



Rusthall Community Cinema
Minutes of Annual General Meeting
8th September 2023 7pm
at Sunnyside Community Hall

Attending:

Amanda-Jane Doran	Alain Lewis
Ben Burke	Anne Goldstein
Bryn Clarke	Benjamin Hargreaves
Chris Gurr	Chris Ducklin
Elaine Johnson	Christine Hyder
Glyn Balmer	Eugene Gardner (chair)
Jeanne Pope	Irene Heskett
Linda Ormorod	Karen Gardner
Mike Flight	Lisa Beaumont
Nicholas Johnson	Miriam Crundwell
Peter Kemp	Penny Clarke
Rosemary Romano	Peter Mellon
Shally Hunt	Sandra Blacker
Tanya Griffiths	Sue Hammond
Val Gurr	

Apologies:

- Aileen Muir
- David Funnell
- Hilary Ward
- Kevin Mullery
- Martin Betts
- Tony Rutherford

Eugene rose to the chair and began a round of introductions.

Minutes from the 2022 AGM were then approved without comment or matters arising.

The Annual Report and Accounts to 31st May 2023 were received. Lisa asked about the listed advertising spend. Eugene explained that the categories were agglomerations made by the external auditor to enable the published accounts to be succinct. 'Advertising' included Facebook paid promotions, poster design and printing, website hosting, and the cost of the season's brochure less income received from external advertisers. Linda praised the poster design and Elaine offered to promote our films on Instagram.

Trustees standing for re-election: Eugene Gardner, Karen Gardner, Kevin Mullery, Rachel Bain, Rosemary Romano, and Lisa Beaumont were proposed en bloc by Alain and accepted without demur. Trustees half way through their 2 year tenancy: Alain Lewis, Peter Kemp, and Anne Goldstein were thanked for their efforts, as was Irene Heskett who was not standing for re-election.

Analysis of the new donation only policy was shared by Eugene. The Trustees would like to make entrance free for those who cannot afford to come otherwise; we experimented with a low ticket price and optional donation in the previous six months and very few people took advantage of that. For the last film (Tár) 13 people had benefitted from entrance at less than £5 and the notional loss of income was closely matched by donations from people who gave more than £5. After taking payment processing fees and likely Gift Aid receipts into account the new policy was shown to have yielded an additional £30 approximately while still enabling those with limited means to attend our Community Cinema, and was therefore considered a success.

Retention of the membership ticket category was then discussed. When tickets had a face value, an annual subscription made financial sense for those attending more than half of the Saturday films. With all tickets free that benefit is lost. Also, with the previous ticketing system we could give promotional discount codes free as prizes in fetes etc. With all tickets free that prize is rather hollow. Lisa asked what benefits remain, Eugene listed enhanced film selection rights, and the option of borrowing a Blu-ray from our library of screened films. There is a small administrative overhead in maintaining memberships, and the additional ticket category may add unnecessary confusion to the online ticket booking process. However, the majority of speakers preferred to be a member and avoid feeling obliged to make a donation for each trip to the Cinema.

The meeting concluded that the category should remain, and those wishing to contribute more than the £65 annual fee (being 50% of the suggested donation amount for attendees of all our Saturday films) could do so via the Crowdfunder page.

The status of the new projector fundraiser was then discussed. Eugene summarized the key reasons for launching this project on our 7th anniversary, being those listed on our Crowdfunder page.

The most attractive quotation so far has been £23,400 for the bare bones projector with integrated playback server, plus extras (audio decoder, platform security, commissioning, audio enhancements for hearing impaired visitors, warranty extension 3rd – 5th year) costing £11,916; plus VAT £7,123; totalling £42,739.

If we used £12k from our reserves and applied the £635 currently donated via Crowdfunder plus £500 received from Southern Water, we were about £30k short.

We have applied for two grants so far, one of £5k seems likely to be awarded, the other for the same amount has been deferred for 3 months. Eugene offered to prepare further grant applications. Lisa volunteered to take responsibility for gaining sponsors to help bridge the funding gap.

Online booking improvements were then discussed, as being the only aspect of our Cinema that yielded much criticism in recent Feedback Finder reports. It was noted that recent shows had enjoyed good sized audiences almost all of whom had successfully navigated the system (rather than taking to option to phone TicketSource).

Some people were not aware that the bookers details could, with a single click, be replicated to the 1st attendee's details. Others did not appreciate that previous purchases caused address details to be stored thereby obviating the need to re-enter these for each film. It was reported that adding details for each attendee was onerous; Eugene explained that this requirement could be removed but at the loss of email addresses to be invited to enjoy our monthly newsletter. A workaround of copy/pasting the booker's details to other attendees was noted.

Possible future outings of thanks for volunteers was sought and support for attendance at The Hastings Rocks Film Festival was high. Another suggestion: an outing to the Cinema Museum in London also garnered interest. Eugene will follow up these.

Fridge capacity had been analysed by Rachel Bain and additional glass fronted storage was agreed to be required. Eugene explained that he was currently raising funds to extend the internal storage of the hall, and once that was completed there would be space to have an additional fridge.

The limited car parking was raised by Chris who wondered whether volunteers could car share more to make greater space available for visitors. Eugene highlighted the almost always empty car park of 12 Rusthall Road, and offered to contact the owner with a view to securing permission to use that space.

Subtitling films was discussed at some length. Chris found subtitles distracting and objected to them being introduced half way through the most recent film – particularly when their presence was not advertised before ticket reservation time.

The majority of speakers found subtitles helpful for films with non-British English or heavy regional dialect dialogue. Those with hearing difficulties, including some with hearing aids yet not able to take advantage of our induction loop, supported subtitles. Poor quality sound on the film and some actors' poor enunciation were also cited as reasons to include subtitles.

The difficulty of establishing which films qualified for subtitles by dint of failing one of the above tests was considered. To enable early publicity of subtitles ideally this should be before the season brochure was sent to print, but media was only bought after a licence to screen was obtained and thus never before the brochure went to print.

The Trustees were asked to do their best to establish the sound quality and publish the presence of subtitles as early as possible, perhaps with a blanket notification to cover all films in the brochure and more detailed listings on posters and the website.

The meeting concluded precisely 90 minutes after it began and a fine selection of food and drink were then tackled.