

HEBDEN ROYD TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting of the PICTURE HOUSE COMMITTEE held 12th JULY 2023

MINUTES

PRESENT: Councillors: Butterick (Chair from minute 93), Boden, Davenport, Hayes, Fraser, Howes & Matthias.

Picture House Manager: Pete Berrisford

HRTC Council Clerk: J Boom

HRTC Project Officer: Emma Green

Maggie Woods (Friends of the Picture House)

MINUTES

93. ELECTION OF CHAIR AND DEPUTY CHAIR OF THE PICTURE HOUSE COMMITTEE 2023/24.

It was **proposed** by Councillor Boden

Seconded by Councillor Matthias

Unanimously resolved: that the Chair of the Picture House Committee for 2023/24 be Councillor Butterick.

DEPUTY CHAIR

It was **proposed** by Councillor Howes

Seconded by Councillor Matthias

Unanimously resolved: that the Deputy Chair of the Picture House Committee for 2023/24 be Councillor Boden .

94. To receive apologies for absence and any substitutions.

None were received.

95. To receive members` interests relating to agenda items for this meeting.

None were declared at this time.

96. To report on matters arising from the minutes of meeting held 6th March 2023 not itemised on this agenda.

No matters were arising.

97. FRIENDS OF THE PICTURE HOUSE

Maggie Wood advised that the Friends continue to support the Picture House in as many ways as possible.

The Making Friends project had hosted a successful community kitchen event attended by over one hundred people at Hope Baptist with the event raising £600 with all costs being met by the Friends. Cooking and food preparation

was undertaken by people from the St Augustine's Centre in Halifax and it is hoped to repeat this very popular event.

This Saturday, 15th July, sees an afternoon screening again as part of the Making Friends Project, the Picture House will open the doors to families and children of refugee seeking families. Similarly a screening aimed at young men is planned for Monday 31st July, with thirty or so expected to attend this screening of Mission Impossible.

98. PICTURE HOUSE MANAGERS REPORT

Pete Berrisford, the Picture House Manager spoke stating that the Picture House is trading well in comparison to last year's levels, ticket are sales up, and accompanied by like for like kiosk sales. The Picture House Manager commented on highly rated movies heading to the Picture House over the summer in addition to our usual Picture Houses fare and Special Screenings.

The Hebden Bridge Film Club now has over six hundred members, impressive as this initiative has only been in place since reopening after the Covid-19 Pandemic, monthly screening and meeting continue.

Fright night continues to be popular with customers and staff, two double bills are scheduled in the next month. Silent films also return and are expected to be popular.

The Picture House returns to a screening of a silent feature this month and the newly planned comedy nights are being looked forward to excitedly, it is hoped that the retail spend will be a well-timed boost to kiosk revenues. A special Happy Valley Pride screening with Q & A of Maisie is planned as part of the weeklong festival.

Kiosk sales remain solid and are growing steadily, sales average £2.50 and upselling continues to grow spend per customer.

The Picture House Manager plans to host a staff incentive screening in the near future to bring the team together and to enthuse them about film and the Picture House.

The meeting discussed film advertising revenue and the options available to maximise. The Picture House Manager shared recent meetings with suppliers and the need to be in a position to negotiate which can only be met by serving notice on Pearl & Dean as their notice period is so 6 months.

The committee agreed to this and asked that the negotiation process needs to have transparency from the supplier when negotiations take place.

99. PICTURE HOUSE MONTHLY TRADING ANALYSIS

The Town Clerk shared the cumulative analysis and financial analysis for April to June 2023. The rational and historical basis behind the cumulative analysis figures was discussed. Historical trading clearly reflects trading levels from Pre-Covid 19 times and the drop in attendances as a consequence of the

reducing theatrical window and the structural change of cinema as a consequence of the growth of streaming.

Committee members made it clear that they want to make the Picture House experience special, not just another event and are eager to understand how to attract customers and what needs to be considered to achieve this. Members realise that cinema tracks in many ways the trends of the High Street and they seek to buck this trend if at all possible by being distinct and special.

When reviewing accounts it was requested that the financial support offered by the Town Council to the Picture House be apportioned monthly to reflect its impact on a monthly basis rather than over the financial year.

100.

PICTURE HOUSE BUSINESS PLAN

The Picture House Manager reviewed the Business Plan for the period 2019-22 plans and the in-depth approach that had been taken. It provides a solid basis to develop a new plan with changes to reflect the changes within the cinema industry since the Covid-19 pandemic. It was agreed that many things have changed since that time and the Picture House needs to consider and find a place in an ever-changing market.

