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**LEWES  
TOWN  
COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES**

of the meeting of the **All Saints Centre (ASC) Steering Group** held on **Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> August 2013**, in the **Yarrow Room, Town Hall, Lewes at 11:00am.**

**PRESENT** Cllrs Catlin (Wischhusen); M Milner; S Murray; R O’Keeffe; and Dr M Turner (*Chairman*); also (*not appointed to the Steering Group*) Cllr D Lamport.

**In attendance:** S Brigden (*Town Clerk [TC]*) ; Mrs F Garth (*Asst TC & Civic Officer*); Miss L Zeyfert (*Manager, All Saints Centre*)

**ASCSG2013/01 ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN:**

Cllr Dr Turner was elected as Chairman of the Steering Group for the 2013/14 municipal year.

**ASCSG2013/02 APOLOGIES for ABSENCE:**

Apologies were received from Cllr M Chartier and J Daly who were on holiday; and Cllr A Price, who had an unavoidable work commitment.

**ASCSG2013/03 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:**

There were none

**ASCSG2013/04 PUBLIC QUESTIONS:**

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

**ASCSG2013/05 MINUTES:**

The minutes of the meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2013 were received and signed as a correct record.

**ASCSG2013/06 BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:**

1 The Group discussed the latest position on various matters in progress, and the sub-group comprising Cllr Catlin, Cllr Turner, Miss Zeyfert and TC recounted discussions since the Group last convened.

2 TC distributed a detailed analysis of film screenings between the start of the operation on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2012 and 14<sup>th</sup> July 2013, being the first “year” of the *Film@AllSaints* operation. Screenings would not run during the rest of July and August, following the pattern established by the previous operator, as it had been recognized that audience interest generally waned during the summer. Seventy-six film titles had been shown over 131 screenings across 34 weekends, with audiences of 3436 in aggregate. Members were interested to see the breakdown of tickets sold in various categories, together with costs for overheads and the trading performance of the refreshment kiosk. As had been noted in an earlier meeting, there had been recognized difficulties with some aspects of publicity and slow growth in audience numbers, although Councillors were pleased to note that the overall financial performance of the operation had run consistently very close to “break-even”, with an overall loss of £241 presented. Subsequent to this discussion, it was recognized that the analysis presented did not show all credits attributable to the shared cost of some advertisements (with Lewes Film Club/Junior FC/Teen Cinema). Taking this in to account, the operation had made an overall surplus of £257. This had been achieved with audience numbers for individual screenings ranging from 2 to 97, with an average of 26. This suggested that even a modest increase in numbers would notably increase the amount of surplus. It was commented that the sum paid to Lewes Film Club for their services, and payments to local suppliers for kiosk goods, represented a healthy sum that had been retained locally.

3 The discussion moved to cover the impact of technological change in the sector. Although films in 35mm reel format would soon cease to be available, the

*continues...*

progress toward digital packaging was slower than anticipated: recently, *The Great Gatsby* had been provided as a new release on 35mm. Releases of “popular” films would continue on DVD/Blu-ray disc, at more or less the same time as the discs were widely available for retail purchase. This stimulated a return to an earlier discussion among Members as to future options, and about issues such as the anticipated planning application for a small multi-screen purpose-built cinema at the Harvey’s depot site. Costs and options regarding up-to-date digital projection equipment had been researched, and were considered prohibitive in the current situation. Developers of the proposed Depot Cinema had suggested that, once planning consent was established for their project, they might obtain their projection equipment in advance and offer it on loan to All Saints during the building programme. This was gratefully acknowledged, although the consensus was that All Saints could continue for a further year on its current basis before any longer-term decisions were made. Local audiences seemed to be less sensitive to the immediacy of a release date than their perception of the film itself. Responses recorded by the planning authority to pre-application material for this project suggested that there may be a significant delay before an application could be refined for submission.

4 It was **agreed** to recommend that Council continues the *Film@AllSaints* operation on the existing basis, with screenings restarting in September and continuing fortnightly as before until at least January 2014. As circumstances evolved, consideration could be given to a subtle change; such as screenings which give focus to thematic weekends such as the recent, popular, biographical film *Peace & Conflict* (about the composer Benjamin Britten), and perhaps be shown less often but with integrated ancillary events.

5 It was noted that lighting and acoustic improvements, which had been designed with assistance from local experts, were scheduled for the current financial year, and provision had been made in agreed budgets. Quotations had been obtained for elements of the programme, and it seemed likely that the cost would exceed the budget provision, although this was not yet certain. Refinement of options was underway, and more detail would be presented to the next meeting. It was recognized that that this project would bring significant improvements for all users of the Centre, as the current installation was extremely outdated. Cllr Milner kindly offered his considerable professional expertise in this field to help assess incoming suggestions and cost estimates. This offer was gratefully accepted.

*Cllr O’Keeffe joined the meeting at this point (11:45am)*

6 There was a brief discussion regarding a presentation of usage statistics for the Centre, which showed hours booked in both halls continued the trend of gradual, slight, increase year-on-year. The current position showed that approximately 83% of the *theoretical* total licensed operating hours were booked. This was very close to the *practical* maximum that could be achieved, as void periods were required between many events.

**ASCSG2013/07**

#### **RECOMMENDATIONS /CONCLUSIONS:**

It was agreed that Council be recommended to note the performance of the *Film@AllSaints* operation and continue in line with the discussions recorded above.

**ASCSG2013/08**

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

*The meeting closed at 11:55am*