



## April 2012 – March 2013 Picture House Annual Review



*Photo copyright Graham Rogers, Studio 110.*

**Hebden Bridge Picture House is owned and managed by Hebden Royd Town Council**

**Town Mayor:** Cllr Christine Davenport

**Chair of Picture House Committee:** Cllr Susan Press

**Members of the Picture House Committee:** Cllr Bampton Smith, Cllr Fearon, Cllr Hodgins, Cllr Sweeney, Cllr Yorke

**Picture House Manager:** Rebekah Fozard

**Clerk to the Council:** Jason Boom

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## Hebden Bridge Picture House Annual Review 2012-13

### ***Cllr Susan Press, Chair, Picture House Committee***

The first year of Hebden Royd Town Council managing the Hebden Bridge Picture House has been very eventful. Notwithstanding the summer of flooding, perhaps the most significant event this year was our £50,000 investment in new digital projection equipment. Most films are now produced and delivered in digital format and without a digital projector it was becoming difficult to source the new film releases we needed to keep the programme topical and varied.

It was always our aim to preserve the unique visitor experience offered by the Picture House and we did not want anything to change that. However, new toilet facilities were desperately needed so we set to work last autumn and the downstairs auditorium toilets have been fully refurbished. Plans are also in hand for the refurbishment of the toilets on the balcony level and the disabled toilet in the foyer.

At our kiosk, our famous range of home-made cakes, Fairtrade products and other kiosk stock has been increased: we have a range of Clipper teas, child-friendly products have been added, our ice cream is now locally sourced from Skipton, and we offer gluten free cakes. In the evenings a glass of wine, beer, pilsner or cider is also available. We're also starting to run bars for live events from our new purpose built mobile bar. We're encouraging customers not to bring their own food and drink to the cinema, but to support us by buying from the kiosk, helping to keep ticket prices static.

In the coming period, another exciting project is about to start – the 'streaming' of live broadcasts: called 'alternative content'. So we now have the potential to show theatre, ballet, opera, concerts and the very best in sport on the big screen, here in Hebden Bridge.

In November we welcomed our new Picture House Manager, Rebekah Fozard, and we would like to thank her and all the Picture House staff who make it all possible. Special thanks also go to Town Clerk, Jason Boom, without whom the Picture House project would never have got off the ground at all.

### ***Rebekah Fozard, Manager, Hebden Bridge Picture House***

In addition to the improvements mentioned by Cllr Press, we've seen the replacement of the flooring in the stalls and updating of paintwork to the lower half of the auditorium to repair flood damage. New curtains will be erected imminently. A baby changing unit has been installed in the unisex disabled toilet in the foyer. We've had several items of maintenance to attend to across our alarm systems, heating and water systems and our flat roofs.

We've invested in a new website, mobile website, and now engage with supporters on Facebook and Twitter. We've reduced the overheads of a large postal monthly mail out by offering instead a great email list facility, keeping our customers up to date with our regular programme and special events and screenings, or customers can opt to receive 12 monthly programmes by post for an annual subscription of £5. We've increased our multiple programme distribution to more venues in the locality, for those who still prefer to pick up a paper copy of the programme.

Our Picture This membership scheme was in need of an overhaul, and prices were brought in line with previous ticket price increases for January 2013. Income for Picture This was £4,835 for year, more than 50% over budget. Our hire prices have been rationalised and favour weekday (Monday to Thursday) bookings generally and local user group bookings specifically by offering reduced rates.

A monthly Parent & Baby screening was introduced in January, and the reception from local parents to this innovation has been nothing but positive.

We're about to commence our live content programme with National Theatre Live broadcasts and the Royal Opera House and Royal Ballet cinema season. We're introducing online and advance in person booking for these live broadcasts.

Refurbishment of our upstairs and foyer toilets begins in July, and our dressing rooms will soon be redecorated by volunteers. We hope to refurbish the foyer later in the year and the Friends of the Picture House have offered to repaint our rather drab staff area for us.

### ***Jason Boom, Town Clerk, Hebden Royd Town Council***

The key principles adopted by the Council to govern the transfer of the Picture House have guided all Council decisions. The Picture House, while striving for a surplus to reinvest in the business, is not profit driven. It operates to serve the whole community and has remained available for community use with an open mind applied to all approaches. The programme has remained wide and varied with expansion into live event streaming further adding to this, and the Picture House has remained that friendly, relaxed cinema for which it has become well know.

In the first year of managing the Picture House Hebden Royd Town Council has achieved a small growth in audience numbers, up on 2011/12 by 2,797 admissions. Net Box Office income increased by just under £7,000 and the number of screenings over the year returned to 2007/08 levels, with 641 screenings, compared to 618 screenings the previous year. Kiosk income increased by just under £2,000 and bar sales added a further £5,249. Income was also generated via on-screen advertising, two shop unit rental receipts, hire fees and Picture This membership scheme income. Income, at £304,464, exceeded expenditure by just over £6,529.

Expenditure in the year included many exceptional items such as numerous examples of unplanned maintenance, developing a new website, legal fees for the asset transfer, ancillary projection equipment, and three new bar / kiosk fridges.

We hope in the 2013-14 year to see our exceptional expenditure decrease and our operating surplus increasing further. Surplus will be focussed in the main on the on-going maintenance, refurbishment and redecoration programme at the Picture House.

### **Acknowledgements**

The Councillors, the Picture House Manager and the Town Clerk wish to thank the following for their support during 2012-13: the Picture House staff, the CMBC staff previously involved in supporting the Picture House, and the Friends of the Picture House and the FOPH committee for all their practical support and input.

View the full report: <http://www.hebdenbridgepicturehouse.co.uk/news/>