



bringing cinema to community venues

Derbyshire Film Toolkit

Welcome to Derbyshire Film – helping you to bring the cinema experience to audiences in rural and community venues in Derbyshire.

This toolkit aims to help you, the venue, present your chosen screenings successfully and attract audiences.

We hope that this toolkit will act as a useful reference document.

This pack can be downloaded from the Derbyshire Film website:

www.derbyshirefilm.co.uk

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What is Derbyshire Film?

Derbyshire Film is a network of voluntary promoters that uses state of the art cinema equipment to provide film screenings in alternative venues, particularly in areas where cinema might not otherwise be available. See the document “List of Film Promoters” on the Derbyshire Film website.

All these voluntary promoters are based at venues as diverse as village halls, community centres, schools and colleges – anywhere that is a meeting point for local people and can provide some very basic facilities.

If you wish to turn your local venue into a temporary cinema so that local people can enjoy films old and new – read on to find out how to do it.

Selecting your films

Take your time to think about who you are aiming your films at. Getting a group together to choose a programme of films is usually the best way. Aim for an eclectic mix of films in order to attract as broad a range of people as possible from your locality. There are various websites that can help you with reviews of films. Here are a couple to get you started:

www.imdb.org.uk www.filmclub.org

All the national newspapers have regular days (usually at weekends) when they review films. These films will usually be available to rent after 3 months. If a film is going to be popular, book it as soon as possible from the distributor.

You may want to start with films that you know will be popular with your local community – for example more recent releases. As your audiences build and you feel more confident you can experiment with different types of film so that your audiences can enjoy a different range of cinema experiences, and so that you can attract new audience members to your venue.

Venue requirements

If your venue can seat what you consider a reasonable sized audience for your village or community then it probably is suitable for screening films. You will need to ensure that there is basic power (13amp) available, and parking immediately adjacent to your venue to unload and load the equipment. Ideally, it should be possible to black out your venue to ensure that the quality of the projected image is as high as possible. You may want to add other touches to create something of the cinema atmosphere - a little imagination and inspiration may be required!

Your venue should have its own Public Liability Insurance (see contacts list) and meet the relevant Health and Safety requirements. You may wish to make a basic check of the following in advance of your event:

- Car parking and access routes
- Lighting, location of fusebox and electrical sockets.

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- Signage (including 'No Smoking' signs)
 - Toilets
 - Heating / air conditioning (if this is too noisy to run during the screening, please make sure that the venue is at the right temperature before the screening starts)
 - Fire alarms, fire exits and fire fighting equipment
 - First Aid kit
 - Security arrangements (e.g. for money taken on box office)
 - Any possible hazards (e.g. trailing cables)
 - Sufficient stewards / volunteers?

The Fire Prevention Officer from your local fire brigade, or a Health & Safety Officer / Environmental Health Officer from your district/borough council, may be able to advise you if you are not sure about anything (see contacts list).

Be clear how many people you are permitted to have in your venue to comply with fire regulations, and make sure that your ticket sales do not exceed this number.

Equipment

You will need projection equipment. You can either hire or buy it. You can apply to get a grant to help you with the cost of buying equipment. Awards for All is a lottery funded grant aid scheme that will look favourably on your application: www.awardsforall.org.uk It is a good idea to ring them first to talk through your idea (tel: 0845 600 2040). Even before doing this you could contact some of the Derbyshire Film promoters or Film Societies and ask them how they got their equipment and grant aid.

Hiring equipment – One way to get started is to hire in equipment and professional help to screen the film and get the film licence. You could do this as a 'one-off' to gauge how much interest there is locally. Or you may decide that this is the easiest way to continue. Reels on Wheels is a Staffordshire company that will provide this service for you: Reels on Wheels, 203 Grindley Lane, Blythe Bridge, Stoke-On-Trent, Staffs, ST11 9JS; ROWfilm@aol.com; tel: 01782 305111.

An alternative is to hire the projection equipment yourself from an audio visual company. Nottingham Audio Visual have a website where you can look at the equipment and prices: www.nav.co.uk, 255-261 Derby Rd, Bramcote, Nottingham, NG9 3JA; tel: 0115 939 3322.

