

HEBDEN BRIDGE 
PICTURE HOUSE

Annual Report

April 2023



Town Mayor
Cllr Jane Hoyle

Chair of Picture House Committee
Cllr Geoff Wood
Picture House Manager
Pete Berrisford



Hebden Royd Town Council

The Town Hall, St George's Street, Hebden Bridge. HX7 7BY • Tel 01422 842181
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Report from the Chair of Picture House Committee



As chair of the Picture House committee, I would like to thank the Hebden Royd community for its support, reflected through attendance at the cinema and enthusiasm for the diverse variety of film and events we screen.

The Town Council is ambitious in its desire to make the cinema the best independent cinema in the country and for it to be a positive place to visit and work, as outlined by the council's commitments that the Town Clerk has commented on.

To the cinema team, I would like to thank you for being unfailingly positive, dedicated, and creative during difficult times; building post-covid audiences and navigating a cost-of-living crisis is no mean feat. Despite these challenges, 2022-23 has been a year of beneficial change and activity.

With support of the cinema team, Pete Berrisford has effectively overseen the introduction of new initiatives and has breathed new life into the cinema's unique heritage and character.

The cinema, more than ever, feels community driven with Hebden Bridge Film Club members increasing every day, programming of new content to reach younger audiences (2022 saw the launch of Fright Night) and working with local organisations in creating events for the benefit of the whole town and wider audiences too.

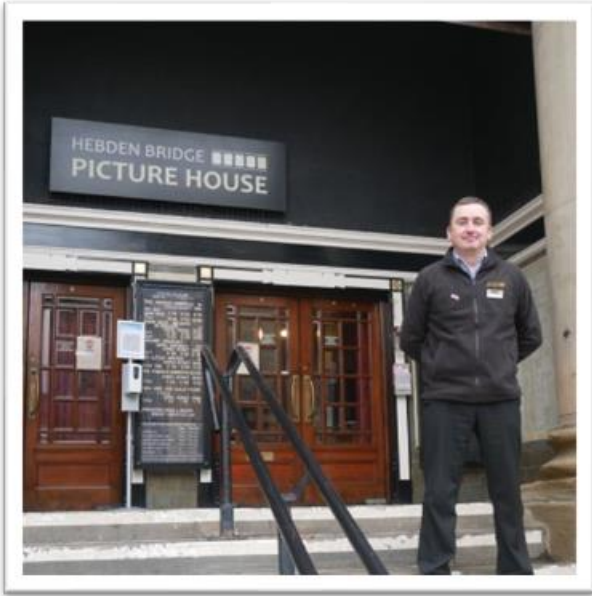
I am personally grateful for the Friends of the Picture House, who champion the arts venue to those far and wide, and engage with all members of the community in making it a safe and welcoming place for all to enjoy.

Cllr Geoff Wood
Chair of the Picture House Committee

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Report from the Picture House Manager



Now 18 months into the role of Picture House Manager and reflecting on all the hard work my team has done to achieve a successful year, in comparison to forecasts on attendance/financials.

Focusing on the operational KPI's was the main factor in achieving these results, from a record high on retail spend to maintaining a streamlined staffing structure - it has been a real team effort.

We've also this year taken the film programming in-house saving £6000 from the overall running costs to the cinema. Behind the scenes we continue to ensure the programme is balanced between commercial gain and community engagement.

Away from the business side of things we hosted the first post-covid Hebden Bridge Film Festival (HBFF) in March. We had a fantastic turn-out across the full slate of films with everyone involved enjoying the whole experience. Highlight for me personally was meeting the cast and crew from Blue Jean.

Aside from the HBFF we also hosted the Yorkshire Silent Film Festival and will be again this year. Last years brought in a mix of demographics with fun to be had by all, as local kids could play instruments in time to the likes of Laurel & Hardy and the great Charlie Chaplin.

Looking to the next 12 months we are focussing on re-engaging with local families and growing our weekend matinee slots. We'll also be hiring out the cinema for comedy nights a few times over the year. Hopefully, these will be as successful as BANFF hires have been as they not only pay a premium for our space but also the added bar revenue.

Last and by no means least, I'd like to add a massive Thank You to the Friends of the Picture House for their continued support.

Pete Berrisford
Manager
Hebden Bridge Picture House

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Report from the Marketing Officer



Following on from our young audience development work, May 2022 saw the launch of our monthly Fright Night screenings – a team project where we programme, promote and eventise the most anticipated new horror films and enduring cult classics.

