

Chair's Report 2022-23

Presented at the WFC Annual General Meeting, 20 June 2023

Report Summary

The period since the last WFC AGM (25 January 2022) has been one of continued recovery post-pandemic and significant change in our IT systems and financial management:

- Our total audience across all screenings is up 28% year-on-year, from 1,136 (20 films) to 1,454 (at 19 films). Average audience size rose from 57 to 77.
- Seasonal membership increased by 42% from 106 (in January 2022) to 150.
- A higher proportion of the membership participated in the Members' Choice votes. The spring 2023 vote recorded the highest ever level of involvement at 67.
- Audience satisfaction was strong with an average score of 78% (4.1).
- Our programme was again recognised at national level in the Cinema for All awards.
- Following a major overhaul, our IT systems are now more robust, cost-effective and secure. This has helped boost membership and ticket sales.
- The separation of the Shorts Film Festival from the Club in 2022 has improved the visibility and control of our finances.
- Our healthy reserves, which were key to sustainability during the pandemic, have been reviewed and the trustees consider them sufficient for future contingencies.

AGM Operational Proposals

Pricing

Ticket income is currently sufficient to cover the cost of screenings (venue hire, film hire, speaker costs etc) so we propose to freeze ticket prices for next season.

Membership income is used to cover the cost of running the club. As those are largely fixed costs (e.g. IT systems) an increase in membership should allow for a reduction in fees. Consequently, we propose to reduce membership fees for next season by approximately 25%. Full-price membership will drop from £40 to £30, while concession membership will drop from £33 to £25 (see [Appendix A](#) for fuller details).

We hope reducing the cost of becoming a member will not only make membership more attractive but will also reward our loyal existing members, who have been a key factor in the Club's sustainability over the last 18 years.

Refunds

We implemented a refund policy earlier this year. In brief, refunds are only available up until 24 hours before a screening (to ensure we have time to sell any released seats) and all refunds are subject to an Eventbrite handling fee (the exceptions being a duplicate purchase, screening cancellation or Covid-19). We would now like formal endorsement of this by the membership. The full policy is attached as [Appendix B](#).