Then you would need to decide which licence you need to screen your film (see next section on licences). This is a separate licence to the premises licence which your venue will need before you can screen a film to the public.

Buying equipment – You could spend anything from £5,000 to £15,000, depending on the size of your venue. For a hall seating 70 people you can buy a good projection kit for as little as £5,000. A quick trawl through the internet, plus looking at what other film societies and promoters have bought will be useful. Here is a list of the equipment you will need:

- Digital projector (2000+ lumens or greater, depending on size of venue)

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- Ceiling bracket for projector
 - Screen – the bigger the better
 - 2 speakers – or 4 if you want surround sound
 - DVD player
 - VHS player

Get a few quotes from companies that provide this equipment and also ask them to visit your venue to discuss your requirements. Stage Electrics are the company that supplied the equipment for the Derbyshire Film scheme when it first started (www.stage-electrics.co.uk).

Film Societies tend to have the equipment permanently installed in their village halls, often with the projector ceiling-mounted and the rest of the equipment in a lockable box at ground level. The equipment can be operated by remote control.

Preparing your venue

You need to have enough volunteers/staff to run your box office (collecting money for tickets on the door), serve food and drink if appropriate, ensure the health and safety of your audience and run any emergency errands. Staff or volunteers should turn up in good time on the night of the screening.

Remember that someone will also need to stay on to lock up, and agree in advance who is helping to clear up the venue after the event.

Please make sure that the space is as clear as possible, so that there is room to bring in the equipment.

For a cinema screening, a “theatre style” layout (i.e. in rows facing the screen) will probably be most appropriate for your seating arrangements. Please leave plenty of space between the rows of seats so that people can get in and out easily. You should also leave a wide central “aisle”. Rows can be curved, if that helps with sightlines.

Bear in mind that some audience members may have limited mobility. If your venue has wheelchair access, you might wish to leave a space at the end of one of the rows near the entrance for wheelchair users.

You will need a table, chair and cash box (with a ‘float’) near the entrance to your venue, together with a willing volunteer to take money and check tickets on the door. You will find it useful to have pre-booked tickets ready for collection in individual envelopes, clearly labelled with the name and the total amount of money owed.

Please ensure that your venue is kept as quiet as possible during the screening so that the audience can have the most enjoyable experience possible. Distracting noise from whistling tea urns or a tap dancing class in the next room will mean a dissatisfied audience. It sounds obvious, but your audience are how you make your money, so make the experience as comfortable and enjoyable as possible and they are more likely to come back to your next screening and create future income for your venue.

Before the screening starts, it is a good idea to remind audience members to switch off their mobile phones.

Complementary activities

You might decide to complement your film screening with other activities. A bar will always go down well. If your venue is not licensed to serve alcohol, then you will need to arrange a special license for the occasion, in advance.

If you are screening a family film then a bar probably won't be necessary, but you could serve soft drinks, tea and coffee. Crisps, sweets and popcorn may also go down well

You may wish to serve more formal food (e.g. a buffet supper) either before or after the film and charge a combined ticket price for the film and food. Or you might want to hold a raffle or other fundraising event at the beginning or end of the screening. All of these are good ways to raise extra funds for your venue.

If your film has a particular "theme" then you may want to have a themed evening. For example, you could decorate the space in a particular way or serve a particular kind of food or drink to add to the atmosphere of your event. Or you could ask people to turn up in themed costumes and award a prize for the best.

You can have an interval if you wish although it is important to put a strict time limit on this.

Publicity materials

You will need to sell the tickets and promote the event. The best way is to sell as many tickets in advance as you possibly can. Obviously, the more tickets you sell, the easier it is to cover your costs and even make a small surplus which can pay towards other screenings or cultural events at your venue.

You know your potential audience, and how best to contact them, better than anyone else. However, we hope that the following suggestions might give you some ideas if help is needed.

You will need to produce some specific publicity for your own event. This does not have to be sophisticated, but some A4 posters to put up in key places around the area, and a larger number of A5 flyers to distribute locally, will really help to promote your event.