The Picture House Manager used the example of children's films, which fill usually eight of the top ten film slots every year and the need to latch onto those revenues which we currently do not attract. The Picture House needs to secure this product, at the right time to help subsidise our expressed desire to screen fewer mainstream features and more challenging film at the Picture House.

After discussion

It was moved by Cllr Boden

Seconded by Cllr Butterick and

RESOLVED: that a rolling four-year business plan, reviewed annually be prepared by the Picture House Manager. The cycle of the Town Council was a consideration in the timescale suggested and that the plan be available for the 23rd October 2023 for consideration, input and possible adoption.

Cllr Matthias stated that she is looking for an experiential element, encouraging people to not stay at home which must be inclusive with a continuation of the unique selling points of the Picture House i.e. proper mugs and homemade cake.

101.

PICTURE HOUSE PROJECTS

Emma Green, the Town Council Project Officer considered the future of the Picture House, what we would want it to become, opportunities available that could be considered and what the Picture House wants to achieve in the coming year.

The Project Officer outlined that the business plan would be considering where the Picture House wants to place itself considering changes as a consequence of Post Covid-19 pandemic trading. It would consider competitors i.e. The Vue, Halifax, the Square Chapel and the Rex Cinema in Elland looking at

what they screen and how they schedule. The consequences of showing films closer to release date aimed at attracting greater loyalty and new custom. It was suggested that increasing the ability to react to a popular screening is important and to 'hold over' a successful title. The business plan will consider and respect the existing loyal local cohort while looking to build a market for future years. The plan must be aware of the constantly changing film slate and the growing trend for features to not receive a release at the cinema and going straight to streaming. There will be emphasis on the successful National Theatre and live streaming events and the Picture House ability to respond to this.

Finally the business plan will continue to hold highly the principles adopted in 2012 and renewed in April 2023 and specifically the Community responsibilities it holds dearly.

The Project Officer looked at opinions available to increase revenue and the trading security of the Picture House. A distinct option that followed industry patterns in moving from a single screen to a dual screen cinema. A simple scoping exercise has been undertaken with the aim of increasing flexibility for scheduling and hire and increasing revenues at the box office and the kiosk. Projections were shared on adding a second screen working towards a potential opening in 2025/26 and therefore a return to a stronger financial footing.

Dis-benefits were considered and included the impact on the aesthetics of the building, increased staff costs and a reduced large auditorium capacity. Community/customer resistance is also likely to be a consideration along with down time when the works would be completed, ideally this will be minimised by scheduling works in quieter months.

Costs were outlined under the headings, general construction, lobby upgrade, mechanical/electrical works, sound/projection works as well as preliminary and specialist costs.

It is hoped that funding could be secured via grants, with the option of the Town Council considering an increase in the parish precept and an approach to the Public Works & Loan Board.

The request was made to initiate the project, investigate and assess along with possibly entering into community engagement. However, this can only take place when the Business Plan is agreed and adopted and marries up with the project. To allow this to progress a funding request from Picture House Reserves is required totalling £10,375.

It was moved by Cllr Boden

Seconded by Cllr Davenport and

RESOLVED: to adopt the following request as submitted in the report:

- To ensure that a Business Plan is available by 4th October 23 to ensure that the objectives of the Business Plan continue to be met and that the project remains desirable, viable and achievable.

- To initiate the project, which will see further investigation and feasibility assessments on the creation of a second screen at the Hebden Bridge Picture House.
- To approve expenditure up to £10,375 for professional fees, structural survey, quantity surveyor and for the time of the Project Officer. This will provide information to fully assess the feasibility of the project.
- To apply for funding of up to £50k from the Rural England Prosperity Fund and to identify further sources of funding.

It was agreed that future reports must include financing costs and that consideration be given to the back screen area as part of the business plan analysis to identify options for consideration. Alternative methods of raising financial support must also be considered.

The meeting finished at 21.10pm.

HEBDEN ROYD TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting of the PICTURE HOUSE COMMITTEE held 7th September 2023

MINUTES

PRESENT: Councillors: Butterick (Chair), Davenport, Fraser & Howes.

