

Dowdales starts raising cash for its arts studios

A public performance will officially kick-start fund-raising for a new performing arts centre next month.



Dowdales School in Dalton wants to build a multi-million pound 350-seater performance space, practice and recording studios, dance and drama studios, learning areas and units for professional artists.

Ian Booth, an assistant head at Dowdales and the school's leadership link for the school's performing arts specialism, said: "The stage we are at now is raising interest so we can fund-raise to develop a proper business plan.

"We are looking to raise a sum of £50,000."

Mr Booth said the overall cost of the project will become part of the business plan. The school is looking at three areas to fund the overall project; fund-raising by the school, private business sponsorship and public sector funding.

The project already has a steering group with representatives from authorities and organisations, including Dalton with Newton Town Council, Barrow Borough Council, Cumbria County Council, Furness Enterprise and Barrow Regeneration.

Mr Booth said there was already interest in business sponsorship and the school would start hosting major fund-raising events after Easter.

The school's sports hall, the £1.3m DASH @ Dowdales, opened in January last year and has become a popular community facility.

Developing the Innovation and Skills Centre for Performing Arts is continuing the vision of Liz Moffatt, the inspirational former headteacher who left the school in January after more than 20 years in charge.

Tony Sinton, Dowdales School's acting headteacher, said: "It was Liz's vision to become a performing arts college and it has transformed the school, giving students' confidence."

Mr Booth added: “We want to build this as part of her legacy.”

The first fund-raising event is a performance of the play Heroes at Dowdales School on Thursday April 15. The show, by Sitting Room Only Theatre Company, starts at 7.30pm. Tickets are £5 and are available from the school on 01229 897911.

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