

Report to the Members

Season overview

In this, our second full season at Chester Picturehouse, the Film Society has gone from strength to strength. However, we planned for the season with some caution, and scheduled our films every three weeks as we had done in the previous season. We were unsure what to expect regarding audience size and membership turnover.

In the event, our audiences grew and we achieved an average attendance of 100 for each film. When we began Part 2 of the Season in January, we decided to return to our “traditional” scheduling of a film every fortnight– and our first film of the New Year, *Dead of Winter* drew in a record 136 people, which sold out Screen 2.

Although we have season breaks over Christmas and in March for the International Film Festival, we have been able to show 12 films in our main season. Last summer, we also showed four films from June to September which were also well attended.

Chester Picturehouse has been very welcoming and has helped us to grow the Society in this second season at the venue. We have agreed with them to show 14 films in our next season, again split up into two parts. This planning enables us to take advantage of newer releases which are available in the cinema industry screening format – unlike in the past when we were limited to screening from discs. The booking of the films is undertaken by Picturehouse’s Senior Film programmer, based in London.

We are also planning to have another Summer Season this year – all films with a theme of music!

Programming our films is managed by a group of volunteers drawn from our members and we have recently welcomed three others to that group.

We also have other volunteers who help “on the door” at film nights, giving out rating slips and collating them afterwards. If anyone else would like to get involved in this way, please get in touch.

Some administrative changes

We made a few changes at the beginning of the season which has helped streamline our administration:

- First, we introduced digital membership cards for all members. This has made things a lot easier for us to manage and save a lot of time and cost. However, it’s fair to say that some members have struggled with access, and we will continue to provide printed cards for those who find these easier to use.
- Secondly, we moved our printed Film Notes to online access only. This allowed us to also save a lot of time and expense by having generic rating slips printed in advance (rather than printing them separately for every film as part of the Film Notes). Despite some people being initially unreceptive, members have largely accepted this change.

Membership

Expanding the number of films in Part 2 of the season allowed us to keep open memberships until later in the season when it was still worth becoming a member – again for just £10 to allow members to buy a ticket for any of our films for £5. So, by March this year we reached 232 members – another new record for the Society! Thank you all for your support.

Chester International Film Festival

Our collaboration with Storyhouse to hold our International Film Festival in their cinema continued. We remain keen to support and work with Storyhouse in this way, which has placed itself as a major host to other cultural festivals within the city. The partnership also extends to the University of Chester. Chester Film Society contributes largely to the curation of the main feature films as well as managing the Animation Festival (for which we are grateful to member Julian Waite who took it over). We will be signing a Memorandum of Understanding with Storyhouse (as will the University of Chester) to continue this collaboration over the next two to three years.

Sponsorship

We have again been very grateful to Vain Hair and Beauty for their sponsorship of our Christmas Drinks Reception as well as the Opening and Closing Receptions at the Film Festival. Jolene Wells, Director at Vain, joined our Committee this season and will continue to serve in this capacity.

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.

Accounts

We have prepared the accounts to the period end 31st March 2026, which covers all the main Income & Expenditure for the current season.

Some main points

- We again adopted a prudent approach to our finances, retaining a Contingency Fund in a separate Savings Account. This attracted small amount of interest and stands at £5,160
- Income has come from Membership Subscriptions, together with submission fees from the Animation Festival – a total of £2,586.06
- Expenditure covers three main areas: Publicity (for printed items), Admin costs (Memberships, Insurance and sundries) and Expenses for attending film preview screenings – a total of £1,156.48
- We had an excess of income over expenditure of £1,430.58
- The Current Account stands at £5,649

The financial budget for the Chester International Film Festival is held and managed by Storyhouse. As a commitment to our collaboration, we donated £200 towards the marketing. We have also agreed to also donate all income from the Animation Festival into that budget. This will be recorded in the accounts for the next period.

The Accounts are shown below:

| Income & Expenditure: Current Account for the period ending 31st March 2026 | | |
|---|------------------|---------------------|
| Starting balance | £4,218.42 | as at 1 May 2025 |
| Income | | |
| | | <i>Notes</i> |
| Membership Subscriptions | £2,243.99 | 1 |
| CIFF | £343.07 | 2 |
| TOTAL | £2,587.06 | |
| Expenses | | |
| Transfer to Savings A/c* | £0.00 | |
| Publicity | £324.75 | |
| Admin & sundries | £371.73 | 3 |
| Committee Expenses | £260.00 | 4 |
| CIFF | £200.00 | 5 |
| TOTAL | £1,156.48 | |
| Current balance | £5,649.00 | as at 31 March 2026 |

NB: The Reporting period covers the 11 months to 31st March. This includes all I&E for the current season. It is intended to produce future accounts for year end 31st March

Notes

1. Membership Subscriptions for the season was set a break-even target £1,350
2. Animation Festival fees received
3. Includes Insurance, Membership admin and any website fees
4. Film Screening Day passes and expenses
5. Donation to Storyhouse for CIFF marketing