

Chester Film Society
Annual General Meeting

Held on Thursday 28th September 2023

The Annual General Meeting was held before the film screening of "Love According to Dalva" in The Garret, Storyhouse and was attended by 57 members including Committee members.

Apologies received: David Gill, Mark Nelson, Anne Ord Sykes, Donna Whittington

Introduction

The Chair, Jo Crotty, opened the meeting by announcing that this season will be her last as Chair and on the Committee. She would be staying on to manage the International Film Festival in March.

Jo noted that the Agenda and Accounts had been emailed to all members prior to the meeting.

1. Chair's Report

Jo delivered the following report:

- Last season was our 50th season! We asked you to come back and you did, for which we are very grateful. We are clawing our way back and have now built a small financial cushion, but this has only been achieved with some changes, including a new night and a new venue.
- There have been some teething problems with our new venue in the Garret at Storyhouse:
 - The opening of the Garret bar has always been by the goodwill of Storyhouse staff so has not always been able to open. Following a recent meeting with the Storyhouse team, bar sales will only be available from the downstairs (Kitchen) bar unless notified otherwise. This is due to rising costs at Storyhouse which at the present time we are not in a place to cover by including it in our hire agreement.
 - The seating in the Garret could be better. We encourage those who find it uncomfortable to please bring your own cushion, We will try and have blankets and/or cushions made available where possible.
- However, there have been many benefits of us moving to The Garret:
 - It represents the best value venue in Chester
 - There is equipment and technical support in situ
 - We benefit from the advantage of being promoted on the Storyhouse website for memberships and guest tickets
 - Our relationship with Storyhouse has made available discounts for other cinema related events at Storyhouse for members.
 - The mini summer season of 90s cult sci-fi also discounted tickets for members and proved very popular.
- Other new initiatives
 - Last season we introduced "Bring a Friend for Free" night which was very successful – and we will be repeating that for our first film back in January: The Quiet Girl. As last time the offer is for one membership, one friend admission for free.
- Not so successful
 - The Social Night held in February struggled to attract expected numbers . Before Covid (and for many years previously) it was a great draw; now it seems to have lost its shine, so we have decided to 'rest' it for this year and explore other social options - the first of which will be our Christmas Reception, to be sponsored by Vain Hairdressing on 7th December before the film.
- Chester International Film Festival goes from strength to strength and has become a fixture on the Chester Cultural Calendar! We sold out at three of the six screenings

this year and sold a minimum of 40 ticket for all screenings. This is down to your support. The Animation Festival is also gaining an international reputation, and the quality of entries improves every year. We will be screening this year's winner – The Smile – on 7th December as part of a double-bill with "Winners". Thanks to Edge Hill University for their continued support.

- **The coming year**

- We will be exploring as a committee our business model. Things in the film world are changing – both locally and globally. Picturehouse will open on November 10th bringing a much wider range of world cinema to Chester. Streaming and the inevitable phasing out of DVDs/Blu Ray also presents us with challenges as we currently screen all our films from disc. So the committee will be looking at different approaches to organising the Film Society in the coming months. We do not intend to close it down – in fact, the opposite: we need to future-proof ourselves. If we do decide to propose significant changes, then we will call an Extraordinary General Meeting to present proposals and discuss with the membership.

Thanks again for supporting your film society!

2. Accounts

Jenny Spick, Treasurer, presented a brief summary of the Accounts for year ended 31 March 2023 which had been posted in detail to all members prior to the meeting. These are presented below:

Overview

In the year ending March 2023 Chester Film Society (CFS) made a surplus of **£3,085**.

This is an improved financial position on the previous two years and reflects our first full year of operation since the Covid pandemic. The society has been able to screen a complete programme of 12 films from September 2022 to March 2023. In contrast the Society did not run a full programme in either 2020/21 or 2021/22. For these years the Society had losses of £1,515 in 2021/22 and £925 in 2020/21, when no income was received, and minimal operational plus pre-season preparation costs were incurred. The loss-making position for both years was not ideal but as a society we reduced our expenses and were in the fortunate position of having a cash balance at the bank that enabled us to continue to operate.

For 2022/23 Memberships, guest ticket sales and attendance figures have been good, with favourable levels of income. Total Income for the year of £9,354 from the previously mentioned sources in addition to fees from the Animation festival and from sponsorships by Vain Hair & Beauty of the CIFF receptions. Sponsorship support of CIFF was also received from Edge Hill University. The cost of Membership and guest tickets was increased in 2022/23. However, given the financial uncertainty resulting from the pandemic and the general rise in prices an increase was required to rebuild CFS finances.

The Society has held expense to a minimum level. The largest areas of expenditure are the hire of the Garrett and film licences. Total expenditure for the year of £6,269. This includes ongoing expenses during the year such as insurance, memberships, film screening costs in preparation for CIFF and the 2023/24 season. We are grateful to Committee Members for website administration, membership administration plus graphic design and artwork services. All at no cost.

Summary: 2022/23 has seen a positive financial position following losses in previous years with the return of a full programme of showings. This has improved the financial future of CFS.

The Film Society also organised a social night in February 2023 and Chester International Film Festival.

Current Season 2023/24

Memberships for the new season have sold very well, with an above target take up of Memberships. The society offered an Early Bird discount on Memberships whereby Members could take advantage of the 2022/23 price of £60 before the new price of £65 took effect on September 1st, 2023. This reflected an increase of £5 which we feel was needed to maintain financial stability and to reflect cost increases.

We are looking forward to showing the films that have been chosen, hoping to maintain good guest attendances and attract new Members.

Financial Accounts for year ending 31 March 2023

	Season 2022-2023 12 Screenings September 2022-March 2023	Chester International Film Festival 2023 3-10 March 2023	Social Night 11 February 2023	Mini Season Spring April - May 2022	Society Expenses- Insurance, Film Festival screenings, Memberships	Total
Expenses Premises hire, screen licences, Insurance, Film festival attendance, Cinema For All memberships, Printing, Postage	3,341	517	979	716	716	6,269
Income Memberships, Guest Ticket Sales, Sponsorship, Animation Festival fee income	7,134	897	1,057	172	94	9,354
Net Surplus/ <i>Deficit</i> - negative figures are net cost/overhead of CFS	3,793	380	78	<i>-544</i>	<i>-622</i>	3,085
Available Balance at 31.3.2022						£1,950
Available Balance at 31.3.2023						£5,035

[Secretary's note: as at 14th October 2023 we had 90 paid members and 3 Honorary members]

Acceptance of the Accounts was proposed by Ruth Davidson and seconded by Val Shannon

3. Election of Committee Members

The Chair noted that Jenny Spick, Treasurer had given notice that she would be standing down from this role and would not be included for re-election, However, she would continue to cover the duties for a while until a replacement was found

The following members put themselves forward for election to the Committee:

Linda Cloet

Rachel Cross (*current Secretary*)

Jo Crotty (*current Chair*)

David Gill

Mark Nelson

Anne Ord Sykes

John Sunter

Donna Whittington

All the above were unanimously elected

4. Questions and Answers

There were no questions or comments from members present.

The business of the AGM was then concluded.