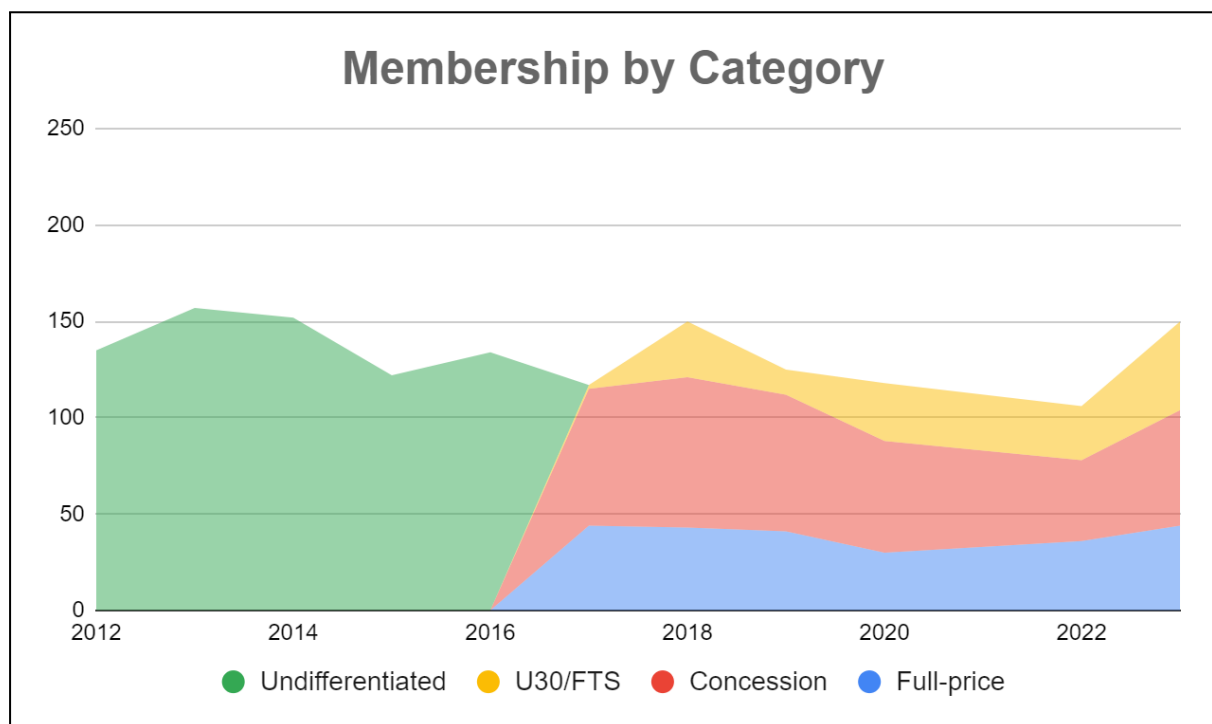
AGM Timing and Financial Year

The Committee proposes that future AGMs should take place after the final screening of the season, as has happened this year. This allows for a fuller picture of the season, including anticipated total income and costs, to be reviewed by the membership.

Additionally, we propose that the financial year-end, currently the 30th of June, should now run to the 31st of August to ensure that all season-related costs are captured and reported. This means that the statutory accounts will be published to all members later in the year.

Membership

Membership has recovered to pre-pandemic levels and we are optimistic for further growth across all categories.



The breakdown of membership by category and time (whether bought for the full-year or the part year from January to June) is as follows:

Category	Total	Full Year	Part Year
Full-price	44	26	18
Concession	60	49	11
Under-30 / FTS	46	31	15
Total	150	106	44

Of the full-price and concession memberships, 17 and 42 respectively were renewals, giving an overall renewal rate (excluding gifts) of 49%. We would like to boost that rate, while continuing to attract new members, and we believe reducing membership fees for next season should help in achieving that goal.

Film Programme

Venue

Since the January 2022 AGM the Curzon hire charge has increased to £360 (this continues to be far below their usual commercial rate). This rate applies to the Blue Room, which has a 90-seat capacity, but for the period covered by this report has in practice had an 80-seat capacity owing to technical problems which prevent use of the back row.

To mitigate this we have been able on occasion to use the Red Room (capacity 103), through an informal local arrangement with the Curzon Wimbledon staff, but we could not afford to hire the Red Room routinely for screenings as the fee is £480 (this would require an average audience of 90 if we keep ticket prices at their current level).

Films

Members have continued to play a significant part in the programming process. Since the last AGM we have screened 29 films (including tonight's) of which 12 were suggested and chosen directly by the membership through our biannual Members Choice Film Votes – the last such vote involving 45% of our membership, the highest level of participation to date.

Guest speakers continue to be an important part of our programme – 12 of the 29 films included a post-screening Q&A with filmmakers, critics, historians and industry experts, and a further 2 included a zoom introduction by the director. We were also delighted to welcome the Mayor of Merton to our 2022 Black History Month screening, and to our 2022 and 2023 LGBT History Month screenings.

While the majority of films were recent releases, we continued to promote knowledge and appreciation of the rich history of cinema by programming four twentieth-century classics: Jean Luc Godard's *Breathless*, Victor Erice's *El Sur*, Billy Wilder's *A Foreign Affair* and Perry Henzell's *The Harder They Come*. All four were accompanied by post-screening Q&As with expert speakers.

A table of the attendance for each film since the last AGM is provided in [Appendix C](#). We have also included a table ordering all of these films by audience score in [Appendix D](#), and a list of all the speakers we have hosted since then in [Appendix E](#).

Audience satisfaction

We have continued to invite audience members to score the film out of 5 when leaving the screening room. As part of our IT overhaul, we have added the scores to our website with a percentage equivalent (this is the Independent Cinema Office and Cinema for All standard), thereby increasing transparency.

Earlier this year we also explored member satisfaction through a [survey](#) about our film programme. The survey was completed by 32 members. In summary:

- Overall satisfaction with the WFC programme was high. On a scale of 1-4, the majority of respondents scored 4, with almost all others scoring 3 (only 1 respondent gave a mark of 2).
- Respondents strongly valued being involved in the programming process through the Members' Choice Film Vote.
- The guest speaker Q&A was the second most highly valued programme element.
- The 'annual' films (in association with Wimbledon Bookfest, BHM, pre-Christmas comedy classic and LGBTHM) were less highly valued. The most highly valued 'annual' film was the pre-Christmas classic comedy, followed by the BHM film.

Respondents were also invited to leave comments about what they would like to see more of, and what they would like to see less of, in the WFC programme. Taking into account that any theme only represents a handful of members, the strongest themes were as follows:

What I want to see more of...

