

Chester Film Society

Annual General Meeting

Held at Chester Picturehouse on Thursday 10th April 2025

The Annual General Meeting was held before the film “My Favourite Cake”. There were 68 members present

Apologies were received from: Mark Nelson, Anne Ord Sykes, Jolene Wells

1. Annual Report

Rachel Cross explained that a Report had been provided by email to members with the AGM Notification sent on 22nd March, which she summarised. The report is given in full here:

Report to the Annual General Meeting Season 2024-25

A New Season, a New Way

Following the Special General meeting held at the end of last season, we commenced arrangements to change the way in which the Film Society is set up.

In doing this, we have to extend a big Thank You to Chester Picturehouse for running with the idea of hosting a film society – something that they had not done before across any of their 26 cinemas. We worked with their local management team of Alf McLean and Susanne Hodder as well as their Senior Film Programmer, Freyja Pakarinen based in London.

Reducing our membership subscription to £10 has allowed our membership to grow to 200 this season, doubling our previous membership. Picturehouse takes all the ticket revenue and together we have achieved average audiences of 95 across our season, the highest being 127 for In The Mood For Love.

We programmed ten films in two parts of five films throughout the season. Showing films in this venue has allowed us to take advantage of picking films more recently released which might not have been available on disc, our previous screening format. In doing this, we worked with Freyja who takes care of all the film bookings. A season of ten films in total was a cautious approach as we really didn't know how this new model would be received. However, as noted, audiences have been very good but we will continue into another season with same number of screenings.

Chester International Film Festival

In 2018 we began a collaboration with Storyhouse to hold our Film Festival in their cinema, allowing us to programme recent releases in World Cinema. Since then, the festival has gone from strength to strength. While we moved to Picturehouse for our main season last year, we kept our association with Storyhouse for the Festival. This year, we agreed to enter into a co-production with Storyhouse and the University of Chester to expand the festival across 2 weeks while the Film Society kept control of the curation of the World Cinema and Animation Festival sections.

Committee changes

As this season draws to its close and we elect a new management committee, will be having some changes. John Sunter and Anne Ord Sykes are both stepping down. Thanks to both of them for their contributions to the working of the film society! Anne will remain as a volunteer on film programming and film nights. We have already co-opted Susanne Hodder now that she's take up a new job away from Picturehouse and she's looking after our communications and publicity. Also joining us is Jolene Wells, who has been instrumental in providing generous sponsorship from Vain Hair and Beauty for drinks receptions at the Film Festival and our Christmas film at Picturehouse. Jolene will come onboard to also help look after our membership admin.

Looking to the future

As we look to continuing a second season at Picturehouse, we will begin the process of selecting the films we want to show, the focus of which remain on World Cinema. To complement our management committee, we have other volunteers who help form our Film Programming Group – thanks to Linda Cloet, Val Shannon and Mark Bendall for their contributions. If anyone else would like to get involved in this way, please get in touch.

Thanks also to our team of volunteers on film nights. As well as everyone mentioned above, Hazel McDougall also helps out on the door.

We are always looking at ways to make things work better. We've trialled digital membership cards and will introduce them for next season, saving us a lot of time and money. But we still have some printed cards for those that wish to continue to use them. However, buying tickets for our films must remain in person at Picturehouse as their booking system is not set up to recognise external memberships like ours.

We look forward to welcoming you all to the next season of Chester Film Society at Picturehouse! Do tell your friends to join us when we open memberships in August – we may get over 200 members for 2025-26!

2. Accounts

Rachel had prepared the Accounts for the year ending 30th April 2025, including projected I&E by the end of that period, which covers all of the present season.

She noted that an expenditure target had been to be kept within an estimated £1,300 membership income. As it turned out, membership income exceeded £2,300.

The committee had also decided to transfer £5,000 into a Savings Account with NatWest which would act as a contingency fund.

The Accounts were accepted by the membership and are included as an Appendix.

3. Election of Committee Members

As mentioned above, two committee members are stepping down: Anne Ord Sykes and John Sunter. Two others had already been co-opted and were included for the election of the Committee

- Rachel Cross
- David Gill
- Susanne Hodder
- Karen Howes
- Mark Nelson
- Jolene Wells

The membership indicated their approval for all to be elected on to the Committee.

There were no more questions or comments and the business of the AGM was then concluded.

APPENDIX - Chester Film Society – Accounts for period ending 30th April 2025

At the start of the season, we set an objective to keep expenditure within expected membership income. This exceeded expectation by £605, so we allowed some additional expenditure for some one-off publicity costs in this season.

As our balance grew, the Committee decided to transfer £5,000 into a Savings Account as a Contingency fund which would also earn some interest.

It is expected that expenditure for next season can be limited to under £1,200 by reducing printing costs.

Income & Expenditure: Current Account for the period ending 30th April 2025			
Starting balance	£8,714.44	as at 1 May 2024	
Income		<i>Projected additional</i>	<i>Notes</i>
Membership Subscriptions	£1,905.89	£0.00	1
CIFF	£263.48	£125.00	2
TOTAL	£2,169.37	£125.00	
Expenses		<i>Projected additional</i>	
Transfer to Savings A/c*	£5,000.00	£0.00	3
Publicity	£388.87	£0.00	
Admin & sundries	£656.61	£65.00	4
Committee Expenses	£360.00	£0.00	5
CIFF	£198.63	£140.00	6
TOTAL	£6,604.11	£205.00	
Current balance	£4,279.70		
Projected Closing Balance	£4,199.70	as at 30 April 2025	
Notes			
1. Membership Subscriptions Season target £1,300 exceeded			
2. Animation Festival distribution fee to be paid (estimated)			
3. TF to Savings A/c £5,000			
4. Insurance, and Member admin. Website hosting due to be paid			
5. ICO Screening Days for online attendance & one in person			
6. Payments due for CIFF Animation Festival trophies			

Liquidity Savings Account with Nat West Bank

for the period ending 30th April 2025

Starting balance	£0.00	as at 1 May 2024
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In

Transfer from Current Account 28/11/2024	£5,000.00
Interest YTD (<i>includes estimate for March & April 2025</i>)	£56.25
TOTAL	£5,056.25

Out

	£0.00
TOTAL	0

Current balance	£5,056.25	At 31 March 2025
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