

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.