



**Fordingbridge Regal Cinema Club
2020 Annual General Meeting**

Tuesday 20th October 2020

Attendees at the Regal Cinema (socially distanced in the auditorium):

- Brian Currie (FRCC Chairman)
- Emma Goddard (FRCC Secretary)
- Barry Robbins (Committee Member and Cinema Manager)
- Bridget Mulrooney (Programming and Operations Manager)
- Sue Ruth (Cinema book-keeping and admin)

Virtual attendees on Zoom:

- Judith Chapman
- Angie Humphries
- Christine Brocklehurst
- Mary Bailey
- Annie Bellows

Apologies

- Caroline Saltrick (FRCC Treasurer)
- Chris Humphries

Introduction

Barry Robbins welcomed virtual attendees as they joined the meeting, thanked them for giving up their evenings, informed everyone the meeting was being recorded and reminded everyone of Zoom etiquette. Barry Robbins explained that the AGM was going to be different this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and that the AGM is covering 2019. This meeting was due to be held back in April but was delayed in the hope that we'd be able to have it face to face. However, as this didn't seem possible in the near future he explained thought we'd do it now with members attending virtually so that we don't fall any further behind.

Barry Robbins explained that unfortunately the club Treasurer Caroline Saltrick wasn't able to attend, but that Sue Ruth, who works at the Cinema and does the accounts, book keeping and VAT day-to-day was in attendance. The accounts have been prepared but they haven't been finalised or approved by the Treasurer due to covid/furlough. When they are completed and official we will circulate them.

Club Secretary Update

Emma Goddard explained that her role had changed mid-way through 2019. She had been responsible for the cinema marketing but was now working on the Railway Hotel. She thanked Barry Robbins and Bridget Mulrooney for taking on additional responsibilities.

Looking at the Key Performance Indicators for 2019, Emma Goddard commented that it was overall a very good year with great progress on key figures. She also said the beginning of 2020 was looking exceptionally good so the timing of the Corona lockdown was particularly bad timing for us.

Emma Goddard said membership numbers for 2019 were down slightly, but that she wasn't too worried about this because we're still selling a good number of tickets. Barry Robbins concurred saying that day members, who pay extra for their tickets, account for approximately 25% of sales.

Operational review – Bridget Mulrooney

Bridget Mulrooney said she was pleased that in 2019 there had been more screenings, more diversity with the films screened and more independent films that had performed well at box office. Showing independent films that aren't shown at other local cinemas has helped us to become known as a credible venue within the regional film community. Film fans come from far and wide to see specific films and cinema goers are very pleased that we show them.

Bridget Mulrooney highlighted the increase of ticket sales of 25% in 2019. The cinema also reached occupancy of just over 80%. The Club Chairman set the target of 80% occupancy for 2019 so it was a good target to have met.

Bridget Mulrooney said the busiest months are during Winter and Spring, mainly due to the release and awards cycle. We, like nearly all cinemas, see a big drop off in the Summer. We normally get a good spike in April, May and June but then show fewer films over the Summer months. The cinema increased screenings in 2019 by 16% and increased sell-out shows by 164%. Doing lots of screenings of the big popular films helped considerably with these figures. She noted that there were lots of very popular musical films in 2019 (Bohemian Rhapsody, Rocket man, Fisherman's Friends).

The cinema management explained that in 2019 we had to start charging VAT on ticket prices and bar sales. We weren't sure what affect this would have on our annual figures as only part of the VAT can be reclaimed. At the end of the year we discovered that the VAT costs the club around £5k as about 1/3 can't be reclaimed. This figure is very close to the annual loss for the unofficial 2019 accounts.

Operational Review – Barry Robbins

Barry Robbins explained that the original air replacement system that was installed when the cinema was built brings in fresh air and takes out stale air. This is a different system to the new temperature control system that operates the heating and air conditioning. The air flow in the auditorium is therefore good, and significantly reduces the risk of contracting covid in the auditorium.

Barry noted that the new air conditioning system installed in 2019 doesn't show on our accounts as it was paid for by Corintech. They kindly agreed to this as they own the building.

Before the lockdowns, the club had a core group of approximately 30 active volunteers. An 'active' volunteer is classified as someone who does a shift at least once every two months. Some volunteers are extremely active, and remained so during lockdown.

The cinema management took the decision to furlough Sue Ruth and Bridget Mulrooney due to the cinema being closed and there not being any income. The cinema management particularly wanted to thank Chris and Angie Humphries and Carolyn McCay who helped manage the cinema office during the furlough period. Other volunteers Sarah Hasted, Judith Chapman and Kim Formhalls have all done extra whenever extra help was required. It means a huge amount to the staff and club to have this support during such a challenging time. In the events/screenings we've held since the first lockdown, volunteers have marvellously stepped forward as there are various roles required, even if there is just a small audience. Angie Humphries said it was a "pleasure".

Barry talked about the subsidised screenings and how this affects the accounts. Family screenings are now very well attended and sell out well in advance but children are free and we get very little income at the bar for these screenings. These weekly screenings usually lose £80 per screening. The management are considering pricing the tickets differently as this could save £3-4k per annum.