- Films members would not otherwise get the chance to see / might miss seeing
- Foreign language films
- Classics
- Variety / range of genres
- Comedies

What I want to see less of...

- Films which are too mainstream / we've seen already (whether recent release or classic)
- Films which are too niche / obscure / minority interest

Recognition from Cinema for All

We are delighted that the WFC once again received a Cinema for All *Film Society of the Year* award (for our 2021/22 season): a commendation for 'Best Film Programme'. WFC was also invited to join a CfA focus group to explore how film societies and community cinemas can contribute to combatting climate change. The work of this group was reported to the CfA Conference in early 2023, which the WFC Acting Chair attended.

As our contribution to the group, we undertook to try to reduce our use of paper in the provision of programme notes. To achieve this we now email them to ticket buyers 2 hours before the screening. As a result, we have gradually reduced the number of paper copies available on the night down to 20.

We also checked the membership's views through a [survey](#) sent to all members who had bought a ticket this season, which was completed by a fifth of the membership (30). Two thirds of respondents were happy for programme notes to be sent only by email, but the remaining third still wanted to have the option of paper notes to be provided on film night.

We have also reduced our use of paper by checking in attendees electronically rather than via a printed list, and by making the 2023 AGM paperless.

Financial Summary

Based on our anticipated income and expenses, we expect to finish the financial year with a small surplus. As the year has been extended, and as some income and costs from the 2021-22 season were incurred in July, our turnover is artificially high, though only marginally.

With all the income and costs for the season yet to be booked, our total actuals for the financial year (1st of July 2022 to 31 August 2023) currently stand as follows:

Income		YTD at 19-Jun	Forecast YE
	Ticket sales	10,288	10,638
	Membership fees	3,085	3,085
	Bank interest	28	28
	Sub-total	13,401	13,751
Expenses			
	WFC running costs	£ 1,532	£ 1,910
	Screening costs	£ 10,394	£ 10,938
	Wimbledon Shorts	£ 753	£ 753
	Sub-total	12,679	13,601
Surplus / Deficit		722	151

As can be seen from this summary, we expect to break-even on screenings while our membership income is well ahead of running costs, allowing for a reduction in fees. The Wimbledon Shorts cost is a one-off reflecting the final settlement of accounts.

Excluding income and costs for Wimbledon Shorts, the last 6 years have seen considerable volatility due to the impact of the pandemic. Our two major costs, venue and film hire, have risen considerably over the last year, but this has been offset by higher ticket income and by reductions in other costs (IT systems, speaker expenses and subscriptions).

Season	Income	Expenses	Reserves
2017-18	14,614	12,408	10,177
2018-19	10,430	11,957	8,650
2019-20	12,217	9,472	11,395
2020-21	2,838	4,082	10,149
2021-22	7,480	9,254	8,375
2022-23	13,842	12,865	

Note: The 2022-23 figures are provisional at this stage. Reserves will be calculated at financial year-end as part of the statutory accounts but will probably be over £9,000.

IT Systems

The WFC website was rebuilt from scratch during the summer of 2022. This exercise entailed moving to a new, London-based hosting provider (the old website was hosted in the US - one reason why it was noticeably slow) and has led to a significant reduction in costs, in part because we have taken maintenance and support in-house.

The new website includes a searchable archive of past screenings, a summary of WFC statistics and a record of our Members' Choice votes, all significant functional improvements.

All memberships and tickets are now managed online through Eventbrite. While we still support door sales, these are also processed via Eventbrite so we have a complete, auditable record.

We have improved the quality and accuracy of our emails, which has helped drive higher ticket sales. Our mailing list is currently 540, reflecting significant growth since 2022 when the *de facto* mailing list was 340 (much of this improvement is down to the consolidation of disparate mailing lists that weren't being contacted). We have also started to use Google Forms for both our Members' Choice votes and for member feedback surveys.

In May of this year we carried out an IT security assessment, which did not highlight any issues. All of the new systems are fully documented and we now have a secure record of all corporate accounts, which should aid knowledge transfer between trustees in future.

Dr Clare Collins

WFC Acting Chair

June 2023

Appendix A – Membership Fees Proposal

Membership fees should cover the cost of running the charity. As a result of reductions in a number of cost areas during 2022 and 2023, and the separation of the Wimbledon Shorts Festival, that cost is approximately £1,900 versus a membership income of £3,085.