Posters and flyers should include the following key information:

- The venue
- What the film is
- The film certificate (what age group it is suitable for)
- Date
- Start time
- Ticket price

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- How to get tickets

A picture, your logo or illustration will also help to add interest to your publicity materials and catch the eye of those who see it.

When putting up a poster in a public place, please ask a member of staff who works there for permission first. Useful places to display posters can include the library, doctor's surgery, church, hairdressers, pub, school, post office, parish notice board and shop, as well as at your venue itself.

Flyers can either be distributed 'house to house' (if you have the energy or the volunteers), or you can leave piles of flyers in appropriate places (see advice on posters above).

The ideal time to distribute publicity materials is 3-4 weeks before your event.

If you have any future screenings planned at your own venue, you might want to announce them at the end of your event.

You can add details of your venue and the films you are screening to this website: www.artsderbyshire.org.uk. It is the one-stop shop for finding out what is going on in the area. You can sign up for a free e-bulletin and you can make sure your films are added to this e-bulletin to remind people to come.

Another good way to keep people informed of your films is to collect their email addresses and a week before the film is screened send them a brief description of the film, director, duration, certificate etc. inviting them to attend.

Other promotion

Parish magazines are an excellent way of drawing attention to your event and letting people know that it is happening. Always take advantage of them to promote your event if you can. Village/community websites can also be a good means of publicising the screening.

It does not cost anything to send a press release to your local paper and radio stations. Give the paper or radio station a call, or look on their website, to find out who the appropriate person is to send details of local events to.

Keep your press release short and simple. Here are some basic guidelines:

1. Give your press release a concise heading. If you can think of something catchy, great, but if not, just "[NAME OF FILM] AT [VENUE]" will do fine. Editors will usually give articles their own titles anyway, so you just want to attract their attention and give them some idea of what your press release is about.
2. Put a date on your press release, so editors know when you sent it. The best 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 may want to include further information about the film – what type of film it is, perhaps a brief introduction to the plot, and who it is suitable for.

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5. You can include brief quotations if you want to, but always credit the person or publication they came from.
 6. In your final paragraph make sure you include details of ticket prices and how to obtain them.
 7. At the bottom of the press release put a contact number, in case the editor wants further information.

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

Selling tickets

If you start up as a film society with members who pay in advance of the season – then you don't really need to worry too much about selling tickets, as you will know in advance what your budget is for films from the number of members you get. See "BFFS Starter Pack" on www.bffs.org.uk website.

Alternatively, the easiest way to guarantee an audience is for each member of your committee to agree to sell a certain number of tickets. For example, if 3 committee members sell 10 tickets each then you have a guaranteed audience of 30 people.

Ideally, you should have one person who co-ordinates all the ticket sales and it should be this person's contact details that appear on your publicity. It is best to offer as many ways for people to buy tickets as possible, e.g.

- The contact person can send tickets by post on receipt of a cheque
- Tickets can be bought in person at the home of the contact person
- Tickets can be reserved over the phone and then collected and paid for on arrival at the event
- Subject to availability, tickets can be bought 'on the door'
- Tickets can be purchased from other local outlets

When selling tickets through local outlets, you could try your village shop, post office, pub or hairdressers. Provide the ticket outlet with copies of your publicity materials, tickets and a sheet of paper for them to record how many tickets they sell and at what price. Include your phone number for them to contact you if they need help or more tickets, and any other instructions they may need (for example, who qualifies for concessionary tickets).

On the day of the screening, or the day before, you should collect from the local outlets 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.

Licences

In order to screen films to the public you need two licences: a premises licence, to include 'film' (your venue may already have this but you need to check; if it hasn't, contact your local district council to find out how to get one) and a film licence, which allows you to screen a film to the public. The film licence can be one of many different types of licence depending on whether you wish to charge an entry fee, become a club, or just screen films as part of many other social activities.

Village Halls and Schools etc

If your main purpose is **not** to screen films (e.g. if you host other social activities) AND you can afford to screen the film for free, you could get a PVS licence from Filmbank. See their website for more details: www.filmbank.co.uk. Once you have the licence you can buy or rent the DVD.

