickets are non-refundable. However, we are happy to exchange tickets for another performance of the same production, subject to availability, up to 48 hours before the performance. Alternatively we will try to resell your tickets (after all other tickets have been sold) and will credit your Watermill account which will be valid for one year. We charge £2.50 per transaction plus £1.30 p&p. Please return your original tickets to the box office.

TICKET PRICING

See individual shows and events pages for prices. All discounts are subject to availability. Only one discount applies. Proof of identity required. Discounts are not offered retrospectively.

Discounts

Senior citizens, Jobseekers, people with disabilities and their companions, Equity members, students in full-time education and under 18s: Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday evenings, £2 off top two price bands.

£10 tickets for under 18 - 25s

For performances from Tuesday to Thursday. Proof of status required. Please collect your tickets from the box office 30 minutes prior to the performance (please note these tickets cannot be posted out).

Student and under 18s Standby

All tickets £5 available from the box office from midday on the day of the show. Available for students in full-time education and under 18s.

Schools and youth groups

Tuesday to Friday evenings 10% off top two price bands, applicable to school groups of 10 or more. Free teacher's ticket with every 15 seats booked, excluding Monday evenings, Thursday and Saturday matinees. Thursday and Saturday matinees all seats are £7, however, please check our website or brochure as we are not able to offer this reduction for all productions.

Groups of 10 or more

Tuesday to Friday evenings 10% off top two price bands. When you book 15 tickets you get an additional free party organiser ticket.

School and group bookings

Please call the box office on 01635 46044 or email boxoffice@watermill.org.uk

DATA PROTECTION

When processing your booking, our Box Office staff will ask for your name, address, telephone number and e-mail address. This information may be used to keep you informed of forthcoming events and special offers and when undertaking fundraising activities. If you do not wish your details to be used in any of these ways, please inform the Box Office when booking. If you book online through the website you will be given the opportunity to opt in to receiving information from us via e-mail. You may also specify that you do not wish to receive information from other arts organisations.

RECRUITMENT

The Watermill has an Equal Opportunities and Inclusive Recruitment policy which is adhered to throughout the recruitment process. All applicants are offered the same respect and courtesy as all other customers, whilst ensuring high levels of discretion and confidentiality.

TRAINING

The Watermill is committed to ongoing training for all members of staff in inclusivity awareness, health and safety and customer care. We believe that well informed staff will deal with customer enquiries quickly and efficiently. Regular interdepartmental meetings, email and strong lines of communication ensure that staff are kept up to date at all times.

EVALUATING OUR STANDARD OF CUSTOMER CARE

The Watermill has a committee dedicated to ensuring the continuing quality of our customer care and comprising the General Manager, Marketing & Sales Director, Box Office Manager, Front of House Manager and Restaurant Manager which meets at regular intervals to discuss and review the theatre's commitment to its customers.

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