

# INFORMATION PACK

## Marketing / Selling

A commercial screening licence allows your shows to be marketed to the public and a direct charge made to your audience

### MARKETING

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As the promoter, it's important that you sell tickets and promote your film event as effectively as possible. Obviously the more tickets sold allow you to cover your costs and make a surplus to finance further screenings and/or alternative local spending within your community.

Use A4 posters inside & outside the actual venue to promote your show (We can usually provide A4 size film posters for you to adapt accordingly)

Place posters in key places in your community area and a larger number of A5 flyers distributed locally will help to promote your event.

Posters and flyers should include the following key information:

- Venue
- Film
- Film certificate (what age group it is suitable for)
- Date
- Start time
- Ticket price
- How to obtain tickets
- A picture, poster or illustration ideally to add interest to the promotion

Where to promote your event;

The host venue  
Local shops, Supermarkets  
Libraries  
Post Offices  
Leisure centres  
Doctor's surgery  
Health centres  
Hairdressers  
Pubs  
The local church  
Fish and Chip shops  
Parish council notice boards  
Council buildings

Supply flyers to newsagents & shops to give to customers.

Arrange for the paperboy/girl to deliver leaflets

Target sheltered schemes for the elderly, retirement homes & community centres as older age groups particularly enjoy the cinema.  
(Liaise with scheme managers to help promote your event to residents)

For family shows use local schools / colleges to display posters  
Schools can give your flyers to their students to give to their parents

If you have the necessary manpower, you could distribute flyers door to door  
(Aim to distribute publicity material approximately 3 - 4 weeks prior to event.)

If you have future screenings planned at your venue, you should announce them at the end of your event.

Parish magazines are important in drawing attention to your event.

Village/community websites are a great way of promoting your event.

## Media Advertising

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It doesn't cost anything to send a press release to your local paper and radio stations. Contact the paper or radio station or look on their website to find the appropriate person to send details of local events to.

Keep your press release short and simple

**1.** Use a concise heading. Try to think of something catchy or just provide the main details – i.e. *[NAME OF FILM]* at *[VENUE]*

Essentially, your aim is to attract the attention of the editor and give them some idea of what your press release is about.

**2.** Date your press release so editors know when you sent it. The ideal time for media coverage is in the week before your event.

**3.** The first paragraph of your press release should contain all the essential information: What, Where and When.

**4.** In your second paragraph you could include information on the type of film, a brief plot outline and the recommended target audience.

**5.** You could include brief critical quotations with credit to the person or publication they came from.

**6.** Final paragraph should include ticket prices and how to obtain them.

7. At the bottom of the press release provide a contact telephone number / email address in the event of the editor wanting further information.

Send your press release to the correct person at your local paper / radio station in good time. If your local paper is only published once a week, check deadlines (usually 2 or 3 days before the paper is published).

## Selling tickets

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To guarantee an audience for your event, each member of your committee should agree to sell a certain number of tickets. For example, 5 committee members selling 10 tickets each guarantees an audience of 50 people.

Ideally one person should co-ordinate all ticket sales and their contact details should appear on your publicity.

Offer various methods for people to buy tickets, e.g.

- \*Your ticket co-ordinator can send tickets by post on receipt of a cheque
- \*Tickets can be bought in person at the home of your ticket co-ordinator
- \*Tickets can be reserved by phone and then collected and paid for on arrival at the event
- \*Subject to availability, tickets can be bought on the door

You can arrange for tickets to be purchased from local outlets. These could include your village shop, post office, pub or hairdressers.

Provide each outlet with copies of your publicity materials, tickets and a means for them to record the number of tickets sold and price.

Include your contact phone number in the event of an outlet needing clarification on any issues or requiring more tickets.

Provide all relevant instructions they may need (e.g. names of customers qualifying for concessionary tickets).

On the day of the screening or the day before, you should collect any unsold tickets together with their list of tickets sold and the money they have made.

Thank the staff at the outlet for their help and ask if they would be willing to sell tickets again for future events.

## Pricing

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In conjunction with the sale of refreshments, the basic requirement when pricing your tickets is to cover your costs.

The higher you set your ticket prices, the higher your profit is likely to be. However, you should set ticket prices appropriate to your particular audience. We usually recommend a minimum ticket price of £5.00

You may want to consider offering concessionary tickets. This means offering a reduced ticket price to people who may be on a lower income, such as:

- Young people under 16
- Students in full-time education
- Senior citizens
- People receiving state benefits (e.g. unemployed or incapacity benefit)

Offering concessionary tickets is a way of ensuring that as many people as possible have access to your event and helps to promote equal opportunities.

