

HEBDEN BRIDGE 
PICTURE HOUSE

Annual Report

March 2022



Town Mayor

CLlr Rob Freeth

Chair of Picture House Committee

CLlr Dr Carol Stow

Picture House Manager

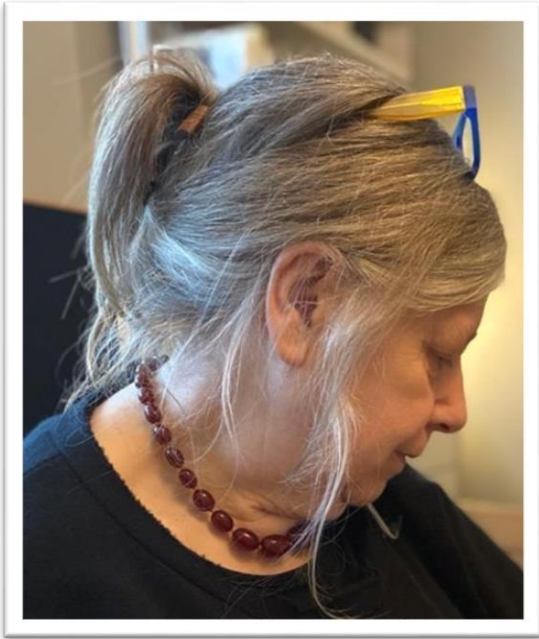
Pete Berrisford



Hebden Royd Town Council

The Town Hall, St George's Street, Hebden Bridge. HX7 7BY • Tel 01422 842181
info@hebdenroydtowncouncil.gov.uk • www.hebdenroydtowncouncil.gov.uk

Report from the Chair of Picture House Committee



This year we welcomed a new Picture House manager and the re-opening of our cinema after its extended closure due to COVID-19 restrictions. Having considered the health of our staff and audience, the availability of films for us to screen and our financial resources we re-opened on 28th June 2021.

Initially we took several measures relating to social distancing and additional cleaning of the building and at the end of this financial year still have some distancing measures in place. Our audience members tell us that these measures have given them the confidence to come and enjoy films together again.

The figures presented in this annual report indicate that although audience numbers have not yet returned to pre-pandemic levels, with the support of grants and careful use of our resources we have once again stayed in a positive financial position. We appointed a new manager, Pete Berrisford, in the autumn and both he and our previous manager, Rebekah Fozard, deserve praise for all their work ensuring the smooth running of the cinema during what is acknowledged across the industry as another challenging year.

As a town council we are committed to keeping the Picture House at the centre of our community and now have our eyes set on replacing our ageing projector in the coming year.

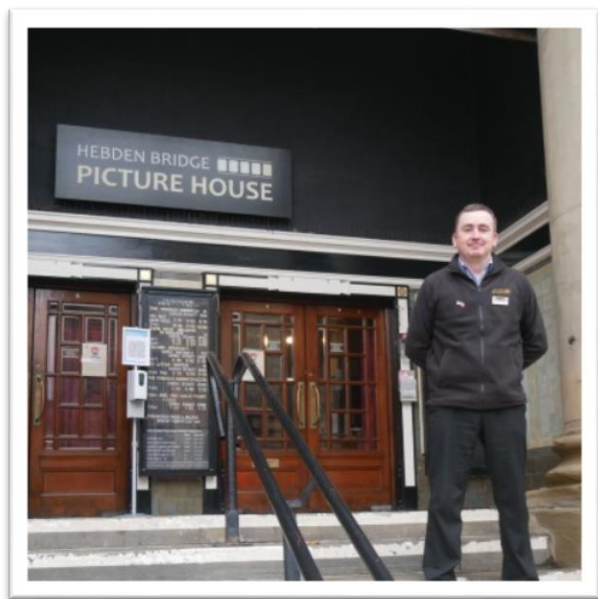
Cllr. Dr Carol Stow

***Chair of the Picture House committee 2020-
Hebden Royd Town Council***

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Report from the Picture House Manager



Taking over the reins from former Picture House Manager Rebekah Fozard was no mean task, but luckily as a former customer I had somewhat of an understanding as to the love that the community holds towards the cinema.

My primary focus has been to maintain the great work done by my predecessor but also to re-engage with audiences. Post COVID I believe cinema has never been more important, as people look for escapism and finally have the chance to meet up with friends and enjoy a movie together. Regulars will have noticed our weekly Film Club screenings which take place each Thursday, everyone is welcome, and we encourage newcomers to join!

Working closely with the Independent Cinema Office myself and my team strive to ensure the film programme appeals to as broad a demographic as possible. From the latest blockbusters to festival winners, we offer something for everyone.

My team have adapted well to the simple changes implemented over the last 6-8 months to ensure that the customer journey is a pleasurable one. From streamlining the booking process to keeping cinema fun, we've worked hard behind the scenes to hopefully encourage repeat custom.