An alternative to Filmbank is the Motion Picture Licence company or MPLA licence. This licence is also only available if your main purpose is not screening films. See their website for more details: www.themplc.co.uk. You can buy a one-off licence from them and then just go and buy your DVD from the local shop or online. You cannot make a charge for tickets. Their licence cost depends on the audience size of your venue. If you only expect 50 or so to turn up it is considerably cheaper.

Film societies

Film societies usually consist of members and guests. Societies use Filmbank and other smaller film distributors as their main source of films and film licences. Film societies charge a fee on entry. See this website to find out how to start a new film society and find other film distributors as an alternative to Filmbank: www.bffs.org.uk.

Filmbank's website has an explanation of film licences: www.filmbank.co.uk.

The British Federation of Film Societies

If you start up as a film society it is worth while joining the national network of film societies in order to gain access to all their resources, special viewing days and contacts. It free to join for the first year: www.bffs.org.uk. They have lists of film distributors and contact details; look under 'film' for details of their block booking scheme and look under 'getting hold of prints' for lists of films and film distributors. They have also produced a guide to starting a new film society, which is available to view on their website called the 'BFFS Starter Pack'.

Film Distributors

All film distributors will require you to send them the name and screening date for the film, and the delivery address. You will have to pay p&p, as well as the

film fee. You should receive confirmation of your booking before your screening date; if not, it is up to you to chase them.

Filmbank

Filmbank is the leading film distributor and has a huge catalogue of films of all genres. You can browse their website to see if they stock the film you wish to hire: www.filmbank.co.uk. They explain on their website how to register with them and order films. Filmbank requires a bond of about £75 from you, returnable when you de-register.

The British Film Institute

The British Film Institute (www.bfi.co.uk) have an interesting list of world, art and classic films.

Parkcircus

Another alternative is parkcircus. Their website is www.parkcircus.com and they represent Granada/MGM titles. You need to ring first on 0141 332 2175 in order to book. This distributor is only available to film societies.

New Realm

New Realm stock a very short list of films, though it is growing constantly (www.new-realm.co.uk).

Pricing

The basic requirement when pricing your tickets is to cover your costs. Add up the cost of your screening (see *The cost to you* below), plus any expenses you expect to have, and divide this by the minimum audience numbers you expect to get. This will give you your basic ticket price.

Set your ticket prices at a cost that is appropriate to the audience you hope to get for that event. For example, if you are screening a film targeted at young people, or at older people, then ticket prices should be affordable to your target audience.

We would strongly encourage the use of concessionary tickets. This means offering a reduced ticket price to people who may be on a lower income, such as:

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

Offering concessionary tickets is a way of ensuring that as many people as possible have access to your event.

You might also want to consider offering a special price for a “family” ticket if the film that you are screening is targeted at a family audience.

If you are offering any complementary activities – such as food, or entry to a prize draw on the evening – then you might decide to incorporate a charge for this into your ticket price.

The cost to you

This depends on which licence you choose. Look on the websites and talk to the licence distributors, film societies and voluntary Derbyshire Film promoters to get an idea of costs.

Who funded Derbyshire Film?

Derbyshire Film was financed by EM-Media, the regional film and media development agency for the East Midlands, the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Arts Council England, Derbyshire County Council, Amber Valley Borough Council, Bolsover District Council, Derbyshire Dales District Council, High Peak Borough Council, North East Derbyshire District Council, and South Derbyshire District Council.

Contacts

Derby QUAD

www.derbyquad.co.uk

The Ritz Cinema, Belper

www.ritz-belper.co.uk

Amber Valley Borough Council

Joanne Bamford – Tourism and Cultural Co-ordinator

P.O. Box 17, Town Hall, Ripley, DE5 3TU

Tel: 01773 570222

Email: joanne.bamford@ambervalley.gov.uk

Bolsover District Council

Carole Hirst – Arts Development Officer

Riverside Depot, Chesterfield Road, Doe Lea, S44 5PN

Tel: 01246 593061

Email: carole.hirst@bolsover.gov.uk

Chesterfield Borough Council

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Derbyshire Dales District Council