In October we were successful in securing funding for a major BFI UK-wide film and events programme, **In Dreams are Monsters**, which enabled us to further develop the Fright Night screenings with food, music, drinks and introduce Fright Night merchandise too.

Supported by National Lottery, BFI Film Audience Network and the ICO we presented double bill horror screenings to our monthly Fright Night audience and beyond. These included Evil Dead, Ganja & Hess, Pet Sematary and The Lost Boys.

Our monthly Fright Night screenings has been building in numbers steadily and one year on we are averaging over one hundred customers for each screening – a fantastic team achievement. Our Fright Night shows might be the key to developing our young audiences as well as the potential to draw in horror fans from outside of the town too. We also worked with local college students who were fantastic horror hosts in creating a more immersive horror experience, improving on our young audience development work and engagement within the local community.

Social media and email marketing (which increases year on year in numbers) proved to be an effective form of communicating to this audience.

On that note, our move to Instagram and Instagram Stories meant we had to move away from Twitter due to capacity limit, but we are still sharing some content on there.

Considering Instagram is one of our newer channels (joined to improve our audience development with younger audiences), we are really pleased with our reach and engagement rate. Focusing on creating more content on Insta Stories has helped to make us seen to our younger audiences.

Facebook continues to grow and is our primary channel for communicating and engaging with our core 35+ audience (outside of our newsletters).

Our aims for 2023 is a focus on working within the community (make sure to join the Hebden Bridge Film Club!), sharing more video content on our socials and creating personalised content using the full cinema team.

Lisa Murdoch
Marketing Officer
Hebden Bridge Picture House

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Report from the Town Clerk



I write this report as we move towards the local government elections in May 2023. This will see a change in the membership of the council and consequently the membership of the Picture House Management Committee. This committee has remained for the main static in the last four years, a conscious decision, to ensure skills are gained and an understanding is retained to the best benefit of the Picture House.

I must pay particular thanks to those not returning to the Town Council having served the Picture House, and in particular Carol Stow and Geoff Wood who have chaired the committee in the past four years.

While the membership may change the principle remains to make the Hebden Bridge Picture House the best single screen cinema. Another changing year of building back has been challenging, and while growth has been slow, there has been growth and progression. We continue to manage costs and bring forward the initiatives the Picture House Manager and Marketing Officer outline.

Delivering a new projector last year has shown the continued commitment to the long-term future of the Picture House and our desire to give our customers the best cinematic experience we can.

Financially, the Town Council made a commitment to support the Picture House income streams in 2022/23 and has made a similar commitment for 2023/24. This commitment has seen £27.5k introduced with a similar amount reserved for the following year. We are determined however to remove this reliance beyond 2023/24 and are developing an appropriate business plan with actions designed to deliver this. It is highly likely that you will see us asking questions of you, the cinema goer, in the near future to help with this aim.

While developing this plan we remain conscious of the need to support our staff as we travel through challenging times, I know we have done this, through formal wage settlements and through our own initiatives. Without them we would not have a Picture House to visit, I would encourage you to thank them.

I have no doubt the Picture House will continue to grow its audience and reinforce its strong reputation locally and regionally with its films, live arts and special events, helping to return to pre covid attendance levels.

Should you wish to examine the financial information further this is available at Hebden Bridge Town Hall.

Jason Boom
Town Clerk
Hebden Royd Town Council

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Acknowledgements & Thanks

We must thank the staff of the Picture House for continuing to contribute to the ongoing success of the cinema. This year has seen some leave to pastures new and we must not forget their contribution.

Those staff members at the Town Council who continue to assist in the background.

Financially the Town Council has again risen to the challenge, supporting the cinema building back following its enforced closures in 2020 and 2021. Without this funding the Picture House would not be the place we continue to visit and appreciate so much.

We again thank the Committee of the Friends of the Picture House for their constant fundraising, clean ups, support, questioning and continued enthusiasm. The Hebden Bridge Film club continue to swell their ranks and encourage those socially isolated to join them in their discussions and screenings and of course the organisers of the Hebden Bridge Film Festival, a well-supported and organised event with a growing reputation nationwide.

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

Finally, our patrons making the Picture House a vibrant, welcoming space who challenge us with ideas and suggestions all the time. We would be a lot worse off without you.

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