

Rural community film exhibition in Wales



Bigger Picture Research
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CHAPTER

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Canolfan Ffilm Cymru

Film Audience Network
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Executive summary

Introduction

- Rural community film exhibition ('community exhibition') can take many different forms, from traditional film societies screening films to members with a common interest in film appreciation, to pop-up screening events in non-traditional venues and village hall screening programmes offered by local groups for social and recreational purposes.
- Such exhibitors provide a community service or cultural amenity rather than being driven solely by the prospect of commercial gain. Invariably they are run by, or with the critical input of, volunteers.
- The strength of community exhibition in Wales is a direct response to the uneven patchwork of commercial provision. Community exhibition can satisfy a variety of needs for big screen, communal cinema-going otherwise unmet by commercial operators.
- Wales has a relatively large rural population, and swathes of the country are sparsely populated, which in part explains the prevalence of community exhibition.
- Rural areas face their own particular challenges, influencing the character of community exhibition provision and thereby justifying a dedicated research focus. These include limited access to services (for recreation, among others), poor transport links and a higher proportion of older adults in the population.
- Film Hub Wales, one of nine Hubs around the UK funded as part of the BFI's Film Audience Network through the National Lottery, commissioned the present research to investigate how the Hub, and its partners, can best support rural community exhibition to develop and thrive.
- The research was designed to build a picture of existing rural provision in Wales, and current funding and support opportunities; identify support needs of existing providers; determine what opportunities exist to improve support for rural community exhibition via the Hub and partner organisations; and to make recommendations about which options to pursue.

Rural community film exhibition in Wales

- A database of rural community exhibitors was compiled from publicly available sources and in consultation with Film Hub Wales and other membership organisations.
- 70 community exhibitors were identified in rural (60, 86%) and semi-rural (10, 14%) areas.
- This means across rural Wales as a whole there are approximately 4.9 community exhibitors per 100,000 people.
- Monmouthshire has the highest concentration of rural community exhibitors in Wales (15 in total, 22%) due to the presence of Moviola, a rural mobile cinema network, in the county; while Flintshire, Wrexham and the Isle of Anglesey have the lowest number of community exhibitors.
- The majority (73%) of community exhibitors in rural Wales are film societies or community cinemas. One quarter of community exhibitors are mixed-use venues that host a regular screening programme alongside other arts provision, and the remainder (3%) are established film festivals (Wales One World Festival and Carmarthen Bay Film Festival).
- Community halls are the venue type most commonly used by community exhibitors (46%), followed by mixed-use venues (29%). Other venues include school/college/university premises, hospitality businesses, commercial cinemas and theatres.
- Two thirds of community exhibitors (66%) screen using DVD or Blu-ray projection systems. Over a quarter (27%) have converted to digital cinema projection (mainly in mixed-use venues) while three exhibitors retain 35mm capability.
- Over three quarters (78%) of community exhibitors offer a mix of specialised and more mainstream programming. Nearly one in five (19%) community exhibitors screen programmes dedicated to specialised film (these exhibitors are all either traditional film societies or film festivals). Only two exhibitors, Crosshands Hall and Cinema in Llanelli (Carmarthenshire) and Cinematic in Caernafon (Gwynedd), offer a predominance of mainstream films.

Support needs and existing services

- Interviews were held with a representative sample of different community exhibitors around Wales in order to gauge the range of issues they face and consequent support needs. In addition, a number of organisations and agencies were consulted that offer support and services for, or relevant to, community exhibitors.
- Rural community exhibitors often rely on their own initiative and local resources to get started and sustain themselves over time. Several we consulted during the research said they were satisfied with their current operation, requiring no outside support.
- That said, community exhibitors face a host of common issues and challenges, many of which would benefit from additional support.
- These include the challenge of attracting younger participants (as volunteers and audiences); the effect of competition from home entertainment film platforms; lack of familiarity with social networking as a marketing tool; the cost of film licences; particular difficulties in programming foreign language titles; and the impact of poor transport infrastructure on accessibility and audience demand.
- A number of these areas are already served by existing support (at least in theory), although the consultation revealed knowledge of available options is patchy among rural community exhibitors and opportunities could be better signposted.
- The report details existing support and services described from the following perspectives: Film sector membership organisations (British Federation of Film Societies; Sinemau Cymru; Moviola); film sector bodies and schemes (Ffilm Cymru Wales; Independent Cinema Office; BFI Neighbourhood Cinema Fund; BFI Programming Development Fund; Filmbank Distributors); Local Authorities; voluntary sector (Wales Council for Voluntary Action, County Voluntary Councils and Volunteer Centres); and wider funding opportunities (Big Lottery Fund Wales; Arts Council of Wales).

Summary of recommendations

- Notwithstanding the variety of provision that characterises rural community exhibition in Wales, the present research indicates two guiding principles should be observed by all agencies that support the sector:
 1. Not everyone involved in community exhibition, even those in senior committee or staff positions, has a film background or any special interest in film culture and appreciation.
 2. Community exhibition often operates at the limits of a community group's or venue's capacity, leaving little time or other human and financial resources for activity that goes beyond the scope of day-to-day operations

Recommendation 1: With these in mind, Film Hub Wales initiatives aimed at, or relevant to, rural community exhibitors (including events, funding opportunities and online resources) should be presented such that they are both attractive and accessible to non-film specialists with limited scope or opportunities for wider engagement, in terms of: the way they are framed, worded and pitched; communication of their likely benefits; location and scheduling; cost and subsidisation.

- Existing sources of information, advice and guidance on community exhibition are dispersed across a number of different organisations, both within and outside the wider film sector, and there is a degree of duplication in certain areas while gaps remain in others.

Recommendation 2: As a first step to addressing this, the present report should be disseminated widely among film and non-film agencies operating in Wales and the rural community exhibition sector.

- There is also a case for a central point of contact, either online or otherwise, offering information about specific support opportunities in Wales.

Recommendation 3: A guide to available support in Wales, based on the report findings, should be made available online and promoted through the different channels open to Film Hub Wales. This would benefit from development in consultation with other agencies, including BFFS (as it prepares to re-launch its Welsh Group), Sinemau Cymru, Ffilm Cymru Wales and the Independent Cinema Office in the film sector, along with input from WCVA, Big Lottery Wales and the Arts Council of Wales.

- Advice on equipment procurement is harder to come by than, for example, film licensing information. Yet this is vital for new start-ups and existing providers wishing to upgrade their operation.

Recommendation 4: Often the best way to inform decision-making is by learning from others, and Film Hub Wales should actively promote information sharing about equipment options among member organisations, accompanied by signposting, in written and online materials, of established sources of information (e.g. BFI Neighbourhood Cinema Fund, BFFS equipment loan service etc.).

Recommendation 5: Mindful of similar initiatives run by other agencies, Film Hub Wales should consider providing opportunities for rural community exhibitors to swap, loan, hire, donate or sell used equipment.

- A range of important support options and services exist for rural community exhibitors outside the film sector. However, the agencies involved (including Local Authorities, Third Sector organisations, arts and community funding bodies) are not necessarily aware of the full range of needs that exhibitors have, or of the wider social, cultural and economic benefits of rural community exhibition that justify continued support.

Recommendation 6: Film Hub Wales should explore ways to engage with Third Sector, local government, Welsh Government and funding bodies outside the film sector (e.g. WCVA, rural Local Authorities, Wales Rural Network, Big Lottery Fund, Arts Council of Wales) to raise awareness of rural community exhibition, its needs and wider benefits, and opportunities for joint work and service provision.

- Given the nature of the sector, which is characterised by resourceful, self-starting groups, many of the support needs of rural community exhibitors can be satisfied through the provision of regular networking opportunities, enabling participants to share experiences, make connections and learn from each other.

Recommendation 7: Film Hub Wales should endeavour to provide a range of accessible networking opportunities in different parts of Wales and throughout the year, bringing together the full range of rural community exhibitors and, where appropriate, other film and non-film sector representatives. These could be run as standalone events, or as part of other gatherings (like screening days), and in partnership with other organisations.

- Many of the film sector organisations consulted for this research suggested Film Hub Wales has an important, and distinctive, role to play in promoting Welsh film, including Welsh-language works, through preview screenings and events, and providing access to talent and marketing support. However, few rural community exhibitors consulted were confident of audience demand for Welsh film, particularly in the Welsh language, including those based in areas with larger Welsh-speaking populations.

Recommendation 8: Film Hub Wales should continue to develop its programme of Welsh film screening days, and consider mounting a wider promotional campaign (perhaps in association with Ffilm Cymru Wales and other interested partners) to raise awareness of high quality Welsh filmmaking and talent.

- There is certainly demand among those responsible for community exhibition programming for opportunities to see films ahead of release, provided previews are timely and accessible.

Recommendation 9: In practice, ensuring previews are timely and accessible means: hosting events at a range of locations around Wales, including in rural community exhibition venues; scheduling events at different points in the year to coincide with programming cycles (March/April is especially significant for film societies and community cinema whose screening year begins in September, as this is when autumn programme decisions are taken); ensuring bursaries are available to attend Hub and other screening events (including festivals), in Wales and elsewhere.

- The research found evidence of demand, albeit from a minority of community exhibitors, for other types of programming, including archive film and shorts, which may otherwise be beyond the reach of programmers lacking the time, knowledge and wherewithal to organise such options themselves.

Recommendation 10: Film Hub Wales should consider ways of curating different types of content, suitably packaged for rural community exhibitors including rights clearance, programming notes and marketing materials. This could be achieved in partnership with Hub members with experience in this area, as well as other agencies and interested parties (like BFFS, which already offers screening licences for short film compilations¹).

- Research blind spots exist across the community exhibition sector as a whole, including intelligence on harder to reach groups (like young people) and in terms of the potential for audience development to extend both reach (attracting a wider audience base) and programming breadth. Further work is needed to better understand rural audiences in general, and how to best serve and engage them.

Recommendation 11: Film Hub Wales should ensure research, like the Understanding Audiences programme, is sensitive to the particular character of rural community exhibition; that data capture and reporting requirements reflect the scale and capacity of operations and do not make undue calls on volunteer time; that it sells the idea of intelligence gathering as a benefit to community exhibitors, including for audience development, marketing and financial planning; and that sufficient provision is made for guidance and training so that rural community exhibition practitioners, particularly volunteers, are properly supported in their research and reporting activity.

- Few existing training and professional development needs were described by consultees, with many expressing satisfaction with available support from providers like the ICO and local CVCs. One notable exception is in marketing, specifically use of digital channels (like web sites and email shots) and social media (like Facebook and Twitter). The benefits of digital communication tools (as a speedy and cost-effective means of maintaining contact with large numbers of people) coupled with the rise of social media as a primary means by which people organise their private lives and leisure time, are too significant to ignore.

Recommendation 12: Film Hub Wales should encourage training providers, like ICO and CVCs, to offer and promote digital marketing training aimed at the full range of competencies, from beginners to more advanced users; and help to promote existing

¹ <http://www.bffs.org.uk/services/Shorts/>

training provision to community exhibitors (including through bursaries). In addition to training events and courses, options should be explored for offering distance learning opportunities, so participants do not have to travel and can accommodate digital marketing training alongside other commitments.

- There is scope for formalising skills development among volunteers involved in community exhibition through accreditation schemes, which could help to attract younger volunteers looking for development opportunities, and who are currently under-represented in the volunteer pool of most community exhibitors.

Recommendation 13: Film Hub Wales should consider what opportunities exist for developing accredited learning pathways for volunteers involved in rural community exhibition as a way of attracting younger people into the sector, and assess the feasibility, costs and benefits of such an approach.

Introduction

1.1 Background

Rural community film exhibition ('community exhibition') can take many different forms, from traditional film societies screening films to members with a common interest in film appreciation, to pop-up screening events in non-traditional venues and village hall screening programmes offered by local groups for social and recreational purposes.

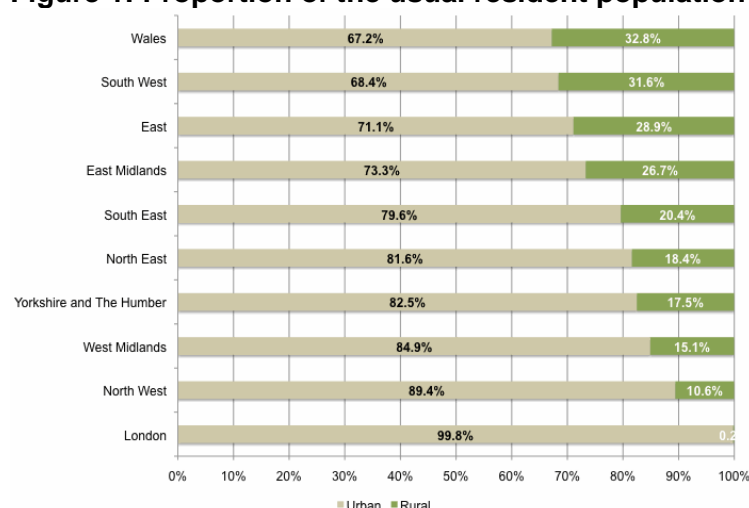
The types of venue, projection format, programme choice and screening frequency may vary widely but in all cases such exhibitors provide a community service or cultural amenity rather than being driven solely by the prospect of commercial gain. Invariably they are run by, or with the critical input of, volunteers.

Wales has a long tradition of community exhibition and historical studies paint a vivid picture of provision, which tended to develop in locally managed screening networks operating in mixed-use civic venues (like Miners' Institutes), run by volunteers as part of wider social, cultural and educational programmes organised by, and for, local communities.²

The strength of community exhibition in Wales is a direct response to the uneven patchwork of commercial provision in the country. Community exhibition can flourish in circumstances where there is no cinema provision within easy reach, or where cinemas fail to programme a sufficient range of films catering to all tastes in an area. In this way, community exhibition can satisfy a variety of needs for big screen, communal cinema-going otherwise unmet by commercial operators.

The limited extent of commercial provision in Wales is due in part to the fact it has a relatively large rural population (of around 1 in 3 of all inhabitants, compared to 1 in 5 in England: see Figure 1), and swathes of the country are sparsely populated. For understandable reasons, cinema circuits avoid developments in such areas, where it is harder to make a business case for investment.

