

## **HEBDEN ROYD TOWN COUNCIL**

### **Meeting of the PICTURE HOUSE COMMITTEE held 12<sup>th</sup> 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 6<sup>th</sup> 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, 15<sup>th</sup> 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 23<sup>rd</sup> 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.