Barry thanked Bridget and Sue for their work and commitment to the smooth operations of the club and the improvements year on year. Bridget was promoted to Programming and Operations Manager in 2019. One of the performance highlights of 2019 was a 25% increase in tickets sold, another was a 16% increase in the number of films we show. The biggest increase was the 164% increase in sell out shows. One of the few decreased figures in 2019 was private events, which were down a little in 2019, but we were meeting the target of two per month.

Barry noted that ticket sales graphs show a spike after newsletters. We changed the way we loaded films in 2019. We started to load them, and make tickets available, whenever we could, even if this was several months in advance. We had previously only done this for live satellite performances. This helped with sales, encouraged people to wait a few extra weeks and then see it at the Regal. The management noted that with covid, people might be worried about booking too far in advance.

Accounts review – Sue Ruth

As the treasurer was unable to attend the AGM the staff discussed the main figures from the unapproved 2019 accounts. The club saw income increase by 4k in 2019. The level at which VAT must be paid is £85k. It's currently not possible to deregister during covid but we'll be under the 85k in 2020 and we will deregister when we can.

Within the cost of sales, the biggest cost is licence fees to film distributors (Warner Bros etc.) and the Royal Opera House.

Utilities used to be cross charged by Corintech, who own the building and manage the utilities in the flats. We were often charged for several months at a time which wasn't good for cash flow and it sometimes crossed over a year into the next year of accounts. We are with a different supplier, Bulb, we got a good deal and it's much easier to manage. We have also changed the phone and internet supplier to Vodaphone, which are half the price and easier to manage. We started having to pay council rates in 2019.

The club received around £1k in donations of tickets not refunded which was extremely generous and very helpful. We claimed £10k small business grant at the start of the first lockdown from the New Forest Council. We also won £1k for the Cinema for All Award in September but this will show up in the 2020 accounts.

Sue Ruth noted that the business reserve account has approximately £13k, and the business current account has approximately £11k. It was explained that the reserve account is a savings account which will, at some point, need to pay for new technical equipment, which will be expensive.

Questions and comments from attendees

Judith Chapman asked about the relatively high cost of advertising. Bridget explained that this includes print advertising digital advertising, brochures, etc. Social media, predominantly Facebook, is the most cost effective. Print media is a lot more expensive and our main cost is the Salisbury Journal but we know people see this regular advert and we also get good free editorial from the Journal.

Judith Chapman asked about the cost of payment processing. Sue Ruth explained that this is the card machine at cinema and also the cost of Veezi (the ticketing platform). Veezi charge a small monthly fee and a standard charge on each ticket.

Annie Bellows asked if it would be possible to decrease these charges. Sue Ruth explained that we had introduced a minimum card spend of £5. It was also noted that we don't want to encourage cash in covid times.

Mary Bailey asked if the cinema receives the extra 30p you pay when you buy a ticket online. Sue Ruth explained that this money goes to Veezi. Bridget Mulrooney said that if you don't want to pay the extra 30p you can buy directly from the cinema. Barry Robbins explained that we didn't have the money to invest in a new piece of bespoke software and that Veezi was a good, affordable option.

Annie Bellows asked if we were able to claim any grants? She is a volunteer at other organisations where she notes her hours, including travel time, and that this counts towards a grant. The committee thanked her for this suggestion.

Judith Chapman asked if we were close to our capacity with screenings? Barry and Bridget said yes, we are and that we can't do more due to staff and volunteer numbers. We don't want to overstretch our volunteers. We're a club, people need to feel that they want to do the shifts, rather than they have to and we don't want people to feel 'burnt out'. As we're near the VAT threshold, the management will consider doing slightly fewer screenings so we skate under this threshold and don't overstretch ourselves. Recruiting new volunteers is an ongoing process that we will continue to work on over the next year.

Annie Bellows asked how we are planning to do screenings with covid if we can't have the auditorium full with 30 people. How are we planning the screenings? Cinema management explained they had done a thorough plan and risk assessment which is available on the Regal website. The depth of the rows/amount of leg space, the size of our seats and the air replacement system help to make our cinema covid secure. There needs to be a seat space between households and it's not currently possible to book an aisle seat. We can fit up to 25 seats, if there are five family groups of five. Most screenings will have fewer seats sold. Sold out screenings in November and December are averaging 18 seats due to need to have a closed seat between each household booking. Luckily, some film licence fees are being significantly reduced so we are hoping that we will still break even.

With regards to ticket sales, some members have launched straight in and booked lots of tickets whilst others have been more conservative in their booking patterns. Feedback has been that it's great to see the cinema opening again and bringing a sense of normality. Some customers who are

more cautious will hopefully come to a screening, see how well managed and safe the venue is and then book more. A lot of our members are in the over 60 years old demographic and they are understandably more careful.

Annie Bellows commented that the air flow system was reassuring and that we should communicate that more.

Judith Chapman held up an old photo of people outside the Regal. All the attendees discussed the photo and management thanked her for sharing this.

Motions put forward to the AGM

Re-election of the committee. Barry suggested that we propose and second all positions on block. The proposer was Christine Brocklehurst. The seconder was Annie Bellows.

Conclusion from Club Chairman Brian Currie

Brian commented that the only drawback of the cinema was being recognised by so many locals in the street. He can hardly believe we have such an institution in Fordingbridge. He thanked 'Mr Regal', Barry, for his superb management, and the rest of the team that supports Barry. He's very proud of everything that has been achieved.