Figure 1: Proportion of the usual resident population living in urban and rural areas



Source: ONS, 2011

² See, for example, Miskell (2000) *Pulpits, Coal Pits and Fleapits: A Social History of the Cinema in Wales, 1918-1951*; James, 2007, *A Very Profitable Enterprise: South Wales Miners' Institute Cinemas in the 1930s*; Miskell, *ibid*; and Moitra, 2011, 'The Management Committee Intent To Act as Ushers': *Cinema Operation and the South Wales Miners' Institute Cinemas in the 1950s and 1960s*. These references are taken from Becky Innes's contribution to *Community Exhibition in the UK* (2014, forthcoming), produced on behalf of the British Film Institute.

For much the same reason, commercial screens devoted to programming specialised films (like foreign language titles, documentaries and independently-produced British films) tend to be confined to larger metropolitan areas.

The establishment of community exhibition is therefore a natural choice for many groups and venues in rural areas, a point illustrated by the British Federation of Film Societies (BFFS) *Annual Community Exhibitor Survey 2012/13*, which found 38% of respondents were based outside urban areas compared with only 3% of commercial cinema screens.³

Of course, rural areas face their own particular challenges, influencing the character of community exhibition provision and thereby justifying a dedicated research focus. A recent study by the Welsh Local Government Association described how the phenomenon of 'rural deprivation' takes three related forms:

- Resource deprivation, "as embodied in problems of low income and housing";
- Opportunity deprivation, "which relates to availability of services (for example health and recreation)"
- Mobility deprivation, "which concerns transport costs and the inaccessibility of jobs, services and facilities."⁴

Limited access to services (including for recreation) and poor transport links have an obvious bearing on demand for community exhibition, but so too does the demographic composition of rural populations, which skew older than the national average (Table 1). This can influence community exhibition provision, as the availability of a large retired population means more potential volunteers, while older people are less likely to visit commercial cinemas and may therefore be more inclined to make use of local screening opportunities.

Table 1: Population by age in rural and semi-rural Local Authorities*, ranked by mean age

Rural/ semi rural Local Authority	Population (2011)	Aged 4 to 19	Aged 20 to 44	Aged 45 to 65	Aged 65+	Mean age
Conwy	115,200	21%	26%	28%	24%	44.6
Powys	133,000	22%	26%	30%	23%	43.9
Isle of Anglesey	69,700	21%	28%	28%	22%	43.4
Monmouthshire	91,300	23%	26%	30%	21%	43.0
Pembrokeshire	122,400	23%	27%	29%	22%	42.9
Denbighshire	93,700	23%	28%	28%	21%	42.4
Carmarthenshire	183,800	23%	28%	28%	21%	42.3
Ceredigion	75,900	23%	30%	26%	21%	41.7
Gwynedd	121,900	23%	30%	26%	21%	41.6
The Vale of Glamorgan	126,500	24%	30%	28%	18%	40.9
Flintshire	152,500	24%	31%	28%	18%	40.6
Wales	1,420,700	23%	32%	27%	18%	40.6
Wrexham	134,800	24%	33%	26%	17%	39.8

Sources: 2011 Census, BFFS, ICO, Ffilm Cymru Wales, Big Lottery Fund Wales, Bigger Picture Research

* As defined by the Wales Rural Observatory (see Appendix 1 for details).

1.2 About Film Hub Wales and the research

Film Hub Wales is part of the BFI's Film Audience Network, one of nine Hubs around the UK funded through the National Lottery to:

- Develop an innovative, adventurous and significant cultural film programme Wales wide;
- Celebrate Welsh language, heritage and culture, offering a platform for Welsh talent;

³ <http://www.bffs.org.uk/newsandevents/news/surveyreport2013.html>

⁴ *Getting the measure of rural deprivation in Wales*, Welsh Local Government Association, 2012, <http://www.ocsi.co.uk/news/wp-content/uploads/OCSI-GettingMeasureRuralDeprivationWales.pdf>

- Increase access to specialist film, through events, screenings and education opportunities;
- Support a network of regional, national and international partnerships and share best practice, leading to a more sustainable film sector;
- Share programming ideas, access, debate and information exchange via training and mentoring;
- Research, understand and develop our audiences so that we can build and sustain interest in independent film;
- Develop innovative approaches to digital technology to promote connectivity;
- Identify and support rural venues in underserved / areas of cultural poverty where audiences are hard to reach.

In light of this final objective, Film Hub Wales commissioned the present research to investigate how the Hub, and its partners, can best support rural community exhibition to develop and thrive across Wales.

The research was designed to:

- Build a picture of existing rural provision in Wales, and current funding and support opportunities;
- Identify support needs of existing providers;
- Determine what opportunities exist to improve support for rural community exhibition via the Hub and partner organisations;
- Make recommendations about which options to pursue.

The report begins with a detailed snapshot of rural community film exhibition across Wales derived from a database (compiled between December 2013 and April 2014) of active providers operating in rural and semi-rural Local Authority areas.

This is followed in section 3 by close examination of rural community exhibitor support needs, based on consultation with a representative sample of practitioners. The section also describes support and services currently available to community exhibitors in Wales, highlighting strengths and weaknesses in provision.

The report closes with a review of the main findings and recommendations for how Film Hub Wales can add value to existing support and services within the framework of its strategic objectives.

Further details of the research methodology are given in Appendix 1.

2 Rural community film exhibition in Wales

2.1 Mapping rural community exhibition

A database of rural community exhibitors was compiled from publicly available sources and in consultation with Film Hub Wales and other membership organisations (see Appendix 1 for a description of the methodology).

Exhibitors were included if, at the time of research, they:

- (a) were an active film society, community cinema, pop-up screening event organiser, mixed-use venue operating a film programme or a film festival;
- (b) operated in a rural or semi-rural Local Authority as defined by the Wales Rural Observatory;
- (c) were run for the benefit of the local community rather than solely for commercial gain.

2.2 Community exhibition by Local Authority area

- Applying these criteria, a total of 70 community exhibitors were identified in rural (60, 86%) and semi-rural (10, 14%) areas.
- Using the same definition, research commissioned by the BFI Neighbourhood Fund identified 114 active community exhibitors across the whole of Wales, which means rural providers account for 61% of all Welsh community exhibitors.⁵
- Monmouthshire has the highest concentration of rural community exhibitors in Wales (15 in total, 22%) due to the presence of Moviola, a rural mobile cinema network, in the county (Table 2).⁶ Moviola is active elsewhere in Wales (notably in the Vale of Glamorgan) and one in three (30%, 21 in total) of all rural community exhibitors were Associate Members of Moviola at the time of the research (nine were also affiliated with Monmouthshire Mobile Movies, which works in partnership with Moviola). Further detail about these rural networks is given in section 3.
- Flintshire, Wrexham and the Isle of Anglesey have the lowest number of community exhibitors, with only one currently active in each area.

Table 2: Community exhibition in rural and semi-rural Local Authorities, ranked by number of community exhibitors

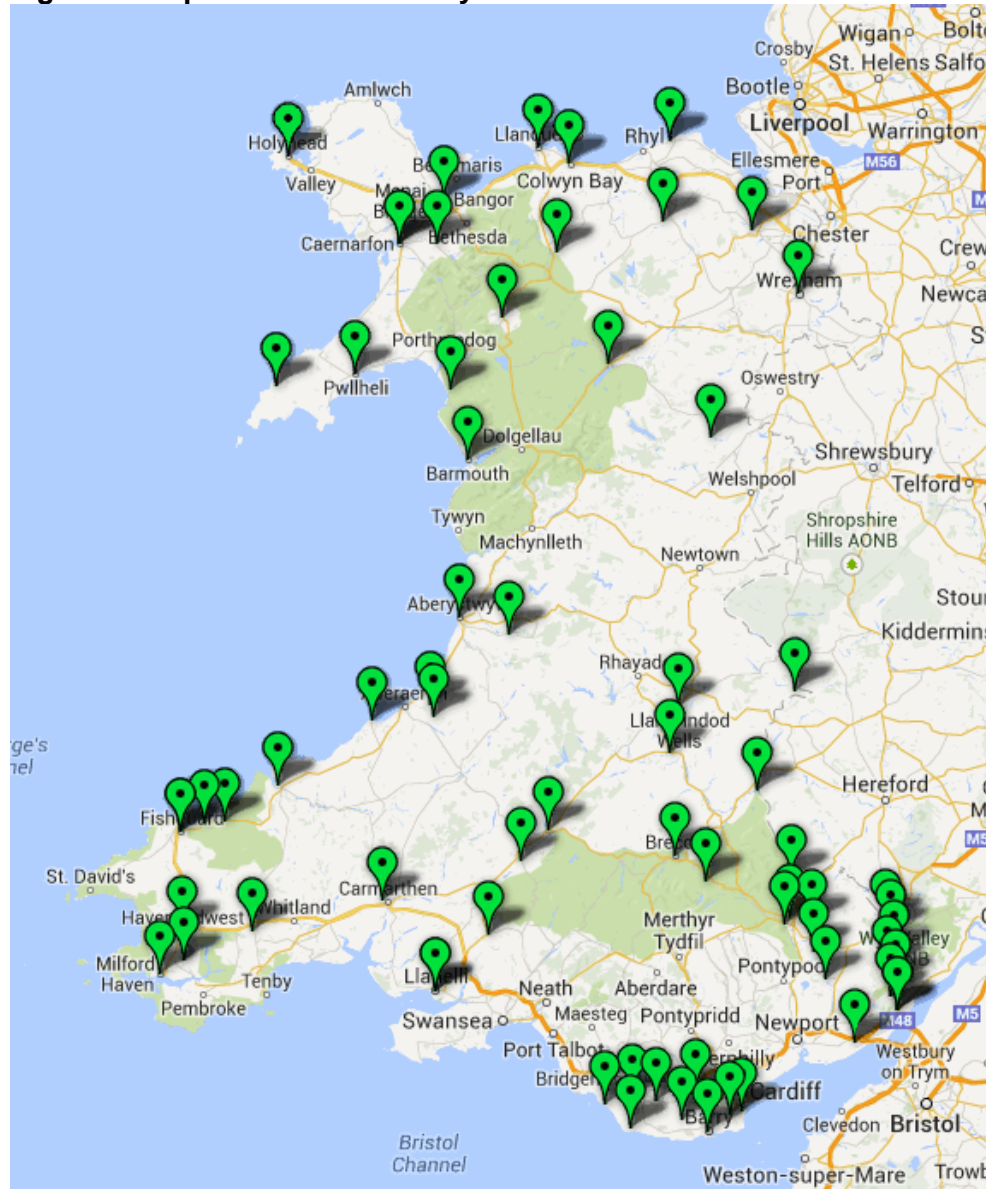
Local Authority	Rural/ semi- rural	Population (2011)	%	Community exhibitors	%
Monmouthshire	Rural	91,300	6%	15	22%
Gwynedd	Rural	121,900	9%	10	14%
Pembrokeshire	Rural	122,400	9%	9	13%
The Vale of Glamorgan	Semi	126,500	9%	9	13%
Powys	Rural	133,000	9%	8	10%
Ceredigion	Rural	75,900	5%	6	9%
Carmarthenshire	Rural	183,800	13%	5	7%
Conwy	Rural	115,200	8%	3	4%
Denbighshire	Rural	93,700	7%	2	3%
Flintshire	Semi	152,500	11%	1	1%
Wrexham	Semi	134,800	9%	1	1%
Isle of Anglesey	Rural	69,700	5%	1	1%
Total		1,420,700	100%	70	100%

Sources: 2011 Census, BFFS, ICO, Ffilm Cymru Wales, Big Lottery Fund Wales, Bigger Picture Research

⁵ *Community exhibition in the UK* (April 2014), prepared by Jim Barratt and Becky Innes on behalf of the BFI Neighbourhood Cinema Fund

⁶ <http://www.moviola.org/>

Figure 2: Map of rural community exhibitors in Wales



Source: Bigger Picture Research, map © 2014 Google

- Across rural Wales there are approximately 4.9 community exhibitors per 100,000 people (Table 3).
- Six rural and semi-rural local authority areas have higher ratios of community exhibitors to population than the national average, led by Monmouthshire (Table 3).
- Carmarthenshire (2.7 per 100k people), Conwy (2.6), Denbighshire (2.1), Isle of Anglesey (1.4), Flintshire (0.7) and Wrexham (0.7) all have a significantly lower ratio of community exhibitors to population than the national average.

Table 3: Community exhibition in rural and semi-rural Local Authorities, ranked by community exhibitors per 100,000 people

Local Authority	Rural/ semi-rural	Population (2011)	Community exhibitors	Community exhibitors per 100k people
Monmouthshire	Rural	91,300	15	16.4
Gwynedd	Rural	121,900	10	8.2
Ceredigion	Rural	75,900	6	7.9
Pembrokeshire	Rural	122,400	9	7.4
The Vale of Glamorgan	Semi	126,500	9	7.1
Powys	Rural	133,000	8	6.0
Rural Wales		1,420,700	70	4.9
Carmarthenshire	Rural	183,800	5	2.7
Conwy	Rural	115,200	3	2.6
Denbighshire	Rural	93,700	2	2.1
Isle of Anglesey	Rural	69,700	1	1.4
Flintshire	Semi	152,500	1	0.7
Wrexham	Semi	134,800	1	0.7

Sources: 2011 Census, BFFS, ICO, Ffilm Cymru Wales, Big Lottery Fund Wales, Bigger Picture Research

2.3 Community exhibition by type of exhibitor

- The majority (73%) of community exhibitors in rural Wales are film societies or community cinemas (Table 4). These are run by volunteers as not-for-profit community enterprises, based either on the traditional film society model of a membership scheme founded with a film appreciation or educational remit that programmes specialised films otherwise unavailable in the local area, or comprising regular screening events run by village or town hall committees as a recreational amenity.⁷
- One quarter of community exhibitors are mixed-use venues that host a regular screening programme alongside other arts provision, and the remainder (3%) are established film festivals (Wales One World Festival and Carmarthen Bay Film Festival).

