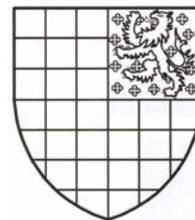


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**LEWES  
TOWN  
COUNCIL**

## **MINUTES**

of the meeting of the **All Saints Centre (ASC) Steering Group** held on **Tuesday 20<sup>th</sup> December 2011**, in the **Yarrow Room, Town Hall**, Lewes at **11:00am**.

**PRESENT** Cllrs Catlin (Wischhusen); J Daly; M Milner; R O’Keeffe; and M Turner

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

**ASCSG2011/11** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:** Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr S Murray, who had a family commitment. No message had been received from Cllr Dean.

**ASCSG2011/12** **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST:** There were none

**ASCSG2011/13** **PUBLIC QUESTIONS:** There were none. (No public or press were present)

**ASCSG2011/14** **BUSINESS OF THE MEETING:**

1 This informal meeting had been arranged to continue discussions in light of more detail of projected costs etc for the proposed community cinema scheme for ASC, and to refine and develop the scheme. Members of the Film Club’s executive committee were in attendance for this purpose: Mrs M Burke, Ms C Slijpen, Mr J Yeats-Edwards.

2 There followed a detailed analysis of cost and income estimates. These presented a scenario based upon average audiences of 50% of the venue’s capacity, and film hire/publicity/projection costs based upon known factors such as industry-standard rates and recent observation of local response to popular films at ASC. Estimates based upon this model took account of the income from the present commercial hirer, which would be lost, and included initial costs and contributions from income toward equipment replacement.

3 TC had been asked to investigate the aspect of kiosk sales and related issues. Preliminary discussions with representatives of the Oyster Project (a local registered charity operated by, and for, people with disabilities) suggested that an agreement that was both practical and financially beneficial to both parties could be arranged, building upon the experience gained from operating the established and popular Wednesday Oyster Café, to provide kiosk service for each screening.

4 There was general agreement that the basic assumptions of costs and likely audiences were conservative, and modelling had deliberately not included additional revenues which would undoubtedly arise from kiosk sales. It was anticipated that a surplus of over £20,000 should be achievable from film screenings alone, and this was a significant amount in the context of ASC’s current deficit.

5 There were some immediate ramifications to this proposal – not least the effects upon the current commercial operator, if no further bookings were accepted from them. There was some discussion on the potential for competition, at alternative sites in Lewes, but councillors recognized that should this arise and defeat the purpose of the project, there were many “disappointed bookings” for other events at weekends at ASC (theatre/music etc), which were blocked by the regular film screenings, to offer continuity of business.

6 It was anticipated that some equipment, currently shared by LFC and the commercial operator, might need to be replaced, eg the 40 “premium” seats

presently fixed in the balcony that were the property of that company. It was suggested that it might be possible to reach agreement over values, and LFC members advised that replacements should be readily obtainable if need arose, and Cllr Catlin (who offered considerable personal experience in the cinema industry) supported this view.

7 A long-standing recognized issue at ASC was the dilapidated seating, and consideration of a project to introduce “rake” seating – retractable tiers – had been held in abeyance for the past two or three years. The steering group found much to recommend the immediate installation of a system of 100 tiered seats, which occupy a relatively small volume when folded-back. This was seen as a fundamental improvement to the Centre, for many user-groups, and the LFC had offered both an initial grant and to dedicate their recently-launched 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary fundraising efforts to that purpose. With additional replacement of portable seats (a reduced number would be required) an estimated total cost for this project was around £30,000, and the steering group thought that there was justification for this to be implemented immediately. It was considered appropriate that initial costs of this nature should be met from existing funds, and replenished from operating profits and the aforementioned contributions, as such improvements to the Centre were overdue and would hugely increase the overall attraction of the venue for all categories of user.

ASCSG2011/15

### **CONCLUSIONS/RECOMMENDATIONS TO COUNCIL**

1 That the Council introduces a Council-run community cinema operation at the All Saints Centre, screening “popular” films for public viewing, in partnership with Lewes Film Club.

2 That the Council agrees a project for the immediate installation of retractable, tiered, seats to the ground floor of the All Saints Centre; the replacement of fixed tiered seating on the balcony, and the replacement of portable seats, all at an estimated cost of £30,000 with this expenditure funded from the General Fund and replenished from community cinema operating surplus and funds raised and pledged by Lewes Film Club.

3 That the Council negotiates a mutually-beneficial agreement with the Oyster Project to operate a traditional kiosk service (to provide confectionery sales and limited range of beverages) for each screening.

ASCSG2011/16

*The meeting closed at 12:30pm*