Nicola Wildgoose – Arts Development Officer

Town Hall, Matlock, DE4 3NN

Tel: 01629 761391

Email: nicola.wildgoose@derbyshiredales.gov.uk

Erewash Borough Council

Laura Guthrie/Jo Stockdale – Arts Development Officer

Sandiacre Friesland Sport Centre, Nursery Avenue, Sandiacre NG10 5AZ

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Email: laura.guthrie@erewash.gov.uk

jolene.stockdale@erewash.gov.uk

High Peak CVS

Nigel Caldwell – General Manager

Dunbar House, 105 Buxton Road, Whaley Bridge, SK23 7HX

Tel: 01663 735350

Email: nigel@highpeakcvs.org.uk

North East Derbyshire District Council

Kelly Massey

The Council House, Saltergate, Chesterfield, S40 1LF

Email: kelly.massey@ne-derbyshire.gov.uk

South Derbyshire District Council

Matt Hinks – Arts Development Officer

Civic Offices, Civic Way, Swadlincote, DE11 OAH

Tel: 01283 228766

Email: matt.hinks@south-derbys.gov.uk

Derbyshire County Council

Ann Wright – Head of Arts

Alfreton Library, Severn Square, Alfreton, DE55 7BQ

Tel: 01773 831385

Email: ann.wright@derbyshire.gov.uk

EM Media

The regional development agency for film and media in the East Midlands

Antenna Media Centre, Beck Street, Nottingham, NG1 1EQ

Tel: 0115 993 2333

Email: info@em-media.org.uk

Arts Council England, East Midlands

The regional office of the national development agency for the arts (including artists' film and video)

St Nicholas Court, 25-27 Castle Gate, Nottingham, NG1 7AR

Tel: 0845 300 6200

Email: eastmidlands@artscouncil.org.uk

Useful Websites

Most of these will require you to register your details first, then you can access their information by using a login name and password.

www.filmbank.co.uk website listing mostly mainstream films for hire and will soon be making images available for your brochure. For booking a film email Emily McDonald info@filmbank.co.uk or ring **020 7984 5957/58**. You will probably be put in a queue and have to wait to speak to someone. It is still worthwhile putting your request in writing or emailing them to confirm bookings.

Filmbank address: **Filmbank Distributors Ltd, Warner House, 98 Theobald's Road, London, WC1X 8WB.**

www.bfi.org.uk or go directly to www.bfi.org.uk/nftva/catalogues/category/7/639 Or use the site search map and look for DVD hire.

The British Film Institute website has information on classics & archive film and world cinema films available for hire, film reviews and exhibition and educational information.

stills.films@bfi.org.uk You can also get digital images of films for use in your brochure or for blowing up to a larger size for a poster by emailing bfi.

www.imagenet.co.uk website to source digital images for your brochure.

www.picselect.com website to source digital images for your brochure.

www.imdb.com The Internet Movie Database website with information and reviews on films.

www.rottentomatoes.com More information and reviews on films.

www.bonsallfilmsociety.org.uk Bonsall & District Film Society – lots of information and useful links to film societies in Britain. Good source for ideas for more unusual films and world cinema.

www.voluntaryarts.org The voluntary arts network have briefing sheets on all sorts of useful things e.g. risk assessments.

www.artsderbyshire.org.uk The one-stop-shop for all things to do with arts – funding, what's on, listings, jobs, venues. You can list your venue and films on this website.

www.parkcircus.com - a small film distributor

www.filmclub.org - website for schools with good ideas for films

www.themplc.co.uk - company that can provide a film licence

Film Posters

Posters of films are available from these companies. This is a free service to groups who are hiring films from film distributors. They are the same type of

poster you would see at your local cinema. You will need to register with them and they will give you an account number. Tell them that you are hiring a film.

0208 991 2121 National Screen Patsy Walton

0208 498 4450 Moving Picture Distribution email asc@delta-com

Bibliography

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The Arts Promoters Pack by Jo Hilton, published by East Midlands Arts, 1997
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www.nrtf.org.uk