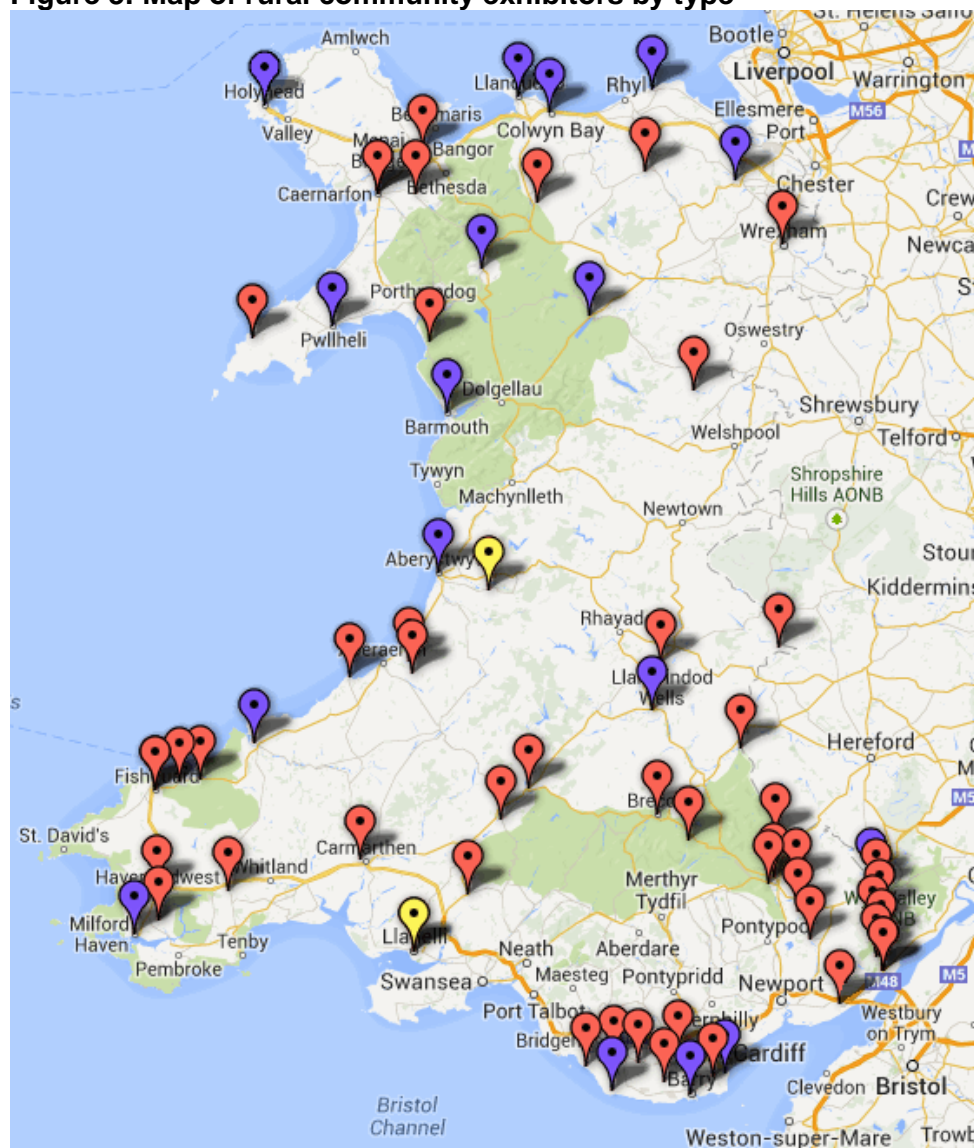
Table 4: Community exhibitor types in rural Wales

Exhibitor type	Number	%
Film society/ community cinema	51	73%
Mixed-use venue	17	24%
Film festival	2	3%
Total	70	100%

Sources: BFFS, ICO, Ffilm Cymru Wales, Big Lottery Fund Wales, Bigger Picture Research

⁷ This distinction is not clear-cut in every case, as a small number of organisations are run along both lines (e.g. Llancarfan Community Cinema).

Figure 3: Map of rural community exhibitors by type



Source: Bigger Picture Research, map © 2014 Google

Key:

Red marker = film society/ community cinema

Purple marker = mixed-use venue

Yellow marker = film festival

2.4 Community exhibition venues

- Community halls are the venue type most commonly used by community exhibitors (47%), followed by mixed-use venues (29%) (Table 5).
- Other venues include school/college/university premises, hospitality businesses, commercial cinemas and theatres.

Table 5: Community exhibition venues in rural Wales

Type of venue	Number	%
Community hall (e.g. village or church hall)	32	46%
Mixed-use venue (e.g. arts centre)	20	29%
Other (e.g. café, cinema, theatre)	8	11%
School, college or university building	5	7%
Multiple venues	5	7%
Total	70	100%

Sources: BFFS, ICO, Ffilm Cymru Wales, Big Lottery Fund Wales, Bigger Picture Research

2.5 Community exhibition projection formats

- Two thirds of community exhibitors (67%) screen using DVD or Blu-ray projection systems (Table 6).
- Over a quarter (26%) have converted to digital cinema projection (mainly in mixed-use venues, see Figure 4), while three exhibitors retain 35mm capability.

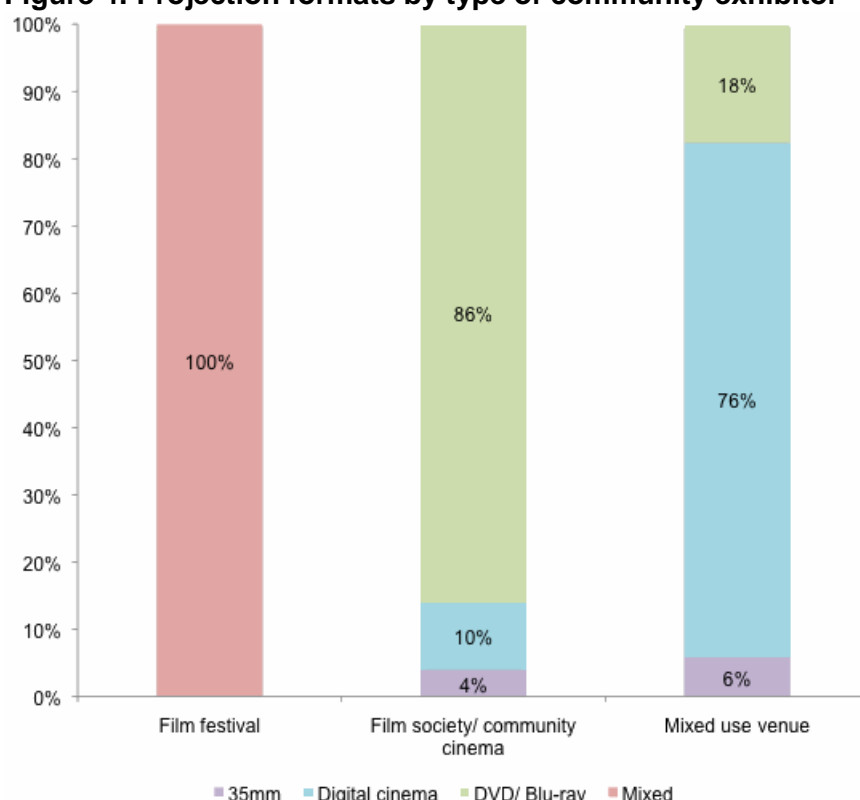
Table 6: Projection formats used by community cinemas in rural and semi rural Local Authority areas

Format	Number	%
DVD/ Blu-ray	46	66%
Digital cinema	19	27%
35mm (including used alongside others formats)	3	4%
Mixed*	2	3%
Total	70	100%

Sources: BFFS, ICO, Ffilm Cymru Wales, Big Lottery Fund Wales, Bigger Picture Research

* WOW Film Festival and Carmarthen Bay Film Festival screen across different venues and employ a variety of projection formats

Figure 4: Projection formats by type of community exhibitor



Sources: BFFS, ICO, Ffilm Cymru Wales, Big Lottery Fund Wales, Bigger Picture Research

2.6 Community exhibition programming

- Over three quarters (78%) of community exhibitors offer a mix of specialised and more mainstream programming (Table 7).⁸

⁸ According to Film Hub Wales, "the BFI's definition of 'specialised film' relates to those films that do not sit easily within a mainstream and highly commercial genre." These include foreign language titles documentaries, archive/classic films, artists films, short film programmes and independently produced British films. For further details see: <http://www.chapter.org/frequently-asked-questions#bfi> specialised film.

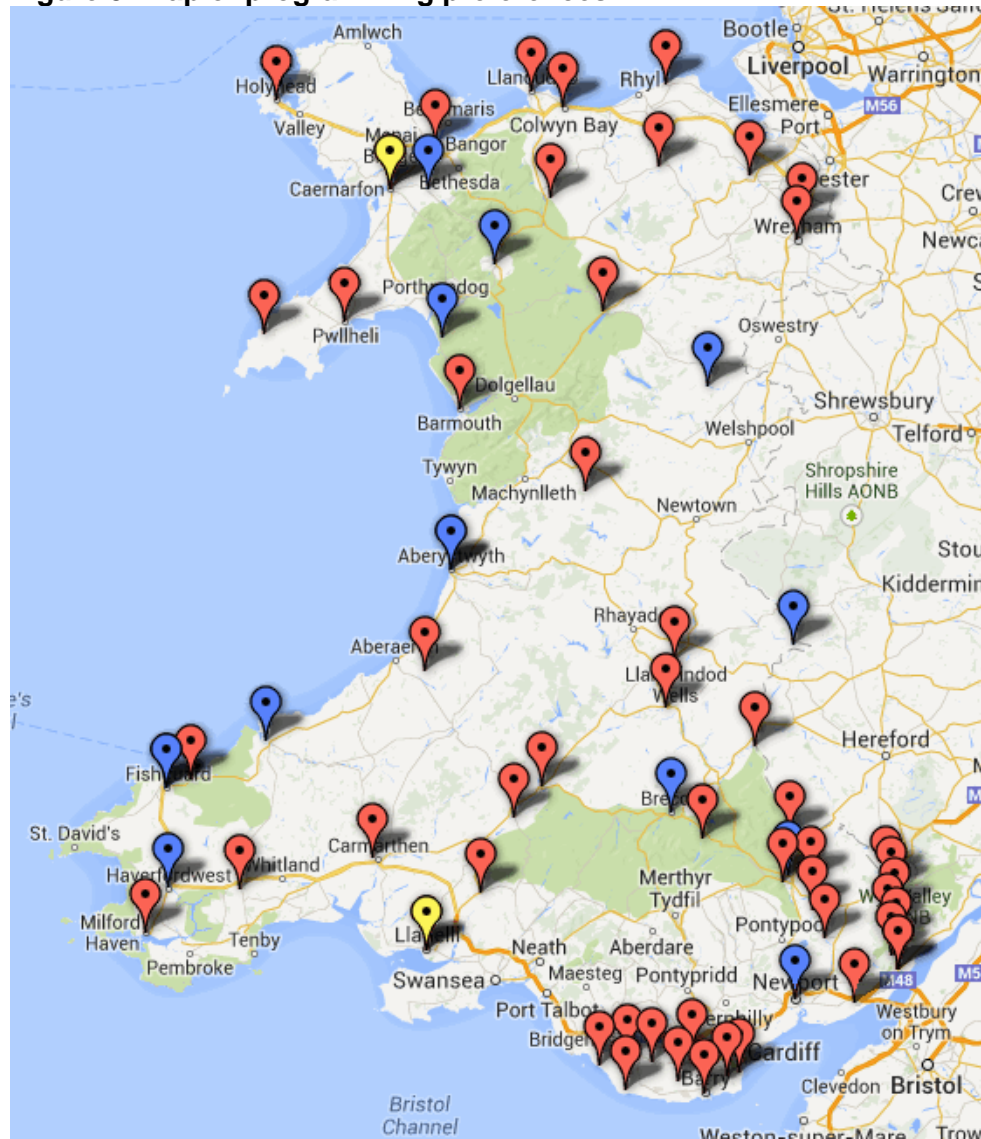
- Nearly one in five (19%) community exhibitors screen programmes dedicated to specialised film (these exhibitors are all either traditional film societies or film festivals).
- Only two exhibitors, Crosshands Hall and Cinema in Llanelli (Carmarthenshire) and Cinematic in Caernafon (Gwynedd), offer a predominance of mainstream films.

Table 7: Programming preferences

Programming	Number	%
Mix of mainstream and specialised films	55	78%
Specialised films	13	19%
Mainstream films	2	3%
Total	70	100%

Sources: BFFS, ICO, Ffilm Cymru Wales, Big Lottery Fund Wales, Bigger Picture Research

Figure 5: Map of programming preferences



Source: Bigger Picture Research, map © 2014 Google

Key:

Red marker = mixed programming

Blue marker = specialised programming

Yellow marker = mainstream programming

3 Support needs and existing services

Interviews were held with a representative sample of different community exhibitors around Wales in order to gauge the range of issues they face and consequent support needs.

In each case interviewees were asked to describe the nature of their community exhibition activity, to identify any sources of support they currently access, and to suggest areas where external support could make a difference.

In addition, a range of organisations and agencies were consulted that offer support and services for, or relevant to, community exhibitors. They were asked for details of their existing and planned provision, and to outline ideas for future development, including in association with Film Hub Wales.

It is worth noting here that by their very nature, rural community exhibitors often rely on their own initiative and local resources to get started and sustain themselves over time. Collectively, community exhibition volunteers are a creative and resourceful group, preferring to learn by experience or from the fruits of their own enquiry. Several we consulted during the research said they were satisfied with their current operation, requiring no outside support:

"I think we've got the measure of the audience. It's a small town and we've got a loyal membership. We put occasional things in that will pull other people in; we've got a good relationship with the local paper; an efficient team of people who do different things. We just seem to be managing alright."

Film society/ community cinema

"My feeling is we're managing perfectly well as we are. [Moviola] provided marketing advice early on [...] I don't think there's anything else I can ask which would assist us to better fulfil our aim to provide this community service."

Film society/ community cinema

Yet as the above quote illustrates, peer-to-peer support, where groups learn from other local exhibitors or wider networks like the British Federation of Film Societies and Moviola, can prove invaluable for new start-ups as well as existing practitioners.

