

Chester Film Society

Special General Meeting

Held on Thursday 21st March 2024

This Special General Meeting was held before the film screening of “Clara Sola” in The Garret, Storyhouse and was attended by 60 members. It had been called to present the proposals for the future of the Film Society.

Introduction

Rachel Cross, introduced the meeting noting that the Agenda and supporting documents had been emailed to all members two weeks prior to the meeting.

1. Presentation of proposals

- At the turn of the year, three members of the Committee had resigned or were due to step down by the end of the season, crucially including the Chair and Treasurer with no replacements forthcoming.
- As a result, the remaining committee decided that it would be necessary to examine the whole model of the society and made the following proposals:
 - Move to operate in a new commercial cinema venue which would provide a more comfortable setting with better projection and audio facilities.
 - This would allow the cinema to take the task and cost of film licencing
 - The cinema venue would also carry the costs of using the venue but in return take all ticket revenue
 - The Film Society could then retain a membership but at a small subscription fee of £10 for the season. This would provide members with an exclusive discount ticket cost for each film
- Subsequently, the Society approached both Storyhouse and Picturehouse with these outline proposals to screen from their respective cinemas, with the following objectives:
 - An evening time acceptable to members (ie 7:30pm)
 - Tickets at about £5 against full standard cost to non-members
 - Storyhouse offered 6pm or 8pm with a 10% discount code in their 92-seat cinema
 - Chester Picturehouse offered 7:30pm with £5 against full Standard ticket (£11) in 107-seat Screen 4
- The Committee felt that Picturehouse was by far the better arrangement for members and followed up with them to reach a working agreement:
 - A season of 10 films split into two halves, before and after year end, starting in September as usual
 - Focus remains on World cinema/indie films
 - CFS Members must buy tickets for each film they wish to attend at £5. No other discounts for PH membership
 - The Picturehouse online ticket system is not set up for this so **all tickets must be bought in person, either on the night or in advance**. Seat reservations will be in place.

- However, the Committee wished to keep the association with Storyhouse for delivering the Chester International Film Festival in their cinema next March and will be meeting with them next week to follow up this arrangement.

In response to a question, Rachel confirmed that each half of the season, comprising 5 films each, would be publicised in advance (expected to be in August for a start on 19th September 2024 and in December for the second half starting on 9th January 2025) which allows tickets to be bought in advance in person at Picturehouse.

Another member thanked the committee for all their work in securing this new arrangement and members gave a round of applause.

Rachel thanked members and asked for a show of hands to formally ratify the proposals. This was carried unanimously.

2. Revisions to the Constitution

Rachel explained that as a result of the new structure for the Society, it was necessary to make some revisions to the constitution as well as taking the opportunity to update some terms.

The following revisions were presented:

Para 3.2 revised to reflect the new ticketing system:

“Membership of the Society shall entitle the holder ~~to attendance at all film shows (subject to venue capacity) and other meetings.~~ obtain tickets for each film screening at a discount rate to be determined between the Society and the Venue Host”

Para 4.1 revised to reflect the nature of the elected committee, abolishing “traditional” roles of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer and instead work collaboratively:

“The ~~business administration and governance~~ of the Society shall be managed by a Committee, consisting of ~~a Chair, a Treasurer and a Secretary and such other executive officers as may from time to time be appointed together with not less than three members.~~”

Para 4.3 An outdated clause removed:

~~“A large part of the Committee's work will be undertaken using email or letters.~~ The Committee shall meet not less than three times per year.”

Para 4.5 New para to describe roles of appointed volunteers:

“The Committee shall appoint other volunteers as necessary to support the aims of the Society. This includes film programming, support for the Film Festival or any other ad hoc tasks such as meet and greet at films”

Para 4.7 revised to reflect better practice:

“The date of any General Meeting shall be publicly ~~displayed in print or electronic form~~ announced in such a manner as ~~it~~ is reasonably accessible by all Members of the Society no less than two weeks before the agreed date of such General Meeting.”

Para 4.9 updated to reflect the actual practice of the Society:

~~The Society shall not be run for the private profit of a Member or Members. The Society shall be a voluntarily-run, not-for-profit organisation.~~ Any financial balance at the end of the year shall be carried over and devoted to furthering the objects of the Society

Para 4.11 updated to reflect a name change:

“The Society shall not be wound up except by a resolution of three-quarters of those present at an Extraordinary General Meeting ..., any remaining funds of the Society ... shall be devoted to objects similar to those of the Society. ... in consultation with the British Federation of Film Societies (t/a Cinema for All)”

All the above revisions were approved by a unanimous show of hands

3. New Committee

As previously indicated, following resignations and the restructuring a new committee needs to be elected which will carry out the responsibilities of administration and governance. This elected committee will be supported by other volunteers appointed in roles of film programming and on the night “meet & greet”.

The following were elected to the committee by a show of hands:

Rachel Cross
David Gill
Karen Howes
Mark Nelson
Anne Ord Sykes
John Sunter

The business of the Special General Meeting was then concluded