Picture House Manager: Pete Berrisford

HRTC Council Clerk: J Boom

HRTC Project Officer: Emma Green

Kate Higham (Friends of the Picture House)

MINUTES

- 177. To receive apologies for absence and any substitutions.**
Cllr Boden & Matthias.
- 178. To receive members` interests relating to agenda items for this meeting.**
None were declared at this time.
- 179. To report on matters arising from the minutes of meeting held 12th July 2023 not itemised on this agenda.**
No matters were arising from the last meeting.
The Town Clerk highlighted that this evenings meeting was considering a single item and that the next meeting of the Picture House Committee will see a full review of the Picture Houses activity as usual.
- 180. PICTURE HOUSE PROJECT - PROGRAMME**
The committee reviewed the documents that had been circulated prior to the meeting following an introduction from Cllr Butterick.
- Emma Green presented an overview of the documents to be considered and the rationale behind them. The following points provide a summary of the points considered and discussed:
- The HBPH Programming Policy dates from 2012, indeed it is likely to date from before the handover of the cinema to HRTC. The policy

continues to be adhered to with the range of, and share of, film types remaining in line with the policy.

- The developing business plan for the cinema stresses the importance of industry film release date and how the Picture Houses policies stand and could change.
- The proposal to test a change to the programming policy is to support the business case for a Screen 2 and will be complemented by a targeted marketing plan.
- The proposal tests 'if we build it, will they come', identify potential positives and problems, help set business goals, inform marketing strategy and support a business justification for a Screen 2.
- The proposed strategy will seek to screen one title per month on date of release (Managers choice), honour National Theatre Live and Royal Opera House dates, introduce Saturday Juniors and continue with the remainder of the programme as usual and would see thirteen unique titles including four foreign language/arthouse titles per month.
- Data collected will help inform audience demographic make-up, cinema catchment area, changes in market share and allow more accurate demand forecasting.
- Data will be collected via ticket sales and the Oscar box office system and include postcodes and email addresses. Surveys will be held along with a programme of visitor engagement both at the cinema and at other locations.

The proposal to test a change to programming policy must importantly be viewed in conjunction with developing Screen 2 concept and the changing in programming arrangements if agreed should be launched and developed hand in glove with this concept. This will create commercial viability while retaining the ability to show specialist content.

To encourage engagements and to grow attendance during the testing period a marketing strategy will be delivered including:

- Online presence, exclusive previews, transparent & positive messaging, partnerships, local press, and updated visual identity. Artists impression of the Screen 2 concept will be commissioned.
- The programme brochure will be adapted accordingly to reflect the changing programme, this may include the time period it covers being altered.

While expecting a positive response to both the proposal to alter the programming arrangements and the developing Screen 2 concept regard will be given to comments and suggestions that are not positive. It is expected that community resistance, fear of change and travel logistic problems will form the majority of concerns to be raised.

The Picture House Manager suggested that a pre- Christmas change to the programming policy would be most advantageous with 'Wonka' being

targeted as the title, this will be confirmed if the proposal is agreed when the titles booking has been opened.

The meeting considered important partners to be involved with the project and how the proposals of both the programme change and the Screen 2 concept be communicated. It was agreed that a special event/meeting at the Picture House be held to communicate messages to the Friends of the Picture House and the Hebden Bridge Film Club.

In summary the proposals are testing a response to the challenges faced by the Picture House as a single screen cinema and are looking to ensure the future of the Picture House, to allow it to continue to offer a mixture and variety of content for visitors and residents of Hebden Royd to enjoy.

The proposed programme test will progress once the structural testing of the building has been completed to identify if a Screen 2 concept can be delivered. Results are expected by the end of September.

The following additional points were raised and will be considered as the Screen 2 concept is developed:

- Project funding, including its long term/legacy impacts.
- Speed of delivery the Screen 2 Concept so as not to undermine the programme change and the testing that has been undertaken and possibly retained.
- The impact on the historical building that house the Picture House, especially the balcony area.

It was moved by Cllr Howes

Seconded by Cllr Fraser and

RESOLVED: to run a programme test period for 6 months, likely to start in December 2023, alongside the development of the screen 2 project, to enable the business justification for a Screen 2 project to be demonstrated.

To launch a marketing strategy that gives a clear narrative for the reasons and the purpose of the change of programming to test the market.

The meeting finished at 8.30pm.

HEBDEN ROYD TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting of the PICTURE HOUSE COMMITTEE held 4th October 2023

MINUTES

PRESENT: Councillors: Butterick (Chair), Boden, Davenport, Fraser & Howes.

Picture House Manager: Pete Berrisford

HRTC Council Clerk: J Boom

HRTC Project Officer: Emma Green

Maggie Woods & Kate Higham (Friends of the Picture House)

MINUTES

- 205. To receive apologies for absence and any substitutions.**
Cllr Matthias.
- 206. To receive members` interests relating to agenda items for this meeting.**
None were declared at this time.
- 207. To report on matters arising from the minutes of meeting held 7th September 2023 not itemised on this agenda.**
- 208. FRIENDS OF THE PICTURE HOUSE**
The Friends reported on the recent Heritage Open Day with the old projector being on display along with the Yorkshire Film Archive Hebden Bridge Carnival film being shown. A poster sale was held which generated funds for the group.
The most recent Making Friends gathering was viewed to once again be a success, the Making Friends Kitchen however continues to look for a new home and kitchen.
The Christmas raffle is to be held starting in late November.