3.1 Community exhibition in Wales: issues and challenges

Talking to community exhibitors it is clear that the issues and challenges they face vary according to a number of factors, including:

Geography

- Size of catchment area
- Local transport infrastructure
- Population demographics
- Local Authority/ Town Council/ Community Council interest and support

Mode of operation

- Screening frequency (full/ part-time or occasional)
- Social (community cinema) vs. cultural (film society) objectives
- Presence of a membership scheme
- Affiliation to rural or touring screen network

Finances

- Level of fixed costs (film licences, venue and equipment hire, staff costs)
- Available subsidies and revenue grants

- Scope for additional revenue streams (including refreshments, alternative content etc.)
- Size of reserves

Venue and equipment

- Available facilities (including bar/food preparation area, black-outs, staging, raked seating etc.)
- Type and quality of projection and sound equipment
- Responsibility for ongoing maintenance
- Accessibility

Programming and film booking

- Programme preference (specialised/ mainstream/ mixed)
- Method of programme choice (committee/ popular vote)
- Relationship with booking agency and/or distributors

Human resources

- Size and make up of volunteer team
- Staffing levels
- Skills base
- Recruitment, motivation and retention

Although rural community exhibitors share certain common challenges, this selection of variables alone indicates the wide scope for variation within the sector.

It follows that demand for external support, and the type of assistance required, varies accordingly. For example, traditional film societies, founded on a film appreciation model, need no inducement to programme specialised film as this is a core feature of their offer. They may, however, welcome film licence subsidies (to help mitigate the financial risk of less well-known titles) or timely access to screening days (to inform programming decisions).

Community cinemas, which exist to provide social and recreational opportunities within local communities, may not consider specialised film programming as a priority, in part because volunteers lack a film background or sufficient interest.

“[Volunteers] mainly have a community interest ahead of a film interest. Speaking for myself, I’m not a great film fan. We don’t go to the cinema! Once a month from September to May is probably enough. We run it for the community.”

Film society/ community cinema

“The problem we face is our local enthusiasm for films is not as great as I would like it to be. It comes back to our committee: have we got enough working members on the committee to engage in this, do all the background work? We’re doing as well as we are at the moment but it’s getting people to go that extra bit further.”

Mixed use venue

For such exhibitors, audience development around specialised film, a priority for Film Hub Wales and other film agencies, would require support at every level, from advice about programming choice and marketing to presentation methods (particularly of subtitled films); issues with which film societies are already well familiar.⁹

⁹ Although even here it is dangerous to make sweeping generalisations: a number of community cinemas in Wales are affiliated to Moviola, which offers seasonal programming guides dominated by specialised film options (see section 3.2.3). *“The BFI’s definition of ‘specialist’ actually comprises a lot of what we have*

Advice on, and funding for, projection and sound equipment is likely to be required by new start-ups operating in non-traditional venues, whereas community exhibitors fortunate enough to host events in commercial cinema premises or mixed-use venues with professional standard projection facilities are unlikely to require such support.

These are just a selection of examples illustrating the point that no single support initiative can ever serve the varied needs of community exhibitors.

Returning to the idea of those crosscutting issues affecting rural community exhibitors, the consultation found evidence of the following common challenges over and above the practical demands of establishing and running a programme of screening events:¹⁰

3.1.1 Attracting younger participants

Rural community exhibitors of all kinds often struggle to attract youth audiences and volunteers, particularly teenagers and young adults. Some consultees expressed disappointment (and a certain degree of resignation) at this, while others are content to serve older audiences provided demand from this demographic group remains strong:

"We do have younger people in our villages but try as we might we don't seem to engage them. Not for film anyway. We have tried over the years. We have tried some of the more action type films and one or two others that should have appealed to young or teenage audiences, and struggled with those."

Film society/ community cinema

"Our audience is 50 plus generally, which is a problem of course because they fall off the twig, at the top end!"

Film society/ community cinema

"Young people don't come to the film society, not very often. It is an elderly population. Ceasar Must Die [2012], we offered that to all the schools. We offered them a subsidised entrance fee and none of them came [...] When young people get to 18 they go to university and on the whole they don't come back. I'm not too worried because people are constantly retiring and coming to live [here]."

Film society/ community cinema

"It would be great if we could get more interest, the youngsters don't seem today interested in going on committees and this is where a lot of the problems lie. It's very difficult to change that at the moment."

Film society/ community cinema

3.1.2 Competition from other film platforms

The increased availability of a wide range of film on DVD/ Blu-ray and online platforms has intensified competition for audiences (and may in part explain the challenge faced in attracting younger audiences), which can affect new start-ups and well-established exhibitors alike.

"Increasingly people can get Lovefilm or whatever else, they can see films via all sorts of other methods and also on a cold, dark, wet night we notice people don't like to come out very much and who's to blame them really?"

Film society/ community cinema

"When I first started as treasurer, about 7 years ago, we had about 120 members

always done. I would hazard a guess that 80% of what I programme would come under their specialist flag."
Phill Walkley, Moviola

¹⁰ Note these are not necessarily unique to community exhibitors: they can also pose very real challenges for commercial exhibitors.

and we used to get a reasonable box office as well. Now we're down to less than 60 members. We have rather put it down to availability of film by other means, home cinemas and what have you [...] So that's been our biggest problem really, the numbers have been falling every year by about 10."

Film society/ community cinema

3.1.3 Unfamiliarity with social networking

With some notable exceptions, older volunteers, who tend to predominate in most rural community organisations, may not be as familiar with social networking and digital marketing techniques that modern approaches to film promotion and audience development require. This can reinforce barriers to attracting younger audiences who use social media to organise their leisure time.

"Facebook and Twitter: they require volunteers who use those forms of media themselves. Here in our community, the community council has established its own website and it's provided links to various things."

Film society/ community cinema

3.1.4 Film licence costs

The cost of film hire, which for many years has been highlighted as an issue of concern in British Federation of Film Societies annual surveys, can be relatively high for community exhibitors, threatening their long-term sustainability and, in some cases, making programme selection more risk averse.

"Films are terribly expensive. We show for one night, an average film cost is £120. You need a lot of footfall just to cover the film. So I don't know if any pressure can be brought to bear on film societies to have a better deal with the likes of Filmbank and BFI."

Film society/ community cinema

"I am aware that one or two [local community exhibitors] have had audiences too small to cover costs [and have ceased performances], although in many cases we operate it on the basis of a community service rather than a profitable exercise. You don't make much money out of it anyway, so it's a community service by and large."

Film society/ community cinema

3.1.5 Programming foreign language titles

Attracting audiences for specialised film is a challenge for the exhibition sector as a whole, and one that is felt all the more keenly when programming subtitled films. In part this is because audiences perceive additional effort when reading subtitles, but for community exhibitors operating in non-film venues like village halls it can also result from presentational factors, like poor sight lines that obscure on-screen text.

Despite the challenges, many of those consulted acknowledged the rich variety and potential high quality of foreign language films, which can entertain audiences provided they can be encouraged to attend performances.

"You take a film like The Rocket: if that was in English it wouldn't even need to star anybody, I could flog it here really well. But because it's got subtitles there's a mistrust of it [...] If I could get my audience to sit down in front of The Rocket, once they've seen it they would love it and they would come again. You've got to get them somehow. What you're never quite sure of is whether it's the foreign language or subject matter. It's very difficult to find that path through and know what they're thinking." **Mixed use venue**

"There are those who would like us to just do art house or world cinema or whatever. If we did that we would have a very small audience. I don't think it's a bad idea to

show those kinds of things. I think people benefit from seeing something they don't expect to see."

Film society/ community cinema

3.1.6 Transport infrastructure

As noted earlier, poor transport links, whether by road or public transport, can be an issue in rural areas, affecting community exhibitors' potential catchment area and audiences' willingness and ability to attend screenings. To remedy this, some community exhibitors have experimented with schemes involving council-run transport services.

"We do have one guy who comes from Rhyl sometimes but he has to leave before the film ends to get the bus home."

Film society/ community cinema

"A while ago I did a theatre shuttle bus off the back of something the council were doing. [It] worked really well but the council cut that about a year ago so sadly we lost it. But something like that is a really good project for enabling rural mobility."

Mixed use venue

3.2 Community exhibition in Wales: existing support and services

As the remainder of this section demonstrates, a number of these areas are already well-served by existing support (at least in theory), although the consultation revealed knowledge of available options is patchy among rural community exhibitors and opportunities could be better signposted.

In what follows, existing support and services are described from the following perspectives:

- Film sector membership organisations
- Film sector bodies and schemes
- Local Authorities
- Voluntary sector
- Wider funding opportunities

Before looking in detail at available support on an agency-by-agency basis, Table 8 summarises provision along the principal axes of need identified from the consultation evidence.

Table 8: Existing support and services for rural community exhibition in Wales

Support and services	FILM SECTOR								NON-FILM SECTOR			
	Film Hub Wales	BFFS	Sinema Cymru	Moviola*	Ffilm Cymru Wales	ICO	BFI	Filmbank	Local Authorities**	CVCs, VCs & WCVA	Big Lottery Wales	Arts Council of Wales
Start up advice	40	1		2		3	4	5		6		
Film & premises licensing: legal aspects		1		2		3	4	5	7			
Film programming guides & menus		8		9		10	11	12				
Film booking service		8		9		10	11	12				
Rights holder tracking		1				10						
Screening/ preview days	13	14				15						
Specialised film audience development	16	16	16	16	16	16	16					
Equipment procurement advice		1					17					
Technical guidance/ equipment user information		1					4					
Equipment loan service		18	19						20			
Equipment funding							17		21	22	23	23
Programming and events funding/ subsidies	24			9	25		26					
Revenue funding					27				28			29
Training: technical, programming, marketing etc.	13	30	31	31		32	33					
Training: non-film, e.g. running voluntary group										32		
Volunteering services		1								34		
Networking	13, 37	1,14,30	35			15, 32	4		36	36	37	37
Sectoral advocacy	38	38	38	38	38	38	38			39		
General enquiries	40	1	40	40	41	40				42		

Source: Bigger Picture Research *Flicks in the Sticks, which launches its touring model in Powys in 2014, also offers similar support to promoters **Varies by Local Authority

Key

1: Advice materials, enquiry service, Roadshow events
 2: Written guides for new members
 3: Online guides to starting cinema & film club
 4: Neighbourhood Cinema web portal & online guides
 5: Online advice and guides
 6: Advice on organising & running a voluntary group
 7: LA licensing dept. for premises & other licensing info
 8: BFFS booking scheme
 9: Seasonal film menus for Associates/ Cinematheque
 10: ICO programming & booking services
 11: BFI titles booking service
 12: Filmbank online catalogue
 13: Film Hub Wales previews & events
 14: Booking scheme preview days

15: ICO Screening Days
 16: Promotion, advocacy & dedicated initiatives
 17: Neighbourhood Cinema Fund Equipment Scheme
 18: BFFS loan equipment
 19: Equipment loan service planned
 20: Council-run loan schemes
 21: Council funding schemes
 22: CVC funding (for non-film equipment)
 23: Lottery funding programmes
 24: Film Audience Network grants
 25: Special Events Fund
 26: Programming Development Fund
 27: Cinema Fund & Festivals Fund
 28: Council funding for mixed use venues

29: Revenue Funded Organisations support
 30: National Conference workshops
 31: Training for members
 32: Regular programme of training events
 33: Neighbourhood Cinema Fund/ ICO training
 34: Volunteer recruitment and management advice
 35: Regular member meetings
 36: Local / national group networking events
 37: Funding advice surgeries/ events
 38: Advocating for specialised film/ community exhibition
 39: Advocating for Third Sector, locally & nationally
 40: Membership/ general enquiries
 41: Support opportunities
 42: General volunteering & Third Sector enquiries

3.2.1 Film sector membership organisations

Prior to establishment of Film Hub Wales a number of organisations counted rural community exhibitors within their memberships, notably the British Federation of Film Societies, Sinemau Cymru (formerly the Welsh Specialised Film Exhibition Group) and Moviola.

This section examines the range of services and benefits offered by these organisations, helping to clarify their respective roles and responsibilities and identifying opportunities for partnership work with Film Hub Wales and other organisations.

To set the scene, Table 9 lists all 70 rural community exhibitors in Wales along with details of their current affiliations, while Figure 6 depicts the same relationships in a Venn diagram, making it easier to identify membership overlaps.

- Between them, BFFS, Sinemau Cymru, Moviola and Film Hub Wales count 49 (71%) rural community exhibitors among their members, leaving 20 (29%) that are currently not affiliated to any of the organisations included in this study.
- Film Hub Wales has most rural members (22), followed by Moviola (21), Sinemau Cymru (15) and BFFS (13). Please note these organisations have additional Welsh members in urban centres, and their membership may also extend to cinemas and other organisations that fall outside our definition of community exhibition.
- Twenty-nine of these exhibitors are affiliated to a single organisation, and 20 hold membership of two or more bodies.