Some venues decide to keep things simple and just offer adult and child rates. However, if the film that you are screening is targeted at a family audience, you might want to consider offering a special price for a “family” ticket.

If you are screening 2 films on the day, as a promotion, you could offer a reduced ticket price for those attending both screenings.

It is usual to provide complimentary tickets to staff and volunteers that have helped you set up and run your event.

## Local Sponsorship

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Sponsorship from local business is a popular means of funding your film shows and the inducement of on screen advertising is a very effective reciprocal arrangement in line with commercial cinema advertising.

Digital technology facilitates the screening of advertising / promotional material and your sponsor provides a short DVD promoting their services. We can then screen this *advert* to the audience as part of the programme

Alternatively, ask each sponsor to simply provide you with a single online advertising image for their business stored on your laptop to which we would then link our equipment

This way, each advert is presented on screen, one after the other on a permanent loop basis for as long as required.

This can be before the show and/or during any intermission

## Building up a regular audience

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To successfully run regular film shows, it's important to build up a database of customers. We recommend that you collect email/ postal addresses of as many of your audience as possible and create a film club of members. By providing you with their contact details, you can then directly notify these members in advance of forthcoming film shows and reduce your advertising.

In forming a film club, you could enrol and charge each member a subscription (to include their seasonal ticket cost).

As an added attraction, offer discounted tickets to potential members

By applying this strategy, you are creating a core audience that can be built on as you take on new members in addition to the regular non- members who buy tickets for each show.

With ticket prices paid up front (through membership subscription), you also have a guaranteed revenue base.

The creation of a film membership club also has the advantage of substantially reducing your marketing activities and related costs.

Don't forget to announce to your audience details of all future screenings

Trailers for future films can usually be played before the main feature

## **Selling to your audience**

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Cinema audiences offer great selling opportunities

It's important to take full advantage to maximise your profits!

In line with commercial cinemas, an important addition to your ticket revenue is generated through the sale of refreshments to your audience and we recommend that you sell as much as you can.

Sweets, ice cream, popcorn, cakes, soft drinks, tea, coffee etc are all ideal for selling before the movie, during an interval and after the show.

You may wish to serve more formal food (e.g. a buffet supper, fish and chips) either before, during or after the film and charge a combined ticket price for the film and food.

A bar will always be popular. If your venue is not licensed to serve alcohol, then you will need to arrange a special license for the occasion in advance.

Screening a family film means a bar won't be necessary but soft drinks, tea and coffee, crisps, sweets and popcorn will all go down well with the kids and the adults.

## Other selling suggestions

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You could offer free guest ticket/s to future shows. This encourages people to bring a friend or relative and stimulates interest in future screenings and swells attendances.

You may want to hold a raffle or other fundraising event at your film show as these are excellent ways to raise extra funds for your venue.

If your film has a particular “theme” then you could organise a themed evening. For example, you could decorate the venue appropriately or serve a related kind of food to add to the atmosphere of your event.

Encourage your audience to turn up in themed costumes and award a prize for the best! (this could include free admission to future film events)

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## The British Film Institute Marketing

*In addition to what we have already outlined, THE BFI provides useful additional ideas to help you market your community cinema, so we have detailed their information guide below.....*

Before you start, here’s a checklist for all the information we recommend your marketing material includes:

- \* The film title
- \* A brief introduction to the film, without giving away any spoilers!
- \* The venue, with directions if necessary
- \* The date and time of your screening
- \* The BFFC age certification, to avoid selling tickets to underage customers
- \* Ticket prices, and whether anyone’s entitled to a discount
- \* How to buy tickets, such as in local shops or pubs, online or via email
- \* Remember to include any sponsors’ logos, as well as your own

### Flyers

Flyers are an easy and cost-effective way to market your event. Remember to use an eye-catching headline and a bold image to draw people’s attention. Then, why not ask your local printer if they would like to sponsor your event and print your flyers for free?

Post your flyers through letterboxes, pin them to notice boards at local cafés, schools, the doctor’s surgery, your local supermarket, the leisure centre, at the venue itself and many other places where local people will see them in the lead up to your screening.

If you are using images in your marketing, make sure you follow the relevant copyright requirements and credit the image source where necessary. To

download approved publicity images, videos and other marketing materials for free, check out [www.image.net](http://www.image.net)

### **Your online presence**

Why not set up your own website or blog? You can use it to sell tickets, show photos, ask your audience to vote for upcoming films and advertise future screenings. Keep your content concise and make it easy for your audience to get involved.

