

Officers' Reports for Lincoln Film Society 2024-2025

Chairman's Report

As we come to the end of another season, the Society looks to be in good shape both financially and in terms of popularity. We've reestablished ourselves at The Venue and by creating a separate presence at the Terry O'Toole theatre at North Hykeham we've attracted new members. The films we've shown have drawn substantial audiences and monitoring the reaction scores and comments since we received some criticism of the 'sameness' of the programme shows we now seem to be choosing the right ones.

We ended 2023/24 with 338 members, which included 25 half season memberships which we offered at the start of 2024. This season, the membership list closed in September at 330. There was some discussion about the wisdom of offering further half season memberships in January for our films at The Venue but it was decided that we risked putting too much pressure on the theatre's capacity if we did so. There's nothing more off-putting to an audience than to be told there is no room. While we've not quite had a full house, two films have attracted attendances in excess of 200 and several have attracted well over 170 - so at least 75% of the theatre's capacity.

Our return from the disruption caused by Covid has therefore been secured and we should be grateful for that. To sustain that position we need to keep the programme as varied as possible and try to maintain the value for money offer that makes the Society so attractive to the cinema fan.

I now want to thank the committee members and trustees who give their time to make the Society what it is. While there are often vigorous discussions between us, especially when deciding which films should go into the programme, all have made significant contributions and the time they give is much appreciated. I want to acknowledge some of them here.

Jonathan Killin, who died last year, had been both secretary and trustee of the Society and his advice and expertise were invaluable. Sue Firth and Tony Butcher have decided to stand down as secretaries of the Society after eight years in the role. Their contribution to managing the Society's business, especially during the hectic period in the summer when membership opens for the new season and ensuring a smooth flow of information to members, all the while maintaining their sense of humour, has been invaluable. Finally, I'd like to thank Les Dicker who is standing down as a trustee after many years of keeping an eye on our finances.

All organisations are subject to change over time and the Society needs to be prepared for that eventuality. We need to be able to sustain the relationship we have with our venues and, most importantly, between us the committee and you the audience. We have made a start on this with a document that describes how we operate at the moment and provides a useful reference point to make sure that the committee would continue to function should its membership or the Society's future change. This is the moment to say that if anyone in the membership would like to help the committee in the future, they just have to let us know.

Finally, thank you all for your support and helpful comments over the past 8 months. The summer season is not far away and I'm pleased to say we've already begun discussions with The Venue about our autumn season. We'll be announcing dates, film details and when membership opens during the summer. I hope we'll see many of you for the summer films and of course when we resume in the autumn.

Treasurer's Report

The financial statements are now presented for the year ending 31/05/24. This year saw "business as usual" finally return to LFS following the pandemic years. In the three financial years prior (June 2020 to May 2023) we had unfortunately made combined losses of £1,339 - initially due to the need to keep the dormant LFS active at a basic level, and then through tentative steps to restart activities at other locations, where membership numbers were constrained by theatre capacity.

For year 2023/24, when we returned for a full season at BGU, we are pleased to report an outturn position of a surplus of £3,817. This will be added to our capital reserves fund. The reasons for this reasonably large surplus reflect two main points: firstly, we had set the prices for the season based on a very conservative estimate of how many members would be signed up, in the region of 230. In fact, we achieved a much healthier and favourable membership roll, exceeding 320. Secondly, some budgeted costs were brought in below budget, such as expenditure on film viewings and programming research. The combined effect of a much healthier membership base, with less costs has resulted in the very favourable outturn position.

John Rossington (Treasurer)

Secretary's Report

In September 2023 the Society was finally able to return to screenings at The Venue after an absence of three and a half years with a programme of 12 films. The membership cost was £35 for the full season and £20 for half-season membership. 313 people signed up as members in the autumn, and a further 25 signed up for the half season during December, giving a total membership for the season of 338. In recognition of the successful return, a bonus film was added to the programme, voted for by members from a short list. This film – Run Lola Run – achieved the highest approval rating of the season at 88%. Attendance for screenings have been high, averaging 183 per film and the average approval rating has been 78%.

Another summer season of four films at the Terry O'Toole Theatre was held during May and June with the theme of films directed by women for which 91 members signed up.

The 2024/25 season of 14 films attracted 330 members at a cost of £36 a head. Attendances for the first 12 films have averaged 175 and the average approval rating is 82%. Once again the Society has put on an extra film for the members to be screened on 11 April before the AGM.

The 2025 summer season of four films to be screened at the Terry O'Toole at a cost of £15 per head will commence on 9 May.

Sue Firth & Tony Butcher (Joint Secretaries)

27 March 2025