

# Stage special ends in the red

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THE ambitious Stroud community play has turned out to be a financial flop.

Organisers of the extravaganza at the Leisure Centre admitted yesterday they had not covered their £50,000 costs.

"I think it is likely that we won't break even. That is something we are going to have to sort out over the next few weeks," said Camilla Hale, play co-ordinator.

Ms Hale said she was unable to reveal the extent of the loss so soon after the final performance of "Making Up Time" on Saturday night.

But she said a full balance sheet would be available by the end of November when Dr. Foster's Theatre, who initiated the community play, will decide their future strategy.

The play itself was however a great success, said Ms Hale. "We were very

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by Jo Barber

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happy with the cast, the work they did and their enthusiasm," she said.

"There are 150 people from the cast involved here. It was an incredibly positive event. Yes, there might be a loss but it has been a fantastic seven months work for everybody involved."

A major expense was renting the main hall at Stratford Park for a fortnight from Stroud District Council.

The hire for a week's preparation beforehand and for seven performances by the 150-strong largely volunteer cast over a further week was around £15,000.

And seating built especially to comply with strict fire regulations cost another £7,000-plus.

Ms Hale thought it likely supporters

of the play might approach the council to see if it could help out, possibly by lowering its charge for the Leisure Centre.

But Alan Caig, Stroud council leisure and tourism manager, said he doubted whether authority members could waive the £15,000 hall hire fee.

"It was a unique booking for a whole two weeks and we based it on what we would otherwise have earned from other users, plus something for the extra electricity for the lights," he said.

"Councillors did however give a £3,500 guarantee against loss from another purse." Mr Caig expected there would be discussions with Dr. Foster's about the financial position.

Tickets for the play, a specially scripted story about Stroud's history, were priced at £7 and £4 and the event did gain commercial sponsorship.