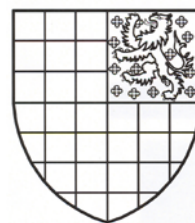


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**LEWES
TOWN
COUNCIL**

MINUTES

of the meeting of the **All Saints Centre (ASC) Steering Group** held on **Friday 10th October 2014**, in the **Assembly Room, Town Hall, Lewes at 11:00am.**

PRESENT Cllrs Catlin (Wischhusen); Chartier; S Murray, and A Price.

In attendance: S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*); Miss L Zeyfert (*Manager, All Saints Centre*); Ms M Burke (*Lewes Film Club*)

ASCSG2014/01 **ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN:**

Cllr M Chartier was elected Chairman for the meeting.

ASCSG2014/02 **QUESTIONS:**

There were none. (No public or press were present)

ASCSG2014/03 **APOLOGIES for ABSENCE:**

Apologies were received from Cllr J Daly (medical appointment); M Milner (work commitment); Cllr R O’Keeffe (an East Sussex County Council meeting), and Dr M Turner (visiting Blois).

ASCSG2014/04 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

There were none

ASCSG2014/05 **MINUTES:**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17th March 2014 were received and signed as a correct record.

ASCSG2014/06 **BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:**

1 The Chairman welcomed Ms Mary Burke, who was attending to offer insight and advice on matters related to film production and screening.

2 Members considered the operation of *Film@AllSaints* and performance statistics for the screenings from the last season – September 2013 to July 2014. There was also data on the first six weeks of the current season. This indicated that audience numbers continued to rise slowly and that the operation overall ran slightly above the point of financial break-even. Analysis of elements of expenditure supported the view that: should average audience numbers reach the levels anticipated when the service was envisaged, then the value of surplus income would be as much as originally suggested. Lewes Film Club had agreed a lower fee for their services for the current season; reflecting the different demands as 35mm format releases were superseded by digital discs. This led to an expectation of better financial performance overall, although it was accepted that this was dependent upon uncontrollable factors ranging from the international film industry’s output to the weather on the night of a screening. It was impractical to attempt to compete with other cinema operators in showing latest titles at the earliest opportunity; as the ASC was not equipped for modern Digital Cinema Projection (DCP) format releases. Disc-based releases were several weeks later, and programming must be adapted to this constraint. There followed a general discussion regarding the timing of screenings; the number of titles shown on a given date; the regularity of screenings and other practical aspects. It was acknowledged that once there was commitment to continue the service for a full season, competing requests to hire the Centre could be managed, and refinement of timing and regularity could be addressed. There was a lengthy debate on publicity and refinement of the operation, and a number of areas identified for possible improvement. Audience feedback on the effectiveness of advertisements suggested that the Viva Lewes advertisements

continues...

were the most helpful. Posters were often defaced or removed, and replacement was a continuing effort. Design was evolving in response to feedback, and visibility was improved over earlier versions. Miss Zeyfert would compile a set of example posters for assessment at the next meeting.

3 Specialist advice had been obtained during the past Summer as to the potential for fitting DCP equipment, and improvements to sound quality. DCP equipment cost would be over £35,000, and it was agreed that the present situation with a digitally-equipped operator at the Little Theatre and the prospect of a purpose-built cinema (The Depot) made this level of investment unwise at the present time. Previous suggestions of used equipment being available free of charge to community cinemas had been investigated, and had proved impractical in reality. Advice had also been obtained on the practical aspects of screening 'live' performances, such as national theatre and ballet or Glyndebourne operatic events. This would require DCP facilities, and it appeared that there would be obstacles to this due to the quality criteria imposed by the originators and existing agreements with commercial operators. It was **agreed** that further consideration of DCP equipment was not practical until such time as the prevailing conditions altered significantly. It was considered that the present operation should continue to the end of the 'season' in July 2015, and pertinent issues would be assessed as they arose.

4 One improvement that would offer immediate improvement to sound quality was a new screen, with micro-perforations to allow sound to pass forward from speakers sited behind. At ASC this would allow existing speakers to be repositioned for performances, and together with sound-baffling fabrics that were already in place would result in a notable improvement to the quality of sound received by the seated audience. The existing screen was over twenty years old, and new pigment technology would also offer a 'whiter' surface. A wider screen (<6m) could be accommodated, which would offer further enhancement by allowing an increase in the projected image size. It was estimated that this would cost around £5,000, and Mrs Burke advised that LFC were likely to offer 50% from their own funds (subject to confirmation by their Executive Committee). Current balances on ASC equipment budgets allowed for such expenditure. It was **agreed** that this should be recommended to Council for immediate purchase.

5 *Report by the ASC Manager:* It was reported that final fixing of the extended lighting truss was imminent, and new sound-baffling fabric drapes were on order which would give the added benefit of screening this from view by audiences. Further curtaining at the back of the building would also minimize draughts and assist heat retention in cold weather. A tailored, removable, screen had been constructed to prevent escape of noise through the window at the South end of the stage – facing Friars' Walk – during live music events. This addressed complaints raised by a neighbour. Estimates of cost for a hearing loop for the whole auditorium had exceeded the level anticipated; largely due to obstacles to conventional routing of cables. This was to be reassessed with expert advice. The pipe-organ was to undergo minor repairs, and would be re-tuned as a consequence. It was noted that the instrument was now regularly used by a number of organists, and was very well-regarded. In answer to a question from a Member, Miss Zeyfert reported that available staff hours were now stable following some protracted absence due to ill-health, and that the increase of the caretaker's role to full-time had brought very noticeable benefits. LFC assistance in the *Film@AllSaints* operation was invaluable

6 There was a discussion regarding the planned WW1 commemoration event, the *Winter of the World*, commissioned by the Council from Helen Glavin and John Hancorn. Some Members felt that: whilst the event was to be free of charge it would be helpful to create tickets for collection in advance. A poster was displayed around the town, but some Members considered the profile needed to be raised further. TC had a meeting scheduled shortly with Miss Glavin and would raise these

questions on publicity; and would also arrange for additional material (tickets and posters) to be created by LTC staff. This gave rise to a general discussion regarding poor availability of sites in the town where posters could be displayed, and Members agreed this might be the basis for a future project for the Council to consider.

ASCSG2014/07

RECOMMENDATIONS /CONCLUSIONS: It was agreed that Council be recommended to:

- Continue the *Film@AllSaints* operation to the end of the current season in July 2015, and to review continuation and/or further development as circumstances dictate.
- To approve the purchase, jointly with Lewes Film Club, of a replacement projection screen as described at 4, above. The cost to be funded from the existing approved budget for repair and replacement of equipment.

ASCSG2014/08

There being no other business, the Chairman declared the meeting closed and thanked everyone for their contribution.

The meeting closed at 12:45am