Table 9: Film organisation membership

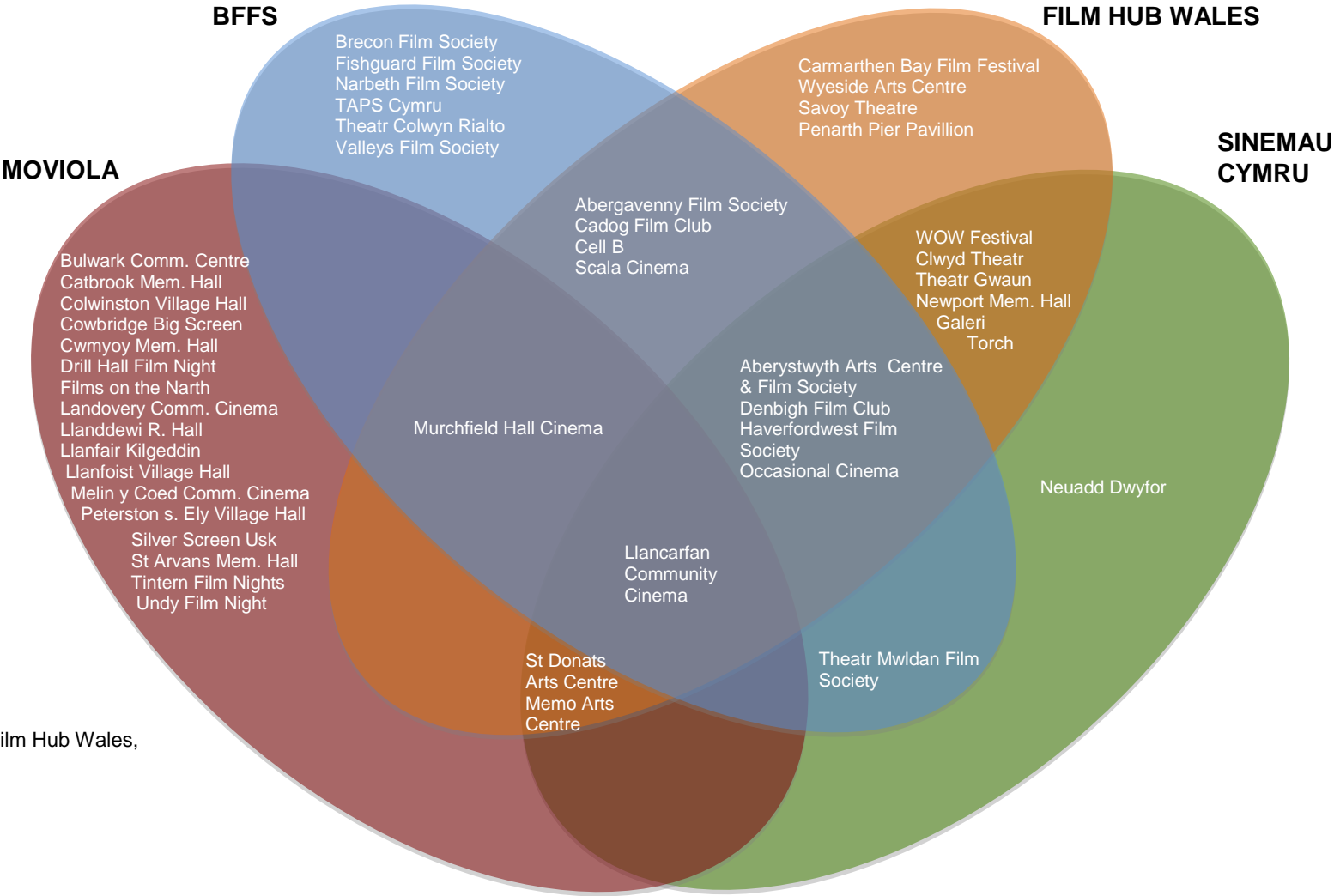
Community exhibitor	Local Authority	Membership			
		BFFS	Film Hub Wales	Sinemau Cymru	Moviola
Abergavenny Film Society	Monmouthshire	●	●		
Aberystwyth Arts Centre	Ceredigion		●	●	
Bangor University Film Society	Gwynedd				
Booth's Bookshop Cinema	Powys				
Brecon Film Society	Powys	●			
Brynamman Public Hall	Carmarthenshire				
Bulwark Community Centre	Monmouthshire				●
Cadog Film Club	Carmarthenshire	●	●		
Carmarthen Bay Film Festival	Carmarthenshire		●		
Catbrook Memorial Hall	Monmouthshire				●
Cell B	Gwynedd		●		
Cinematic - Gisda	Gwynedd				
Clwyd Theatr Cymru	Flintshire		●	●	
Colwinston Village Hall	Vale of Glamorgan				●
Cowbridge Big Screen	Vale of Glamorgan				●
Crosshands Hall and Cinema	Carmarthenshire				
Cwmyoy Memorial Hall	Monmouthshire				●
Cyfeillion Hen Ysgol	Gwynedd				
Cymuned Pennant Comm. Hall	Ceredigion				
Denbigh Film Club	Denbighshire	●	●	●	
Dragon Theatre	Gwynedd				
Drill Hall Film Night	Monmouthshire				●
Film Night at Pelham Hall	Monmouthshire				
Films On The Narth	Monmouthshire				●
Fishguard Film Society	Pembrokeshire	●			
Galeri Caernafon	Gwynedd		●	●	

Community exhibitor	Local Authority	Membership			
		BFFS	Film Hub Wales	Sinemaau Cymru	Moviola
Glyndwr University Film Club	Wrexham				
Harlech Film Society	Gwynedd				
Haverfordwest Film Society	Pembrokeshire	●	●	●	
Llancarfan Community Cinema	Vale of Glamorgan	●	●	●	●
Llanddewi Rhydderch Hall	Monmouthshire				●
Llandovery Comm. Cinema	Carmarthenshire				●
Llandrindod and District U3A	Powys				
Llanfair Kilgeddin	Monmouthshire				●
Llanfoist Village Hall	Monmouthshire				●
Melin y Coed Comm. Cinema	Conwy				●
Memo Arts Centre	Vale of Glamorgan		●	●	●
Montgomery Movie Club	Powys				
Murchfield Hall Comm. Cinema	Vale of Glamorgan		●		●
Narberth Film Society	Pembrokeshire	●			
Neuadd Buddug	Gwynedd				
Neuadd Dwyfor	Gwynedd			●	
New Quay Memorial Hall	Ceredigion				
Newport Memorial Hall	Pembrokeshire		●	●	
Occasional Cinema	Gwynedd	●	●	●	
Penarth Pier Pavillion	Vale of Glamorgan		●		
Peterston s. Ely Village Hall	Vale of Glamorgan				●
Presteigne Film Society	Powys				
Savoy Theatre	Monmouthshire		●		
Scala Cinema and Arts Centre	Denbighshire		●		
Silver Screen Usk	Monmouthshire				●
South Ridgeway Comm. Assoc.	Pembrokeshire				
St Arvans Memorial Hall	Monmouthshire				●
St Donats Arts Centre	Vale of Glamorgan		●	●	●
Talybont Flix	Powys				
The Barn at West Farm	Vale of Glamorgan				
Theatr Colwyn & Rialto	Conwy	●			
Theatr Gwaun	Pembrokeshire		●	●	
Theatr Mwldan Film Society	Ceredigion	●		●	
Tintern Film Nights	Monmouthshire				●
Torch Theatre	Pembrokeshire		●	●	
Trinity St Davids Film Nights	Pembrokeshire				
Ty Mawr Mansion	Ceredigion				
Ucheldre Centre	Anglesey				
Undy Film Night	Monmouthshire				●
Valleys Film Society	Powys	●			
Venue Cymru	Conwy				
Wales One World Film Festival	Ceredigion		●	●	
Wyeside Arts Centre	Powys		●		
Yr Hen Ysgol Film Club	Pembrokeshire	●			
TOTAL: 69	-	13	22	15	21

Sources: BFFS, Sinemaau Cymru, Moviola, Film Hub Wales, Bigger Picture Research
Information correct as at April 2014

Figure 6: Current affiliations of rural community exhibitors in Wales

No affiliation:
Bangor University Film Society
Booth's Bookshop Cinema
Brynamman Public Hall
Cinematic- Gisda
Crosshands Hall
Cyfeillion Hen Ysgol
Cymuned Pennant Comm. Hall
Dragon Theatre
Film Night at Pelham Hall
Glyndwr University Film Club
Harlech Film Society
Llandrindod U3A Cinema Group
Neuadd Buddug
New Quay Memorial Hall
Montgomery Movie Club
Presteigne Film Society
S. Ridgeway Comm. Assoc.
Talybont Flix
Trinity St Davids Film Nights
Ty Mawr Mansion
Ucheldre Centre
Venue Cymru



Sources: BFFS, Sinemau Cymru, Moviola, Film Hub Wales, Bigger Picture Research

Information correct as at April 2014

British Federation of Film Societies (www.bffs.org.uk)

“The whole purpose of the BFFS network is that it’s peer-to-peer, volunteers supporting volunteers.”

Deborah Parker, BFFS

First established in 1946, BFFS is “the national support and development organisation for the film society and community cinema movement.”¹¹

The organisation is funded through income generating activity, including a membership scheme, alongside financial support from the BFI and charitable sources.

BFFS offers three membership categories:¹²

- **Member**, “for groups that screen films in their community, share the charitable objectives of BFFS, are voluntary led and not-for-profit.”
- **Associate**, “for groups that screen films in their community, are not-for-profit, but may be from a broader, non-voluntary background.”
- **Affiliate**, “for groups or individuals that want to stay ‘in-the-loop’, receive sector updates and access our online, phone and email advice and support services.”

The first two categories require paid subscription, which entitles holders to a range of products and services from BFFS and its partners. Affiliates can sign up for free but must upgrade if they wish to take advantage of these premium services.

As part of its core offer, BFFS services include:

- Providing practical advice and support for new and existing film societies and community cinemas through published resources and an enquiry service;
- A Booking Scheme offering cost effective, non-theatrical licences for a wide range of specialised films;
- Equipment loans, to help new groups trial community exhibition before investing in their own kit;
- Research and sectoral advocacy, including publication of the annual Community Exhibitor Survey;
- Short film compilations for community exhibitors;
- A poster library, hiring cinema artwork for a fee;
- Discounted public liability and equipment insurance through WRS Ltd.;
- Regional groups (in the South West, Yorkshire, Scotland and the South East) providing local networking opportunities and screening days;
- The annual National Conference and Film Society of the Year Awards.

In addition, BFFS has hosted a series of Cinema for All Roadshows around the country, providing information about community exhibition operations to prospective groups, best practice guidance for existing providers and networking opportunities. Events are planned throughout 2014, including in Wales.

In the past BFFS had a well-established regional group in Wales, but in recent years activity has waned. It is hoped a regional group will be re-established subject to consultation with existing members in Wales:

¹¹ <http://www.bffs.org.uk/aboutus/>

¹² <http://www.bffs.org.uk/membership/servicesandbenefits/>

“The first stage for us in Wales is to identify who would want to be part of a more structured group [...] Every region is going to be different. We’ve got quite a formal setup which works really well in the South West but that might not necessarily work everywhere. The consultation side of it will be really important.”

Deborah Parker, BFFS

Sinema Cymru

“We specifically support anybody who screens specialist cinema. [O]ur membership does go out to all cinemas, film organisations and venues. Our aim is to represent venues and get what they need, so we’re venue-led.”

Siobhan Ashe, Sinema Cymru

Sinema Cymru started life as the Wales Specialised Film Exhibitors Group, a consortium of Welsh exhibitors with a particular interest in programming a wide range of non-mainstream film. It advocates on behalf of members, representing their voice in dealings with film sector bodies, like Ffilm Cymru Wales (formerly Film Agency Wales) and the BFI, as well as wider arts sector bodies like Arts Council of Wales.

Membership is open to all types of film exhibitor active in Wales, including cinemas, mixed-use venues, theatres, film societies and community cinemas, film and arts festivals and film education providers.

Two types of membership are available:

- **Full membership**, open to all exhibitors in Wales;
- **Associate membership**, for other organisations delivering specialised film-related activity but who do not have a regular screening programme (e.g archives, education providers etc.).

Full membership is subject to an annual subscription fee, while Associate membership is free.

Since establishment in 2013, Sinema Cymru has set out plans to work across the following areas, building partnerships with other agencies and fundraising for sectoral development:¹³

- Capital infrastructure: increasing existing screen space and addressing issues of underserved audiences and sustainability.
- Capacity building: addressing issues of capacity within cinema exhibition in Wales in terms of staffing and other resources.
- Skills development: developing both formal and informal learning opportunities for the membership and the wider sector.
- Product awareness: building awareness of new product through initiatives including screening days and bursaries.
- Product availability: working with partners, including distributors, producers and film agencies, to improve the availability of specialised film in Wales.
- Industry awareness: promoting awareness of new developments and opportunities in the cinema industry.
- Research: undertaking research into issues of interest.
- Regional filmmaking: supporting development of relationships between venues and independent filmmakers throughout Wales.

¹³ This section is adapted from *Sinema Cymru Benefits & Aims* (2013).

- Cross artform: commissioning, touring and promoting cross artform productions and supporting filmmaker and artist residencies.
- Education: developing formal and informal film education projects.
- Engagement: fostering audience engagement in exhibition.
- Strategic advocacy: acting as an advocate for joined up thinking between strategic bodies.

While there is scope for overlap with some aspects of Film Hub Wales activity, Sinemau Cymru intends to work in close association with other agencies, including the Film Hub, building strategic alliances and accessing funding opportunities wherever appropriate.

Moviola (www.moviola.org)

“We love films. We love showing them, we love creating the proper environment in which to appreciate them, and we love facilitating the shared audience experience. Being able to walk to your nearby hall to enjoy a quality cinema experience is something we would like to see happen all over the UK countryside.”

www.moviola.org

Moviola bills itself as the ‘South and West’s rural multiplex’ and has been operating a touring scheme for over a decade. Starting life as Dorset Film Touring, screening films using portable equipment in venues across the South West of England, Moviola has since extended its reach across the UK and now provides programming and booking services alongside its touring activity.

Membership of Moviola falls into two categories:

- **Partner** venues host Moviola screening events on a revenue-share basis. Partners select films, sell tickets locally and provide volunteers for front of house duties, while Moviola books films, provides marketing and ticketing materials and supplies the screening equipment and a projectionist/presenter for each performance.
- **Associates** plan and run screening events themselves using their own equipment, while Moviola provides three seasonal programme menus and a booking service. There is no annual membership fee for Associates, with the cost of the service included in booking fees.

“There’s the Moviola Associate service, which is basically film supply but it’s so much easier with someone supplying it like that with their own licences etc. It removes all the licensing difficulties.”

Film society/ community cinema

There are no Partner venues in Wales, only Associates concentrated mainly in Monmouthshire and the Vale of Glamorgan where provision has been actively encouraged by Local Authorities (see Section 3.3).

Moviola operates as a commercial, charitable venture, and is a member of Film Hub South West & West Midlands. In addition to its touring activity and film programming and booking services, Moviola offers advice and guidance to anyone wishing to establish their own rural cinema.

Earlier this year Moviola was awarded funding under the BFI Neighbourhood Cinema Fund touring scheme (see section 3.3.3), enabling it to launch ‘Moviola Cinematheque’, offering discounted licences for selected specialised films alongside related training and research

activity.¹⁴ Moviola's Programme Director, Phill Walkley, indicated in interview Moviola's willingness to work in partnership with Film Hub Wales to ensure Associates in Wales take up the Cinematheque offer (funding has also been sought from Film Hub South West & West Midlands for similar activity in that region).