As we cannot guarantee to break even on films, due to the uncertainty of ticket sales, it makes sense to budget a contingency within the membership fees to cover any shortfall. As a rule of thumb, it is proposed that this should be equivalent to 5% of our programme income (i.e. one film), which would be roughly £530.

This means that we should aim for membership income in 2023-24 to be in the order of £2,400, based on 2022-23 costs.

As membership fee income is in excess of that figure, it is proposed that we reduce membership fees for all paying categories.

The following table shows the proposed reduction plus the number of films that have to be attended to break even (i.e. the point at which cumulative savings on ticket price exceed the membership fee).

Membership	Current Fee	New Fee	Reduction	Break Even # Films	
				Old	New
Full-year - Full-price	£40.00	£30.00	25%	6	4
Full-year - Concession	£33.00	£25.00	24%	5	4
Discounted - Full-price	£30.00	£24.00	20%	4	4
Discounted - Concession	£25.00	£20.00	20%	4	3

As ticket prices are currently in line with the principle that sales should cover screening costs, and as we're not anticipating significant increases in those costs, there is no immediate need for a change in ticket pricing.

Appendix B – Refunds Policy

It is the policy of the charity to offer refunds against membership and individual ticket purchases per the following conditions.

Memberships

Memberships will only be refunded in full if the member has not purchased any individual film tickets at the prevailing member rate.

If member tickets have been purchased then the refund will be made less the total difference between the member and non-member ticket prices for that season. If this total exceeds the purchase price of the membership, no refund will be made.

Memberships will not be refunded after the end of the relevant season.

If the membership has been purchased online via Eventbrite, the time taken for the funds to reach the purchaser's account will be at Eventbrite's discretion.

All refunds will be subject to an Eventbrite handling fee. This is equivalent to their standard booking fee (currently 6.95% of the price + £0.59 GBP + 20% VAT). For a full-price membership of £40, the net refund amount would be £35.95. This fee will be waived and the membership refunded in full if the refund is due to a duplicate membership purchase.

Film Tickets

Tickets booked online via Eventbrite will be refunded if you are unable to attend, but only up to 24 hours before the screening (so typically before 8:30pm on the Monday). Tickets will not be refunded after that point. This is to ensure there is adequate time to resell any tickets made available due to a refund.

If the ticket has been purchased online via Eventbrite, the time taken for the funds to reach the purchaser's account will be at Eventbrite's discretion.

All refunds will be subject to an Eventbrite handling fee for all ticket types (i.e. member as well as non-member). This is equivalent to their standard booking fee (currently 6.95% of the price + £0.59 GBP per ticket + 20% VAT). For a member ticket of £7, the net refund amount would be £5.70. This fee will be waived and the ticket price refunded in full if the refund is due to COVID-19, a duplicate ticket purchase or the screening was cancelled.

Appendix C – Films Ordered by Attendance

This covers the 28 films screened since the last AGM in January 2022, but does not include tonight's film, *Two of Us*. The titles shaded in grey are this season's films.

The attendance figure is for all ticket types, including complimentary. MC = members' choice.

Film	Date	Attendance	Score	%	MC?
The Quiet Girl	14-Mar-23	88	4.6	90%	Y
Lunana: A Yak in the classroom + Q&A	6-Jun-23	83	4.7	93%	Y
Benediction	28-Feb-23	83	3.7	68%	
A Foreign Affair + Q&A	6-Dec-22	82	4.1	78%	
Compartment No. 6 + Q&A	26-Oct-22	81	4.2	80%	
The Taste of Tea	24-Jan-23	80	3.3	58%	Y
Official Competition	10-Jan-23	80	4.0	75%	
Eric Ravilious: Drawn to War + Q&A	16-May-23	79	4.7	93%	
Hit the Road	14-Feb-23	78	3.7	68%	Y
Blind Ambition	7-Feb-23	78	4.3	83%	
El Sur + Q&A	2-May-23	77	3.7	68%	
The Doo Dah Man + Q&A	28-Mar-23	77	4.3	83%	
Limbo	22-Feb-22	76	4.3	83%	Y
Tomboy	8-Feb-22	76	4.4	85%	
Parallel Mothers	11-Oct-22	74	4.4	85%	
Aftersun	30-May-23	73	3.6	65%	Y
The Harder They Come + Q&A	4-Oct-22	73	4.4	85%	
Riders of Justice + Q&A	15-Nov-22	68	4.4	85%	Y
Wild Men	8-Nov-22	67	4.3	83%	
The Worst Person in The World	20-Sep-22	67	3.9	73%	
The Banshees of Inisherin	18-Apr-23	66	4.2	80%	Y
I'm Your Man	25-Jan-22	66	4.4	85%	Y
Sometimes Always Never + Q&A	10-May-22	65	4.5	88%	Y
Breathless + Q&A	22-Mar-22	61	3.9	73%	Y
After Love	14-Jun-22	60	4.5	88%	Y
Boiling Point + Q&A	31-May-22	56	4.8	95%	Y
Wildfire	8-Mar-22	54	4.1	78%	
Paris 13th District + Q&A	28-Jun-22	40	3.8	70%	