209. MANAGERS REPORT

The Picture House Manager reported on recent screenings and the busy August period. He outlined special screenings since the last meeting which had proved successful.

The committee discussed ongoing arrangements regarding Covid-19 and it was agreed that the balcony should remain socially distanced for the foreseeable future.

210. FINANCIAL REPORT

The Town Clerk reported on secondary sales and ticket sales, reminding councillors that the annual cumulative analysis was not adjusted for inflation and that when considering figures this must be accounted for.

The meeting discussed upcoming screenings and the need to continue to support repeat customers and the mix of features that they appreciate.

211. BUSINESS PLAN

The meeting thanked the Picture House Manager for this draft version and agreed the need for targets, not necessarily financial, to measure the success of the plan and to add structure.

Councillors agreed to contribute and the Town Clerk would approach all members of the committee in the coming weeks. The business plan is to progress ‘hand in glove’ with the developing screen two proposal.

212. SCREEN TWO PROJECT

It was confirmed that the commissioned structural report had confirmed that the Picture House would be able to accommodate the proposed Screen Two project.

The Project Manager outlined the next steps of the project with the appointment of a Quantity Surveyor progressing already. The project will continue to develop alongside the trial programme and all its elements.

Meetings are planned with the Friends of the Picture House to explain the proposal and start the process of public consultation.

The Project Manager outlined a presentation to full council planned for the 11th October and asked that Picture House Committee Members provide feedback by 12 noon the following day.

The meeting finished at 8.55pm.

HEBDEN ROYD TOWN COUNCIL

Meeting of the PICTURE HOUSE COMMITTEE held 3rd JANUARY 2024

MINUTES

PRESENT: Councillors: Butterick (Chair), Boden & Howes.

Picture House Manager: Pete Berrisford

HRTC Council Clerk: J Boom

HRTC Project Officer: Emma Green

Maggie Woods (Friends of the Picture House)

318. To receive apologies for absence and any substitutions.
Cllrs Davenport, Fraser & Matthias.

319. To receive members` interests relating to agenda items for this meeting.
None were declared at this time.

320. To report on matters arising from the minutes of meeting held 4th October 2023 not itemised on this agenda.
No significant items needed to be reported and as the meeting is solely intended to consider budget request they were deferred to the planned committee meeting on the 14th February.

321. FRIENDS OF THE PICTURE HOUSE

Maggie Woods from the Friends outlined the recent acts of the group.

The Friends had been consulted on the Screen 2 consultation process and the proposal itself, the response had been positive with much useful information exchanged.

As screening of ‘We Dare to Dream’ had been planned by the Friends and hosted at the Picture House, a reception was held at the Town Hall before the screening. The screening was attended by two coaches of visitors from St Augustine’s Centre which also included a Judo display prior to the screening.

As part of the ‘Making Friends’ project the annual Christmas Party had been held at the Town Hall, followed by a screening of the ‘Grinch’ at the Picture House.

The Christmas raffle took place as usual; receipts are yet to be finalised but the expectation is for the raffle to have raised £2k approx.

The Friends have purchased from the Picture House 100 Cinema Vouchers which have been circulated via local food banks to those in need. Previously awarded funding to support those with social isolation paid for the vouchers following a struggle to identify those that are hard to reach. Further funds are available for this project should it be assessed to have been effective

The Friends thanked the Picture House Manager for his continued support and for continuing to update the Friends of the Picture House on the cinema's activities.

322.

PICTURE HOUSE FINANCIAL POSITION & FUNDING REQUEST for 2024 - 25

The Town Clerk presented accounts to the end of November 2023 highlighting ticket revenue growth of 13% and kiosk income growth of 21% above budget. The Picture House continues to perform well against budget and moves towards a break even position for the financial year 2023/24. The Town Clerk also shared initial reports of trading in December 2024 which again were well above budget expectations, ticket sales showing a 10% increase and kiosk sales showing a 47% increase.

The Town Clerk explained salary increases due to the 2023/24 pay settlement being agreed and back pay becoming payable to staff.

The Picture House Manager presented the annual ticket price increase proposal which looked to freeze the prices increased in 2022/23 and increase those that were held in that same year. The proposal looked to increase admission prices by £1 for seniors, passport to leisure card holders and students while freezing admission prices for adults and children. Live Streaming tickets were proposed to increase for each category by £2.