3.2.2 Film sector bodies and schemes

A number of bodies operating within the film sector provide support and services for rural community exhibitors in Wales, as follows:

Ffilm Cymru Wales (<http://www.ffilmcymruwales.com>)

Formerly Film Agency for Wales, Ffilm Cymru Wales supports Welsh and Wales-based talent with funding and support initiatives across the following areas: production & development, exhibition, education and programmes that focus on regeneration aims with particular communities.¹⁵

The organisation's Cinema Fund currently supports thirteen community exhibitors in rural and semi-rural Local Authority areas (Table 10), in recognition of their commitment to specialised film. Venues are eligible if they are

- independent non-profit exhibitors; or
- specialist exhibitors where film societies use their venues specifically for the provision and presentation of their specialist film programme.

Funding contributes to core costs associated with delivery of the venue's specialised film programme.

Table 10: Rural community exhibitors funded by Ffilm Cymru Wales Cinema Fund

Exhibitor	Local Authority
Aberystwyth Arts Centre*	Ceredigion
Barry Memorial Cinema	Vale of Glamorgan
Clywd Theatr Cymru	Flintshire
Galeri Caernafon	Gwynedd
Neuadd Dwyfor	Gwynedd
Penarth Pier Pavillion	Vale of Glamorgan
Scala Prestatyn	Denbighshire
Theatr Gwaun	Pembrokeshire
Theatr Harlech	Gwynedd
Theatr Mwldan	Ceredigion
Torch Theatre	Pembrokeshire
Ucheldre Centre	Isle of Anglesey
Wyeside Arts Centre	Powys

Source: Ffilm Cymru Wales

* Ffilm Cymru Wales also funds the annual Abertoir Festival hosted at Aberystwyth Arts Centre and elsewhere in Wales

¹⁴ Another touring network operator, Flicks in the Sticks (<http://www.artsalive.co.uk/>), based in Shropshire, was also successful in its application to the touring scheme and plans to extend operations into Powys as a result.

¹⁵ Film Agency for Wales, as it was then, made a successful bid to Big Lottery Fund Wales to launch Film in Afan in 2012, a mobile cinema scheme in the Upper Afan Valley. Despite many similarities with models of rural community exhibition, the scheme was not included in the present study as it is located within Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council, classified as an urban Local Authority by Wales Rural Observatory. Further details of this scheme can be found here: <http://www.filminafan.com/>

In addition, the Festival Fund currently supports one rural-based festival, Wales One World Film Festival (it also supports The Festival of British Cinema in Hay-on-Wye, run by Borderlines Film Festival).

Community Exhibitors are also able to apply to the Education Fund, which supports projects that are increasingly focused on community engagement and participation, across the 5 – 19 years learning spectrum up to life long learning. Intergenerational filmmaking projects and community ‘special event’ screenings have been a popular feature supported by this fund.

Finally, the Special Events Fund is open to a wide range of community exhibitors for stand-alone events that increase access to specialised film. The Fund offered awards totaling £10,000 in 2013/14, up to a maximum of £2,000 per applicant.

Ffilm Cymru Wales delivers the BFI’s Talent NET.WORK initiative in Wales, offering Welsh born and/or resident talent opportunities including:

- Specialist labs and masterclasses
- Surgeries and preparatory market sessions
- Short films and sector partnerships
- Improved talent networks & peer-to-peer support
- Bespoke mentoring for talent and projects
- Talent showcasing, script reading and networking

Of relevance to the present research, Ffilm Cymru Wales plans to work alongside the BFI’s Film Audience Network (which includes Film Hub Wales), Sinemau Cymru and other representative bodies in Wales, encouraging programming diversity and partnership working.

Looking ahead, Ffilm Cymru Wales has certain plans of relevance to rural community exhibition. For example, the Cinema Without Walls scheme, currently under development, will offer community groups the opportunity to host screening and education events in non-traditional exhibition spaces and disused cinemas, promoting access to specialised film in areas currently under-served.

“It would be about going into communities and providing cinema type activities: community engagement workshops with film education as the focus, such as watching, learning and making films in community and youth centres, libraries, existing spaces where the community would naturally meet. Going into communities that are too far away from local specialised cinema to access this kind of provision. Following consultation we’ve identified several clusters we want to work with and we’re looking to do a pilot of the project with Communities First funding in the first phase.”

Emma Flatley, Ffilm Cymru Wales

Independent Cinema Office (<http://www.independentcinemaoffice.org.uk>)

The Independent Cinema Office (ICO) is the national body for the development and support of independent film exhibition. It’s principal aims, taken from the web site, are to:

- Promote diversity in exhibition content, audience and location;
- Develop a culturally-led approach to an economically sustainable independent exhibition sector;
- Provide access to industry leading exhibitor training.

To this end, ICO is involved in a range of activities including:

- Film booking and programming;
- Training and events;
- Film distribution;
- Consultancy, advice and support;
- Audience development for specialised film.

ICO serves three main groups:

- **Client** venues, which is supports with full programming and audience development services for an annual fee based on the scale of their involvement. Client venues include two rural community exhibitors in Wales: Galeri Caernafon and Penarth Pier Pavilion Cinema;
- **Associates**, which for a fixed annual fee can benefit from access to industry intelligence, funding application support, training discounts, screening day passes and priority film booking;
- **Film societies**, which can access free programming and booking advice.

The rolling programme of training and regular screening days ICO hosts are open to all exhibitors, and the ICO web site has links to a range of resources including advice on setting up film clubs and local cinemas.

In July 2014, ICO will host the first Screening Days Wales event in partnership with Film Hub Wales, a two-day event of preview screenings aimed at staff and volunteers from independent cinema and community exhibitors.

BFI Neighbourhood Cinema Fund (<http://www.bfi.org.uk>)

Launched in December 2013, the BFI's Neighbourhood Cinema Fund is the first Lottery award scheme dedicated to supporting community exhibition in the UK.

It will award up to £2m by 2017, with the provision of new or upgraded screening equipment, alongside a pilot fund to extend existing touring schemes to new areas and audiences.

An online platform, due for launch in 2014, will underpin the Fund, providing a 'one stop shop' for community exhibition advice and support while signposting existing resources offered elsewhere. The ICO has also been awarded funding to deliver training and development opportunities to volunteers and staff active in the community exhibition sector. These targeted interventions aim to:

- grow audiences for film at a community level;
- establish and develop community venues;
- increase the focus on, and access to, British independent and specialised film.¹⁶

It is too early to judge the likely impact of this new funding source and support initiatives on rural community exhibition in Wales, but there can be no doubt it presents a significant opportunity for new start-ups and existing groups to secure equipment and improve their skills base.

BFI Programming Development Fund (<http://www.bfi.org.uk>)

The BFI's Audience Development Fund, which oversees the Film Audience Network of which Film Hub Wales is part, also includes the Programming Development Fund (PDF),

¹⁶ <http://www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/bfi-neighbourhood-overview-2013-12.pdf>

providing financial support for, and promotion of, 'high-quality, distinctive, diverse film exhibition projects of scale and ambition.'

Although the PDF is open to a range of applicants, it is unlikely that individual rural community exhibitors will secure support under existing funding criteria. PDF is primarily intended for large-scale projects, and bids involving partnerships with FAN Hubs, and other networks, are encouraged.

It is in this regard that rural community exhibitors can benefit from PDF support, by participating in joint bids with Film Hub Wales, as happened with the recent Gothic blockbuster film season (which involved events hosted at Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Torch Theatre, Clywd Theatr Cymru and Llancarfan Community Cinema, along with other venues in urban areas)¹⁷, or other networks (for example, Flicks in the Sticks has PDF funding for its touring work in Shropshire and Herefordshire).

Filmbank Distributors (<http://www.filmbank.co.uk/>)

Filmbank, a joint venture owed by Warner Bros. Entertainment, Sony Pictures Releasing and NT Digital Partners, sells non-theatrical film licences on behalf of the majority of independent and US studio distributors, including the Single Title Screening Licence commonly used by community cinemas and film societies.

With an extensive online catalogue, and the facility to offer non-theatrical licences for certain titles ahead of their retail window, Filmbank is a popular option for community exhibition film booking. The company also offers online advice about legal aspects of film licensing and setting up a film club. Touring networks like Moviola hold a Filmbank account and block book films on behalf of their Partner and Associate members.

Although Filmbank is the most active non-theatrical booking service, other options are available, including Motion Picture Licensing Corporation (<http://www.mplc.org/>).

Cinema Arts Network (CAN, <http://cinema-art.net/>)

CAN is a UK-wide network of independent cinemas, theatres, galleries and museums whose purpose is to build digital capacity in film and the arts. Members and partners are linked via a private broadband network providing a high-quality environment for digital services, programming support and skills development.

CAN offers a number of packaged services, including live transmissions and recorded programming from theatres, cinemas and arts centres around the UK; support for in-house video production and transmission; and training & knowledge sharing across the sector.

Of direct relevance to the present report, CAN is piloting a digital film booking and delivery platform with Cinegi (<http://cinegi.com/>) involving a number of rural community exhibitors in Wales. Should the pilot prove successful, the service will roll out across the UK, providing community exhibitors with an alternative to traditional booking methods offering physical media like DVD and Blu-ray.

3.2.3 Local Authorities

As in almost every area of public administration, Local Authorities have been required to cut spending since the financial downturn started in 2008. Leisure, arts and cultural services have often been hardest hit and this is reflected in the level of support Local Authorities are able to offer community exhibitors.¹⁸

¹⁷ <http://www.chapter.org/past-projects-20132014>

¹⁸ "The overall the picture of local government funding for the arts is one of declining resources and competition from other statutory and non-statutory services. Arts services are no different to other

However, this is not the only channel of local government funding open to community exhibitors in rural areas. Regeneration and social inclusion schemes, run by Local Authorities often with backing from European funds (like the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development), have been instrumental in supporting the development of community exhibition projects.

Such schemes fall under the Welsh Government Rural Development Programme 2007 – 2013 (RDP), providing support across four axes, including ‘Axis 3’ which addresses ‘the quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the Rural Economy’. The next RDP (2014-2020) is currently under consultation, and includes proposals for a Rural Community Development Fund:

“The community-led projects supported will play an important role in improving the quality of life in rural areas including helping to tackle poverty through activities such as community-based renewable energy schemes, energy efficiency, the introduction of new key basic services including community transport initiatives, support for advice services, access to financial services (e.g. credit unions) and small-scale investments in village renewal, tourism/recreation and cultural and natural heritage.”¹⁹

The Wales Rural Network, run by the Welsh Government, provides a forum for agencies involved in delivering the RDP, and could provide a useful platform for raising awareness of the value of community exhibition in furthering the Programme’s social and cultural aims.²⁰

In terms of current local government support, the present research found the scale and type of opportunities available vary widely across Wales, with some Local Authorities taking a more active approach than others.

What follows is a snapshot of support for community exhibition in each rural and semi-rural Local Authority based on desk research and consultation with local government officers. Evidence from consultation with community exhibitors indicates that town councils also contribute funding and other support (for example, Denbigh Town Council is co-funding new projection equipment for Denbigh Film Club, alongside an Awards for All grant), but the research did not look at this aspect in detail.

In a number of cases Local Authority officers identified County Volunteer Centres (CVCs) and Voluntary Centres (VCs) as potential support channels, and these are discussed in greater detail in section 3.2.4.

Local Authorities actively involved in supporting community exhibition

Carmarthenshire County Council (<http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk>)

South and mid Carmarthenshire are reasonably well-served by commercial cinema circuits located in Carmarthen and Llanelli, and the Local Authority remains open to supporting community exhibition wherever demand can be demonstrated. Brynamman Public Hall

cultural services provided either directly or indirectly by authorities and the downturn in the economy over the last three years has enforced major changes to the cultural landscape.” *AD:uk/ Arts Council of Wales Local Authority Arts Investment & Partnership Survey 2013/14.*

¹⁹ <http://wales.gov.uk/consultations/environmentandcountryside/wales-rdp-2014-2020-final-proposals/?lang=en>

²⁰

<http://wales.gov.uk/topics/environmentcountryside/farmingandcountryside/cap/walesruralnetwork/?lang=en>

Cinema is highly valued locally, and a film programme is expected to start at Theatr Elli in Llanelli.

“The picture of cinema provision [...] in Carmarthenshire has changed significantly over the past 3 years as a result of the opening of successful town centre multiplexes in both Carmarthen and Llanelli. It would be nice to think there is sufficient interest in the communities we serve to establish independent Film Societies or Clubs and so far this remains only an ambition with little evidence to convince us one way or another. However such possibilities and options will be part of our ongoing community consultation within the context of achieving significant reductions in our budgets.”

Local government officer

Three different funds are available for groups wishing to start or develop community exhibition:

- Rural Community Inclusion Grants²¹
The Rural Community Inclusion project is designed to tackle access and social exclusion in rural Carmarthenshire.
- Innovative Communities Grant²²
The Innovative Communities project aims to help communities within rural Carmarthenshire take the lead with innovative ideas that will improve the quality of life through improved access to services.
- Carmarthenshire Local Action Group²³
Carmarthenshire's Local Action Group (LAG) is a board of members responsible for the delivery of Axis 4, which focuses on the delivery of innovative projects.

An earlier scheme, which ran until 2013, was also relevant:

- Collaborative Communities
Partnership of Carmarthenshire, Pembrokeshire, Swansea and Neath Port Talbot CVCs. The Collaborative Communities Project has two aims:
 1. Support the development of a robust and sustainable Third Sector;
 2. Prove and develop the unrealised potential of social enterprises as a particular type of service provider.

Gwynedd Council (<http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk>)

Gwynedd Council, through its Heritage & Arts Unit and Economy & Community Team, supports community exhibition venues through funding for the likes of Theatr Harlech, Galeri Caernafon and Dragon Theatre (in receipt of Strategic Grants for their arts provision, though not necessarily film), and management of two mixed use venues with film programmes: Neuadd Dwyfor (Pwllheli) and Neuadd Buddug, (Bala).