Appendix D – Films Ordered by Audience Score

This covers the 28 films screened since the January 2022 AGM, but does not include tonight's film, *Two of Us*. The titles shaded in grey are this season's films.

The attendance figure is for all ticket types, including complimentaries. MC = members' choice.

Film	Date	Attendance	Score	%	MC?
Boiling Point + Q&A	31-May-22	56	4.8	95%	Y
Lunana: A Yak in the classroom + Q&A	6-Jun-23	83	4.7	93%	Y
Eric Ravilious: Drawn to War + Q&A	16-May-23	79	4.7	93%	
The Quiet Girl	14-Mar-23	88	4.6	90%	Y
After Love	14-Jun-22	60	4.5	88%	Y
Sometimes Always Never + Q&A	10-May-22	65	4.5	88%	Y
Riders of Justice + Q&A	15-Nov-22	68	4.4	85%	Y
I'm Your Man	25-Jan-22	66	4.4	85%	Y
Parallel Mothers	11-Oct-22	74	4.4	85%	
The Harder They Come + Q&A	4-Oct-22	73	4.4	85%	
Tomboy	8-Feb-22	76	4.4	85%	
Limbo	22-Feb-22	76	4.3	83%	Y
The Doo Dah Man + Q&A	28-Mar-23	77	4.3	83%	
Blind Ambition	7-Feb-23	78	4.3	83%	
Wild Men	8-Nov-22	67	4.3	83%	
The Banshees of Inisherin	18-Apr-23	66	4.2	80%	Y
Compartment No. 6 + Q&A	26-Oct-22	81	4.2	80%	
A Foreign Affair + Q&A	6-Dec-22	82	4.1	78%	
Wildfire	8-Mar-22	54	4.1	78%	
Official Competition	10-Jan-23	80	4.0	75%	
Breathless + Q&A	22-Mar-22	61	3.9	73%	Y
The Worst Person in The World	20-Sep-22	67	3.9	73%	
Paris 13th District + Q&A	28-Jun-22	40	3.8	70%	
Hit the Road	14-Feb-23	78	3.7	68%	Y
El Sur + Q&A	2-May-23	77	3.7	68%	
Benediction	28-Feb-23	83	3.7	68%	
Aftersun	30-May-23	73	3.6	65%	Y
The Taste of Tea	24-Jan-23	80	3.3	58%	Y

Appendix E – Speakers Since Last AGM

We have had 12 in-person speakers and 2 video introductions since the January 2022 AGM.

Film	Date	Speaker
Limbo	22-Feb-22	Recorded introduction by Ben Sharrock (Director)
Wildfire	8-Mar-22	Recorded introduction by Cathy Brady (Director)
Breathless	22-Mar-22	Prof. Peter Evans
Sometimes Always Never	10-May-22	Carl Hunter (Director)
Boiling Point	31-May-22	Hester Ruoff & Bart Ruspoli (Producers)
Paris 13th District	28-Jun-22	Sarah Peacock (BBFC)
The Harder They Come	4-Oct-22	Lloyd Bradley
Compartment No. 6	26-Oct-22	Leigh Singer
Riders of Justice	15-Nov-22	Danny Leigh
A Foreign Affair	6-Dec-22	Nick Smedley
The Doo Dah Man	28-Mar-23	Claude Green (Director)
El Sur	2-May-23	Prof. Peter Evans
Eric Ravilious: Drawn to War	16-May-23	Margy Kinmonth (Director)
Lunana: A Yak in the classroom	6-Jun-23	Prof. Nitasha Kaul