The Picture House Manager advised the meeting that the Picture House remains cheaper than both local and national competition while remaining a far better venue with significantly better customer service.

It was moved by Cllr Butterick

Seconded by Cllr Boden and

RESOLVED: to unanimously adopt the proposal as presented by the Picture House Manager and to implement the price increases as of the 1st April 2024. Communications should be issued focusing on the positive price freezes for adult and child customers.

The Town Clerk presented a draft budget for the Picture House 2024/25 to the committee and a discussion ensued.

The Town Clerk explained the weightings applied to the monthly revenue figures as being a historical basis for distributing expected income which sometimes did not fit in line with cinemas content releases.

In summary the budget is in line with current trading levels at the Picture House with additional ticket revenue from increased pricing and an expectation of attendance growth of 5%. Expenditure items have seen renters fees being increased to 38% as a result of taking film titles earlier than in previous years, energy costs increase by 9% and insurance an increase of 20%. Staff salaries are expected to increase by 4.5% across all posts but will be only decided by national negotiations by the National Joint Council (NJC).

It was agreed that the budget set an ambitious target for the Picture House to aim for but one that is achievable with the Picture House Manager looking to see the team at the Picture House rise to the challenge.

It was moved by Cllr Howes

Seconded by Cllr Boden and

RESOLVED: to unanimously adopt the Picture House budget for 2024/25.

Draft budget requests were put to the committee considering current trading levels and aspirations for the Picture House. As the Picture House is expected reach a net break even point during 2023/24 there is no request for revenue support from the Town Council for 2024/25. It was agreed that this was a significant achievement by all HRTC Staff associated with the Picture House who were thanked.

Connectivity at the Picture House was discussed with the challenge of providing reliable Wifi in the cinema of real importance to ensure card purchases completions while the Picture House hosts customers. The IT was also discussed and it was agreed that it was due to be replaced and that both these requests should be supported and put to the Strategy & Review committee for inclusion in the Town Council budget for 2024/25.

It was moved by Cllr Boden

Seconded by Cllr Butterick and

RESOLVED: to pass the budget request for improved connectivity at the Picture House to the Strategy & review Committee.

The HRTC Project Officer presented the current position of the Screen Two project to the committee considering survey work, marketing, consultation, decisions taken, budgets and future actions. The Project Officer shared indicative costs for the overall project with the meeting, recently received from the appointed quantity surveyor. The two phases were discussed, phase one being balcony strengthening and an improved kiosk, and phase two implementing the plan for a second screen. It is important to note that the structural work in phase one must be completed in the next 10 years (estimate) to insure the integrity of the Picture House, work has indicated a weakening of the structure. It was acknowledged that stage one would likely see a greater proportion of the overall project cost for preliminaries and fees being attached to it as the two phases must be developed at the same time but that it was possible to deliver the phases separately, which may be the preferred approach.

The Committee discussed the financial reserves at the Picture House.

It was moved by Cllr Butterick

Seconded by Cllr Boden and

RESOLVED: to reallocate the restricted reserves (£31,000) of the Picture House associated with the improvement of the building façade to the Screen Two project. It was agreed that the Screen Two Project Board would consider and respond to the suggestion to add the improvement to the façade to become a possible phase three.

After significant discussion and consideration of the expert advice and indicative costings received, along with officer recommendations and the project boards recent reports the Committee agreed the following unanimously.

It was moved by Cllr Boden

Seconded by Cllr Howes and

RESOLVED: to unanimously request from the Town Council as follows:

- The Town Council to support the continued development of the Screen Two project with phase one, accepting that phase one will bear

increased overall project costs as it will contain preparatory phase two project costs within. A request of £87,178.50 to meet the cost of phase one, which will include preliminaries and professional fees for both phase one and part phase two. For clarification the £31,000.00 reallocated from Picture House reserves as previously agreed will be in addition to this amount to meet the indicative costs for Phase One totalling £118,178.50.

- The Town Council reserve financial support for the Screen Two project in the financial year 2024/25 for use in delivery in 2025/26 against indicative overall costs of £550,000.00 less phase one costs as outlined previously. Reserved financial support should be set at a level that will have significant impact on reducing the projects reliance on external funding and therefore reducing the need of the Picture House to generate a surplus against a needed return on capital. This should be no less than £100,000.00. The Committee suggested a level that the Town Council could meet from its reserves and underspend and by appropriate management of the precept for 2024/25.

Meeting finished at 9.15pm.