### **Press coverage**

If you book your screening well in advance, it's a great idea to send out a press release to your local radio station, newspapers and magazines. Just tell them the film you're showing, where and when it is taking place, how to get tickets and where to go for more information.

You can also add your event to the Press Association's event listings database. It's completely free and it will send details of your screenings out to your local newspapers.

### **Word of mouth**

Word of mouth is one of the most powerful marketing tools you can use. Get audiences talking about your event in a positive way and you'll reap the benefits. Ask members and volunteers to spread the word and get talking to friends and colleagues. If people have a great time at your screening, they're more likely to support your next event.

### **Email**

Collect email addresses from members, volunteers and audiences when they buy tickets. Then, you can build interest and anticipation for forthcoming screenings, remind your members that events are taking place and prompt them to buy tickets and invite friends. If you have time, send two or three emails in the run up to your screening – one month in advance, one week to go and the day before the big day.

### **Get tweeting**

Your community cinema screening is a social event, so get people talking about you online! Most local businesses, magazines, newspapers, events organisers, pubs and the council will have a social media presence, so if you follow them on Twitter and promote their news and events, chances are they will support your event too. Build up excitement, encourage audiences to use hash tags and really build the atmosphere.

You can announce your next event; remind people to get tickets and even live tweet during the screening. Re-tweet your audience's positive comments and follow local people who express an interest in film. Put your community cinema at the heart of your community.

### **Set up a Facebook page**

Facebook is a great platform to get people talking about your event – they can discuss what they liked or disliked about the latest screening, share the films they'd like to see and add photo or video content.

Start off by asking your friends and colleagues to 'like' your page, link up with local businesses, tell your audience members where to find you and you'll soon have an eager audience keen to hear about your next screening.

### **Post-event marketing**

Keep the conversation going after your event. Send an email asking audiences for feedback, or just to tell them how successful the screening was and thank them for coming along. Tweet photos, share them on Facebook and ask people share their stories – you'll soon find it all happens without you having to prompt anyone.

### **Write a blog**

Give your community cinema more personality by reviewing your screening after the event. What did you think of the film? Was it as good as the critics suggested? A blog gives you the chance to talk to your audience in a bit more depth and ask them what they thought. You could even share your ten best tweets or Facebook comments to back up your argument and keep your audience involved.

## **How to involve young people in Community Cinema**

Encouraging children and young people to come to your film screenings offers all kinds of benefits. With children's film clubs and screenings seeing a steady growth throughout the UK, it's never been a better time to involve young people in your film activities – not least because they're your volunteers of the future.

There are lots of ways that community cinemas can develop more activities for children:

### **1. Screen films specifically for family or children's audiences**

If you usually screen to adults, why not consider launching a children's film matinee in the daytime before your evening screening? Showing a family film is a great way to bring your community together over the weekend, and a great activity for all members of the family, such as grandparents, to enjoy with children. It will also help to broaden your audience and spread the word about your main screenings.

### **2. Set up a family-friendly competition**

Running a competition can be a very effective way to inspire young audiences. This could be anything from the best fancy-dress outfit at a themed screening to a special showing before the main film of short films that older children have produced themselves. You could offer prizes such as a free family membership to your cinema. It could also be a good way to attract some press coverage.

### **3. Run a children's film club alongside your cinema**

Setting up a children's film club can be a fun and effective way to involve local young people. As well as offering a great opportunity for children of all ages



to socialise, they can be instrumental in increasing cultural awareness by introducing new ideas and concepts.

#### **4. Organise activity sessions based around the film**

Turn your family screenings into a real event by arranging some family activities before or after the showing that tie in with your film's subject matter. Think themed art workshops to illustrate key scenes, simple cookery sessions to make snacks to eat during the film, and adventure walks or football matches after the film. Work with local experts who can bring some real know-how to specific activities.

#### **5. Team up with existing youth groups**

Connect with other local youth organisations such as schools, drama groups or youth centres to see how you could work together on combining film activities with their existing activity schedule. You might even be able to use their venue to screen in at no extra cost.

#### **6. Publish children's reviews online**

Everyone loves to see their name published, so why not create a film reviews section on your community cinema's website, where you post reviews from young audience members? You could also include children's artwork inspired by the film, or photos of activities they took part in after the screening. If you don't have a website, a blog can be easy to set up and update using a free platform such as Wordpress or Blogger.

