



Cine North – some top tips for your screenings!



So, you've decided to take part in Cine North and show some films in your village? Great news! With thanks to our friends at Derbyshire Film, we have gathered together some top tips for local cinema promoters to help you to plan and promote your film night.

Cine North will provide you with the cinema equipment (if required), your chosen film, and organise the screening license for the film. We'll list the film on our website www.cinenorth.co.uk and in a seasonal film brochure that is distributed to all venues.

Below is a summary of what you might want to think about to ensure that your venue is ready, and that your local community are inspired to come along and see the film you have chosen to show.

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, Performing Rights

Society License, and meet the relevant Health and Safety requirements (please refer to local authority licensing department). 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.
- 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.

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

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 How to get tickets
- Cine North Logos / Branding (this will be provided)

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.

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.
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).

You may also wish to submit your film events to local and online listings services.

As a Cine North venue, your event will be added to the Cine North website www.cinenorth.co.uk and to our printed brochure, which will be distributed to public venues throughout the region.

You can also add your events to: www.wherecanwego.com or www.screeningfilm.com by joining as a member and submitting your events for free and www.findanyfilm.com by requesting a submission form from the British Federation of Film Societies <http://bffs.org.uk/newsandevents/news/findanyfilm.html>

Selling tickets

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.

- How to get tickets

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Acknowledgements:

This is an edited extract, reproduced with the kind permission of the owners, of the Derbyshire Film Toolkit, available in full at www.artsderbyshire.org.uk. Derbyshire Film created the toolkit by drawing on advice and information from the following sources:

The Touring Scheme Toolkit by Richard King, published by the National Rural Touring Forum, 2003 www.nrtf.org.uk

The Arts Promoters Pack by Jo Hilton, published by East Midlands Arts, 1997 Promoters Don't Panic Pack, published by the National Rural Touring Forum www.nrtf.org.uk With thanks to Katie Owen Freelance Arts Development worker katie.owen@katieowen.co.uk Steven Foxon at Phoenix Arts www.phoenix.org.uk

Cine North in Cumbria (South) and its operation is delivered by **National Media Museum** and **Signal Film & Media**. Cine North is a strategic partner of **Film Hub North**, part of the **BFI Film Audience Network**, supported by Lottery Funding through **BFI Neighbourhood Cinema**

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