“At present we are scoping a new way of delivering the service at Bala and are looking at a potential partnership with the new school building project. Gwynedd Council also has a partnership with Neuadd Ogwen, Bethesda, [...] a Community Asset Transfer project to

²¹

<http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/english/living/communitygrants/pages/ruralcommunityinclusiongrant.aspx>

²²

<http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/english/living/communitygrants/pages/innovativecommunitiesgrant.aspx>

²³

<http://www.carmarthenshire.gov.uk/english/living/communitygrants/pages/localactiongroup%28lag%29.aspx>

develop a community arts venue with provision for film screenings.”
Local government officer

Meanwhile the Community Arts Fund is available to community groups for arts events/projects.²⁴

Earlier this year local youth charity Gisda was awarded £75,000 from the council's social enterprise investment fund ("Cyfenter") to establish a mobile cinema service run by, and for, young people.

Other sources of support include:

- Voluntary Development Grant "Cist Gwynedd"²⁵
Available to Gwynedd's community and voluntary groups, whose aim is to support projects that improve the quality of life of the county's residents, including by enhancing social, linguistic, cultural and leisure opportunities.
- Gwynedd Arts Forum²⁶
The Forum's aim is to encourage representatives from the arts world in Gwynedd to share and develop the requirements of practitioners in the arts field through networking, improve facilitation and assist in getting hold of, or accessing resources.
- Gwynedd Creadigol/Creative Gwynedd²⁷
A website to share and promote local events, including film screenings.

Vale of Glamorgan Council (<http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk>)

Creative Rural Communities, the Council's rural regeneration unit part-funded by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development, has helped establish an informal network of community exhibitors ('Vale Cinema Network') that share touring equipment or use kit purchased with money from CRC's own grant schemes.²⁸ The network is currently made up of six Moviola Associates, and since the end of 2013/14 it has become self-sustaining (CRC continues to own the touring equipment but loans, which are free of charge, are managed by existing community exhibitors themselves).

The council also offers:

- A small grants scheme open to community groups, performing arts groups, youth organisations, sports teams, and other recreation groups.²⁹
- Voluntary Action Scheme grants³⁰, whose priorities are reviewed annually but typically include: Safer Vale (Community Safety); Health, Social Care and Wellbeing; Lifelong Learning (Vale Learning Network); Children and Young People; Economic and Environmental.

Other Local Authorities

²⁴ http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/gwy_doc.asp?doc=53&language=1

²⁵ http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/gwy_doc.asp?cat=2795&doc=25264&Language=1&p=1&c=1

²⁶ http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk/gwy_doc.asp?cat=4578&doc=16068&Language=1&p=1&c=1

²⁷ <http://www.gwyneddgreadigol.com/>

²⁸

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/working/regeneration/rural_regeneration/grants_available.aspx

²⁹

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/life_in_the_community/community_grants/small_grants_scheme.aspx

³⁰

http://www.valeofglamorgan.gov.uk/en/living/life_in_the_community/community_grants/voluntary_action.aspx

The picture of available support is more mixed in other Local Authorities, either because there is little relevant activity (despite, in some cases, past involvement in the sector), online information is limited, or at the time of writing local government officers had not responded to enquiries, making it difficult to draw conclusions about funding opportunities:

Ceredigion County Council (<http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk>)

Ceredigion County Council provides some indirect support to community exhibitors, for example covering the cost of electricity at New Quay Memorial Hall, which hosts a volunteer-run, part-time cinema. In return volunteers maintain the hall and manage hall bookings, saving the Council expenditure on management and caretaking staff.

In addition, the Council offers the following support schemes, which may be relevant to community exhibitors:

- **Community Grants³¹**
The purpose of the scheme is to increase the range of facilities, activities and opportunities within Ceredigion. Grants are available to Community Groups, Community Councils or bona fide Voluntary Sports and Play Associations who wish to improve and increase the range of facilities, activities and opportunities within Ceredigion.
- **European rural regeneration funding³²**
European Funding in Ceredigion is promoted and coordinated through the Council's Regeneration Unit. One of the strands of funding is Rural Development Plan funding. Funding for projects which enhance quality of life in rural areas may be available through Axis 3.
- **Cynnal y Cardi³³**
The project 'Enhancing the Quality of life in Ceredigion' ran from 1st March 2011 to 30th August 2013. Aimed to improve the quality of life through the development of sustainable rural communities fostering wider community cohesion. Cynnal y Cardi's activities were part funded through the Rural Development Plan for Wales 2007 to 2013, financed by the European Union and the Welsh Government as well as Ceredigion County Council.

Conwy County Borough Council (<http://www.conwy.gov.uk>)

The main source of financial support for community exhibition through the council's Arts Service is the Arts Development Grants scheme, offering up to £1,000 for a new arts project or event.³⁴

Elsewhere in the Council, community grants are available (like the Community Regeneration scheme³⁵) under the Rural Community Action Plan. However, the Principal Development Officer explained the council is likely to stop small community grants in 2013/14 due to lack of available funding. Conwy Voluntary Services Council, the local CVC, is the main source of community funding and Third Sector support in the county.

Denbighshire County Council (<https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk>)

The Community Arts Development Officer explained that Denbighshire is not "a grant giving arts service", but has supported community exhibitors, like Denbigh Film Club, with information sharing and writing letters of support for grant applications. The council also funds the Scala Arts Centre in Prestatyn, although the venue is at risk of losing this support.

³¹ <http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=178>

³² <http://www.ceredigion.gov.uk/index.cfm?articleid=15166>

³³ <http://www.cynnalycardi.org.uk/eng/index.php>

³⁴ <http://www.conwy.gov.uk/doc.asp?cat=774&doc=24023&Language=1>

³⁵ <http://www.conwy.gov.uk/doc.asp?cat=8726&doc=1547>

Funding for rural development projects is available under the Rural Development Plan, operated in partnership with Flintshire County Council, and includes the Rural Development Plan Grant³⁶ aimed at helping businesses in rural areas to start up or grow successfully.

Flintshire County Council (<http://www.flintshire.gov.uk>)

The Council funds Clwyd Theatr Cymru, but the Arts Officer explained that local residents tend to travel out of county for cinema trips (for example to Rhyl, Chester or Wrexham).

In the past the Council ran a scheme to help schools purchase screening equipment for use with local communities, but it ran into practical difficulties around the accessibility of school sites (e.g. security, toilet facilities, caretaker hours).

Funding opportunities are limited due to pressure on budgets, but the Council does offer local groups assistance in applying elsewhere for support. The local CVC (Flintshire Local Voluntary Council), is a key player in this regard and it operates a community hall/small hall forum for networking and advice sharing.

Isle of Anglesey County Council (<http://www.anglesey.gov.uk>)

The Ucheldre Centre is the only place in Anglesey where people regularly go to watch films. It is also possible to hire the Centre for private showings, and the Centre receives grant aid from the Local Authority. The local government officer consulted for the research has “no knowledge that support is given to volunteer run film clubs” on Anglesey. The Council web site has brief information about Regeneration Grants, but little detail.³⁷

Monmouthshire County Council (<http://www.monmouthshire.gov.uk>)

Monmouthshire’s extensive rural community cinema network, made up primarily of Moviola Associates, originally started life as a Local Authority initiative.

The three-year scheme, introduced as part of a rural regeneration initiative, involved a touring projectionist who visited village halls in the County. The Council intended halls to purchase their own equipment in time, and become self-sufficient once the scheme ended its term in 2007/08.

To this end, and with Council support, Monmouthshire Mobile Movies developed around this time as a volunteer-run network to support halls through an equipment hire service, while Moviola provides programming and booking support. Network members pay an annual fee of £45 and a usage fee for equipment of £10. The arrangement continues today but without Local Authority involvement.

“The County Council’s vision from 10 years ago – of a self-sustaining film network in rural communities – has come about to a great extent with five or so successful outlets with their own equipment and another five or so showing films using the cooperative equipment.”

Monmouthshire Mobile Movies

Pembrokeshire County Council (<http://www.pembrokeshire.gov.uk>)

The Council provides revenue funding for the Torch Theatre in Milford Haven, and subsidised rent for Theatr Gwaun. Very little information is provided on the Local Authority’s website about support or funding for arts, leisure or communities.

Powys County Council (<http://www.powys.gov.uk>)

³⁶ <https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/business/funding-and-grants/business-grants/grants-we-offer/rural-development-plan-grant.aspx>

³⁷ <http://www.anglesey.gov.uk/advice-and-benefits/grants/>

The Community Grants, Arts Service officer advised that the Council no longer offers grants for community groups due to funding cuts. This is despite strong interest in community exhibition projects from prospective groups (the officer estimated around 12 groups were keen to start a screening programme but lacked funding to do so).

Some grant funding is available through the Regeneration Department's Community Regeneration Fund. This supports community activity of any type and is heavily weighted towards arts/culture. Projects must have a community benefit and have a regeneration slant or demonstrate wider benefits than just being 'something to do'. However, this fund is under threat of cuts although it is not expected to be dropped altogether.

The local CVC (Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations) is the other principal source of funding for community groups in Powys.

According to Ian Kerry, Director of Flicks in the Sticks, Powys County Council had early dealings with Flicks when it was preparing its bid for funding under the BFI Neighbourhood Cinema Fund touring scheme, but the Council is not an active partner in the initiative.

Wrexham County Borough Council (<http://www.wrexham.gov.uk>)

The Community, Well-being & Development Department officer explained the Council currently offers no specific support for community exhibition but is *"looking at setting up pop-up screenings."*

The Council offers more generic funding accessible to groups for community exhibition, including a Village Halls Fund, which can be granted to voluntary organisations for equipment, building repairs and items of lasting benefit.³⁸

3.2.4 Voluntary sector

With the majority of community exhibitors relying, to varying degrees, on volunteers, the wider voluntary sector has a role to play in supporting such ventures. And as the following quote suggests, community exhibition can provide valuable opportunities with wider benefits for individuals and communities:

"At a local end, one objective [of community exhibition] is getting cinema into rural areas so people can enjoy it, but the other can be offering opportunities for people to gain skills, meet likeminded people, draw in people who are marginalised in the community. If it's planned appropriately, that's where volunteering also has that potential for community building."
Fiona Liddell, Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Mention has already been made of County Voluntary Councils (CVCs) and Volunteer Centres (VCs), which provide a network of support across Wales (Table 11).

At a national level, Wales Council for Voluntary Action (<http://www.wcva.org.uk>) operates across the voluntary sector, ensuring consistency of standards of support through CVCs and VCs, in addition to providing a range of free services (including information and advice) and membership services (networking, training, publications, grant application support, recruitment and payroll services and Third Sector advocacy).

WCVA also runs the Volunteering Wales web site (<http://www.volunteering-wales.net>), enabling individuals and organisations to register interest in, and opportunities for, voluntary activity. Registered organisations, who must demonstrate certain minimum operational standards, include community exhibitors like Brynamman Hall and Cinema in Carmarthenshire.

³⁸ http://www.wrexham.gov.uk/english/leisure_tourism/grants/

Table 11: County Voluntary Councils in rural and semi-rural areas

County	CVC
Carmarthenshire	Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services (http://www.cavs.org.uk/)
Ceredigion	Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Organisations (http://cavo.org.uk/)
Conwy	Conwy Voluntary Services Council (http://cvsc.org.uk/)
Denbighshire	Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (http://www.dvsc.co.uk/english/index.htm)
Flintshire	Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (http://flvc.org.uk/)
Gwynedd	Mantell Gwynedd (http://www.mantellgwynedd.com/)
Isle of Anglesey	Medrwn Mon (http://www.medrwnmon.org/)
Monmouthshire	Gwent Association of Voluntary Organisations (http://www.gavowales.org.uk/monmouthshire)
Pembrokeshire	Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services (http://www.pavs.org.uk/)
Powys	Powys Association of Voluntary Organisations (http://www.pavo.org.uk/)
Vale of Glamorgan	Vale Centre for Voluntary Services (http://www.valecvs.org.uk/)
Wrexham	Association of Voluntary Organisations in Wrexham (http://avow.org/)

Source: WCVA

CVCs operate at the local level, helping to develop voluntary group infrastructure by providing sources of practical support, through networking, online services, training and subsidised facility and equipment hire for members. A good example of this is Haverfordwest Film Society's web site, which was designed for free by Pembrokeshire Association of Voluntary Services, and PAVO continues to host the site for a modest annual fee.

CVCs may also have funding schemes of their own or can provide guidance about opportunities available locally. New Quay Memorial Hall Cinema secured funding from Ceredigion Association of Voluntary Organisations for chairs and tables.

VCs provide drop-in opportunities for individuals to discover more about volunteering opportunities in the local area, helping to connect people and groups with common interests, which make them valuable promotional vehicles for community exhibitors seeking volunteers:

"Volunteer Centres provide a brokerage function. They are there for people to walk in off the street, or they go and seek out perhaps more marginal groups who wouldn't walk in off the street, to have conversations with them about the kind of volunteering they'd want to do and to guide people to finding something that's appropriate. They have a promotional role, so if there are new initiatives or new possibilities for volunteers [VCs] will be keen to make these known, through their mailings, events or social media."

Fiona Liddell, Wales Council for Voluntary Action

3.2.5 Wider funding opportunities

Both Big Lottery Fund Wales and Arts Council of Wales continue to fund community exhibition activity at different levels and through various schemes, often providing the only

support accessed by groups and organisations that might otherwise be 'off the radar' of film-sector agencies.

Big Lottery Fund Wales (<http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/wales>)

Awards for All Wales is the Big Lottery Fund Wales programme most commonly accessed by community exhibitors, offering grants of between £500 and £5,000 to voluntary or community groups or organisations.³⁹ Grants are awarded for projects 'that improve local communities and the lives of people most in need'.

Alongside Awards for All Wales, the People and Places programme supports capital and revenue projects that encourage coordinated action by communities (this programme awarded Ffilm Cymru Wales funding for the Film in Afan scheme in 2011/12).