Lastly, I'd like to formally thank the Friends of the Picture House for all their support and further endorsing my love for cinema. The 'Making Friends' trips that treat local asylum-seeking families to a day at the pictures is a fantastic initiative and long may they continue.

Pete Berrisford
Manager
Hebden Bridge Picture House

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Report from the Marketing Officer



Our marketing goals over the past year have been to create awareness of the venue and our programme to younger audiences and drive continued footfall to the cinema (as attitudes to visiting cinemas change post-covid restrictions).

Data analysis from the new Box office system is continuing to enable identification of audience demographic information and better inform our marketing strategies, to deliver more targeted campaigns and retain and grow our audience.

Our email marketing activity continues to be an effective form of communication helping us to reach our customers directly. Results are excellent, the UK average open rate for newsletters in our sector is 20.51% and ours is higher than average at 40.5%. With rising printing costs and our commitment to working to reduce our carbon footprint and printed paper waste, we no longer create a formal cinema programme. However, to ensure we don't alienate members of the community who don't use social media or our website regularly, they can now enjoy an A5 flyer printed in-house which details the films we're screening every fortnight. This has received great feedback in the community and is available outside the building and in the foyer.

We introduced changes to the website to make it more accessible and customer friendly following the box office installation last year. Including changes to the home page and the mobile platform, we identified that users needed a faster way to book tickets.

Our Social Media figures have increased consistently year on year on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Instagram has been our driving focus this year, ensuring we are delivering film focused content to the channel and our younger audiences. Growing new audiences is vital if we are to exceed our reputation of being a community cinema and establish the committed, film-loving audiences of the future. HBPH was part of a nationwide, BFI-funded youth membership scheme from 2021 which allowed us to offer 16–25-year-olds £5 tickets for all films

We've seen an increase each quarter in Young Audience attendance since introducing the new ticketing scheme. As we move into finishing the project (at the end of August) young audience development will be integrated into ongoing work through targeted marketing, launch of Fright Night, and engagement with local community groups working with young people (e.g., Happy Valley Pride).

Lisa Murdoch
Marketing Officer
Hebden Bridge Picture House

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Report from the Town Clerk



The Picture House in 2021/22 was fortunate to receive financial support from the Cultural Recovery Fund as the Picture House, like so many other businesses sort to build back after the Covid-19 restrictions. Accurate financial projections made by the then Picture House Manager, Rebekah Fozard, allowed the end of year accounts for 2021-22 to demonstrate that the Picture House had generated a small surplus for the year. The contribution of the Cultural Recovery Fund was crucial.

This achievement cannot be downplayed, the Picture House had supported 24 staff and their families throughout and had returned to reasonable trading levels following the pandemic. Hebden Royd Town Council staff who had worked throughout the Pandemic must be thanked, even a business temporarily closed is extremely time consuming.

As usual expenditure was managed well and this allowed, towards the end of the year, the Picture House to start the process of replacing the now ageing digital projector with help from both Hebden Royd Town Council and the Friends of the Picture House. Staff benefits from increased wages as a Living Wage Employer were monitored and a new complementary ticket system introduced. Our two tenants, Valley Taxis and the Night Jar have also agreed to renew their leases giving secure income to the Picture House.

Income proved a greater challenge, a lack of confidence and a real choice of movies saw ticket sales down and consequently kiosk sales struggle.

We must now look to trading without the financial support of the Cultural Recovery Fund as 2022/23 will be judged on that basis. The completion of the new Laser Projector install is a priority along with a great volume of sales from the kiosk. We know that as the quality of the movies we have available to us increased attendances will become evident. We continue to search for new ideas, films and customers and hope that you will join us as we continue to support this single screen cinema that is so important to Hebden Royd.

Jason Boom
Town Clerk
Hebden Royd Town Council

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Acknowledgements & Thanks

For their continued dedication and commitment, we thank the staff of the Picture House and those who support the Picture House at Hebden Royd Town Council; their commitment and energy remain central to the cinema's continuing success.

David Sin & Mikaela Smith at The Independent Cinema Office continue to receive our gratitude for their excellent advice and help in putting together an enjoyable and diverse film programme each month, and assisting with special events.

Film Hub North and the UK Cinema Association also continue to provide support and assistance to the cinema.

Thanks are always due to the Committee of the Friends of the Picture House for their constant fundraising, clean ups, support, questioning and continued enthusiasm. Their regular committee meetings to discuss cinema issues, hear from the Manager and develop ways to enhance what the cinema offers through their own schemes, such as the Making Friends group, really brings so much value to the cinema's core operations.

As always, sincere appreciation too to the many regular visitors to the Picture House who choose the Picture House above other cinemas, continue to make the Picture House a vibrant space and organisation, and provide ideas and feedback on what we do. We'd be lost without you.

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