#### **7. Run inclusive children's screenings**

If there are any children in your community who would benefit from more inclusive screenings, such as children with disabilities or young people who are new to the UK and still learning English, cinema screenings could play an important role in involving them in the community. Work with teachers to make sure your film choices are appropriate, and ask them to help to share the screening responsibilities.

Organising a community cinema screening with lots of children in the audience of course requires a little adult supervision, so ask local parents and grandparents to get involved too. You can also work with them to host specific events, like mum and baby screenings.

Bear in mind, if you're running extra screenings or activities you'll need to make sure you can cover any additional costs. Offering a discounted rate ticket for children can really help encourage more people to attend, and you can charge a little more for activities to cover the cost of materials or any extra venue hire costs.

## **Involving Local Book Clubs with Your Community Cinema**

The worlds of cinema and literature have always sat alongside each other – and collaborating with a book club, library or literary society can be a really effective way for community cinemas to share audience members. It's also ideal for starting some lively conversations around the themes of the books and films you read and screen.

A good first step is to search for book clubs in your area using event websites like MeetUp or find your local library.

Once you know which book-based activities are happening in your area, find out where there's potential to collaborate with your local literary organisations. This could mean something as simple as distributing flyers on behalf of each other, right through to planning the launch of a joint local literary and film festival.

You could ask members of both groups to vote on a book and its literary adaption, allowing everyone to read the book then watch the film. Running seasons with matching themes is also a good way to interest both groups.

## **Top tips for working with libraries and book clubs**

Andrew Mohammed is the Senior Library Assistant at Deptford Lounge, part of the Lewisham Library Service in South London. Deptford Lounge is a community and library space, which regularly screens films as part of its activity programme.

Andrew has coordinated joint events between the library's book club and cinema audience over the years with lots of success. His top tips for community cinemas to successful work with book clubs include:

### **Start simply**

"We've had external community cinemas approach us with the idea of cross-publicity several times. We've always been more than willing to work together, and all it's taken is a simple request."

### **Share a theme**

"Month-long events provide a wide blanket theme for both groups, such as Black History and LGBT month. In April 2014, 'Banned' was the theme of both the book club and our film screenings. Even though we didn't only screen adaptations of the book club's titles, both groups were able to discuss the topic of censorship, which started lots of conversations."

### **Ask your library to set up a display**

“Setting up a themed book display including material related to community cinema screenings – such as posters or memorabilia – is a big advantage of working with a library. For our Banned Books season, our display included original material from of the films that were shown including The Exorcist, A Clockwork Orange and The Island Of Lost Souls. This really increased interest in both the film screening and the library stock, and helped promote the film screenings to the library users.”

### **Run a themed competition**

“Aim to get a prize donated that ties in with the film and the book. For example, a colleague asked a local Odeon cinema to donate a pair of tickets to Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows Part 2 and they obliged without any persuasion. Books are also of course a good competition prize!”

### **Cast a wide net**

“I know that there are a lot of library users who don't have the chance to go to the cinema due to one issue or another. They love the idea of a low cost community cinema, but it's usually the case that they don't know where there is one. Get the word out and you might be surprised how far people travel from – for example, one of our regular viewers travels for miles across London on the bus just to catch the films we show.”

### **Literary adaptations for your cinema**

There are countless films that have been adapted from some our favourite books, bringing timeless stories and characters off of the pages and onto the Silver Screen. To share the love of a great story with more members of your community, why not plan a screening in partnership with a local book club to showcase their latest read? Make an event of it with some of our novel ideas!

### **Set the mood**

Are you screening Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone? Try serving up some “Butterbeer” or “Gillywater” before the screening to get your audience in a magical mood. Providing refreshments and an atmosphere inspired by the film can add a bit of fun to the event and make it a memorable occasion.

### **Spot the difference**

Enhance the screening by providing an opportunity for a post-film discussion

about how the book and film differ from each other. Some topics for discussion could be:

- Is there a difference between the character development in the novel and the film? Are the characters on screen a good representation of the characters in the novel?
- Is there symbolism in the novel that is lost in the film? Or, are there parts of the film that were enhanced because of the use of multimedia or special effects?
- How faithful was the film to the book? If there were significant differences, did they work?

### **Invite a guest speaker**

Do you know someone who worked on the film, the screenwriter or the author of the original novel? Inviting a guest speaker to talk about their contribution to the film is a great way to highlight the film and maybe find out some behind the scenes details!

## **Contact**

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Pete Heathcote

### **Filmsceneuk**

Tel: 0115 921 2445

Mobile: 07787 125049

Email: [peter@filmsceneuk.com](mailto:peter@filmsceneuk.com)