Between 2008/09 and 2013/14, Big Lottery Fund Wales made 13 awards for rural community exhibition projects totaling £213,766, and Awards for All Wales accounted for 10 of these grants:

Table 12: Big Lottery Wales awards for rural community exhibition, 2008/09 to 2013/14

Group or organisation	Local Authority	Purpose of award	Programme
Ysgol Gynradd Nantgaredig	Carmarthenshire	Film projection equipment for community cinema	Awards for All
Screen at Hay	Powys	Film projection equipment for community cinema	Awards for All
South Ridgeway Community Association	Pembrokeshire	Film projection equipment for community cinema	Awards for All
Narbeth Film Society	Pembrokeshire	Film projection equipment for community cinema	Awards for All
Llanfair Kilgeddin Village Hall	Monmouthshire	Hall improvements for film screenings	Awards for All
Henderson Hall, Talybont	Powys	Film projection equipment for community cinema	Awards for All
Evans Public Hall	Carmarthenshire	Sound and lighting for community cinema	Awards for All
Cymuned Pennant Community	Ceredigion	Hall improvements for film screenings	Awards for All
Cyfeillion Hen Ysgol Llangwnnadr	Gwynedd	Film projection equipment for community cinema	Awards for All
Cae'r Felin Community School	Carmarthenshire	Film projection equipment for extra-curricular film club	Awards for All
Tabernacle (Bethesda), Neuadd Ogwen (2 awards)	Gwynedd	Conversion to community arts venue, including film programme	Community Asset Transfer
Penarth Pier Pavilion	Vale of Glam.	Leasehold transfer for mixed use venue with film programme	Community Asset Transfer

Source: Big Lottery Wales

Arts Council of Wales (<http://www.artswales.org.uk>)

The Arts Council of Wales is responsible for funding art and culture projects for individuals and organisations. They also provide funding advice through monthly surgeries and phone consultations.

Funding for organisations is available from multiple sources, including Small Grants of up to £5,000, Large Grants for sums over this amount and a Lottery Capital Programme for equipment purchase and feasibility studies.

³⁹ <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/global-content/programmes/wales/awards-for-all-wales>

Since 2010, Arts Council of Wales has made six awards to groups or organisations in support of film exhibition activity (to a value of £126,998), three of which are based in rural areas:

Table 13: Arts Council of Wales awards for rural community exhibition activity, 2010/11 to 2013/14

Group or organisation	Local Authority	Purpose of award	Programme
Montgomery Movie Club	Powys	Projection equipment	Lottery Capital
Neuadd Dwyfor	Gwynedd	Digital cinema equipment	Lottery Capital
Andrew Logan Museum	Powys	Arts festival including film	Large Grants

Source: Arts Council of Wales

Separately, Revenue Funded Organisations (RFOs)⁴⁰ receive recurrent grants, awarded on an annual basis, towards their core activities. They include six mixed use venues that qualify as rural community exhibitors by virtue of their film programmes: Aberystwyth Arts Centre, Clywd Theatr Cymru, Galeri Caernafon, Theatr Mwldan, Torch Theatre and the Ucheldre Centre.

⁴⁰ <http://www.artswales.org.uk/what-we-do/funding/rfos>

4 Discussion and recommendations

Rural community exhibition in Wales is characterised by a mixed ecology of provision, from village hall film nights to full-time film programmes screened using state of the art digital cinema equipment in mixed-use venues. In this respect Wales is little different from other parts of the UK, where community exhibition takes a wide variety of forms, serving a host of social, cultural and financial objectives for individuals and communities.

As the preceding section demonstrates, support for different operational needs is already available to community exhibitors from a variety of sources. Against this background, the present report, although commissioned by Film Hub Wales, is not intended to carve out a new role for the Hub in relation to community exhibition.

Rather the idea has been to identify the full range of current support and services, clarifying who currently does what, for whom and to which ends. Having reviewed current provision in the previous section, the report concludes by considering where and how Film Hub Wales can add value within the framework of its strategic objectives, and suggests how other agencies can work in a complementary fashion to support rural community exhibition in future.

4.1 Over-arching principles

There is a case for treating rural community exhibition differently to other types of provision, in view of challenges around transport, social exclusion, lack of cultural provision and an ageing population in sparsely populated areas. However, as section 3 makes clear, important differences exist within the category of rural community exhibition.

“Rural and urban are very different in terms of transport and possibly communication modes. [But whereas] community cinemas [may] need help on how to programme, venues such as Theatr Mwldan don’t. They also each have a different set of resources available to them.”
Siobhan Ashe, Sinemau Cymru

Notwithstanding such variety of provision, when dealing with rural community exhibitors the present research indicates two guiding principles should be observed:

1. Not everyone involved in community exhibition, even those in senior committee or staff positions, has a film background or any special interest in film culture and appreciation.

“There are a few new community cinemas I know that definitely need help with programming [...] They’re really doing it not because they love cinema but as provision [for the local community]. So they’re not the classic film society people who get involved because they love film and know what to show. Help with marketing is needed as well as audience development.”
Siobhan Ashe, Sinemau Cymru

2. Community exhibition often operates at the limits of a community group’s or venue’s capacity, leaving little time or other human and financial resources for activity that goes beyond the scope of day-to-day operations.

Recommendation 1: With these in mind, Film Hub Wales initiatives aimed at, or relevant to, rural community exhibitors (including events, funding opportunities and online resources) should be presented such that they are both attractive and accessible to non-film specialists with limited scope or opportunities for wider engagement, in terms of:

- **The way they are framed, worded and pitched;**
- **Communication of their likely benefits;**
- **Location and scheduling;**
- **Cost and subsidisation.**

“My experience of rural cinema volunteers is that they shy away from highfalutin phrases – avoid jargon.”

Phill Walkley, Moviola

4.2 Film Hub Wales: adding value to existing support

The following are suggested as areas where Film Hub Wales can either enhance existing support and services for rural community exhibitors in Wales, or address current gaps:

4.2.1 Joining up the dots

Deborah Parker, BFFS Managing Director, argued that establishment of Film Hub Wales provides an opportunity to assess current support for specialised film exhibition in Wales, helping to avoid duplication by different bodies involved (in part the intention behind the present report):

“The key thing is to avoid duplication. The only way to do that is to have a really clear idea of what all those parties (the strategic partners, funded partners and arms-length partners like Arts Council and local authorities) are already doing. Then act like a guide to encourage [everyone] to move in the same direction with the overall aim of encouraging specialised film [exhibition].”

Deborah Parker, BFFS

Recommendation 2: As a first step the present report should be disseminated widely among film and non-film agencies operating in Wales and the rural community exhibition sector.

In interview, Emma Flatley (Head of Education, Exhibition and Regeneration) indicated that Ffilm Cymru Wales receives a number of enquiries about setting up community exhibition projects, and would welcome working with partners to provide clear signposting of available sources of information, advice and support in Wales. In some cases enquirers require seed funding to start a new venture, which is something Ffilm Cymru Wales does not currently offer at this stage. Support of this kind is available elsewhere (for example, through Local Authority sources, charitable funds etc.) but it would be helpful to point to a single source of information about such opportunities.

“I had a phone call yesterday from [someone] looking to set up a community touring cinema around the Bridgend area, maybe extending to Neath. She was at a bit of a loss where to go for advice and that seems to be a continual feature, people don’t really know where to start and who the potential development partners could be.” **Emma Flatley, Ffilm Cymru Wales**

To a degree, this information is available from UK-wide sources like BFFS and that planned under the BFI Neighbourhood Cinema Fund web portal. But for enquirers who turn initially to local agencies, like Ffilm Cymru Wales, Film Hub Wales and Sinemau Cymru, it will be helpful to have a more targeted information source, one that links to this wider slate of resources but also presents Wales-focused advice and guidance.

Recommendation 3: A guide to available support in Wales, based on the report findings, should be made available online and promoted through the different channels open to Film Hub Wales. This would benefit from development in consultation with other agencies, including BFFS (as it prepares to re-launch its

Welsh Group), Sinemau Cymru, Ffilm Cymru Wales and the Independent Cinema Office in the film sector, along with input from WCVA, Big Lottery Wales and the Arts Council of Wales.

The research has confirmed that film licensing and programming guidance is readily available through other avenues (including BFFS, ICO, Moviola and Filmbank) whereas advice on equipment procurement is harder to come by. As this is of the most important financial commitment a community exhibitor is likely to make, affecting not only its reserves but also the standard of presentation it is able to achieve, it is vital that information and other support is available.

Recommendation 4: Often the best way to inform decision-making is by learning from others, and Film Hub Wales should actively promote information sharing about equipment options among member organisations, accompanied by signposting, in written and online materials, of established sources of information (e.g. BFI Neighbourhood Cinema Fund, BFFS equipment loan service etc.).

Recommendation 5: Mindful of similar initiatives run by other agencies, Film Hub Wales should consider providing opportunities for rural community exhibitors to swap, loan, hire, donate or sell used equipment.

“We’re coming to a stage where we have to seriously consider the best way forward. We don’t want to close the cinema. We don’t want to stop it but I know some places have had digital projectors donated to them but we’re not so lucky in that respect.”

Mixed use venue

A range of important support options and services exist for rural community exhibitors outside the film sector. However, the agencies involved (including Local Authorities, Third Sector organisations, arts and community funding bodies) are not necessarily aware of the full range of needs that exhibitors have, or of the wider social, cultural and economic benefits of rural community exhibition that justify continued support.

Recommendation 6: Film Hub Wales should explore ways to engage with Third Sector, local government, Welsh Government and funding bodies outside the film sector (e.g. WCVA, rural Local Authorities, Wales Rural Network, Big Lottery Fund, Arts Council of Wales) to raise awareness of rural community exhibition, its needs and wider benefits, and opportunities for joint work and service provision.

Given the nature of the sector, which is characterised by resourceful, self-starting groups, many of the support needs of rural community exhibitors can be satisfied through the provision of regular networking opportunities, enabling participants to share experiences, make connections and learn from each other. Models of peer-to-peer support have worked well in the past (as witnessed by past successes of the BFFS Welsh Group) and there are plenty of examples of networks developing at a local and regional level in Wales (e.g. Vale Cinema Network and Monmouthshire Mobile Movies).

“It is really getting us together so we see what we have in common, what our differences are, and the things we have in common getting us to stop reinventing the wheel all over the place and work together.”

Mixed use venue

Recommendation 7: Film Hub Wales should endeavour to provide a range of accessible networking opportunities in different parts of Wales and throughout the year, bringing together the full range of rural community exhibitors and, where appropriate, other film and non-film sector representatives. These could be run as

standalone events, or as part of other gatherings (like screening days), and in partnership with other organisations.

4.2.2 Promoting Welsh language, heritage, culture and talent

Many of the film sector organisations consulted for this research suggested Film Hub Wales has an important, and distinctive, role to play in promoting Welsh film, including Welsh-language works, through preview screenings and events, and providing access to talent and marketing support.

“Where I do think it’s important for Wales is when talking about Welsh cinema and the connection with the Welsh film industry, because that’s something the Hub will be able to do very well.”

Deborah Parker, BFFS

“The element that might be useful is to do with Welsh films, firstly coming up with a number of them that I can offer to promoters.”

Ian Kerry, Flicks in the Sticks

Naturally, support for Welsh filmmaking and talent is key to Ffilm Cymru Wales’s strategic agenda, and the agency would like to work with Film Hub Wales in promoting Welsh film to rural community exhibitors through a variety of means including deployment of secure, online screeners (thereby overcoming the travel and time commitments that screening days can impose). Ffilm Cymru Wales’s web site will soon showcase all Welsh films backed by the agency, including screening and booking details.

Promotion could also extend to Ffilm Cymru Wales supported-titles that are self-distributed, which would otherwise not appear on Filmbank or other non-theatrical booking lists.

Furthermore, talent, including writers, directors, producers and actors, could be made available to attend special events with Ffilm Cymru Wales assistance, adding value to this proposition. Ffilm Cymru Wales also indicated its willingness to provide small amounts of funding for events involving Welsh talent; working in collaboration with venues delivering talent development initiatives like Net.Work/ Launchpad; and providing information and advice more generally.

A word of caution, though: few rural community exhibitors consulted were confident of audience demand for Welsh film, particularly in the Welsh language, including those based in areas with larger Welsh-speaking populations. The problem is rooted in a perception among some programmers and audiences of the limited availability of high quality Welsh films, coupled with resistance, even among native speakers, to watch subtitled Welsh language films on the big screen.

“If you want my blunt answer, I don’t think there’s sufficient Welshness here to that extent. I don’t think it would mean much here and I don’t think it would be sufficiently successful. In fact I think it would most likely fail.”

Film society/ community cinema

“On the subject of Welsh language films, we try to put on a film with a Welsh theme around March for St David’s Day. And it’s getting harder to find a film that’s of a good enough quality. We put on Hedd Wyn last year. One person turned up. That’s the only time we’ve ever cancelled a show. I have to say the theatre puts on a lot of Welsh plays, if there’s a Welsh play on it’s packed. Standing room only. You put on a Welsh language film, nobody turns up.”

Film society/ community cinema

"We'd like to show Welsh made films but quality ones seem to be a bit rare."

Film society/ community cinema

"We put on Patagonia, got a reasonable house for that. Then we had that one that Gruff Rhys made, Separado, that wasn't too bad either but once you've showed those you're kind of running out of films! Or so it seems."

Film society/ community cinema

Recommendation 8: Film Hub Wales should continue to develop its programme of Welsh film screening days, and consider mounting a wider promotional campaign (perhaps in association with Ffilm Cymru Wales and other interested partners) to raise awareness of high quality Welsh filmmaking and talent, and share best practice around how to market these kinds of films.

4.2.3 Supporting cultural programming and specialised film

Film Hub Wales has previously hosted screening events, and more are planned in future (including July's Screening Days event run in partnership with the ICO).

There is certainly demand among those responsible for community exhibition programming for opportunities to see films ahead of release, provided previews are timely and accessible.

"Just thinking about some of the festivals in Wales and the screenings that happen: it makes sense for a lot of my promoters who want to go and see more films if things like travel bursaries can be arranged."

Ian Kerry, Flicks in the Sticks

"I know people used to go to the ICO screening days but it's all got rather expensive, they're usually in London or one of the major cities, there are overnight stays and all the rest of it. To be honest the funding hasn't been there to support all of that. We're in the wild west of Wales so have a reasonable journey wherever we go. If we could have more film viewings around Wales itself it would be quite useful."

Film society/ community cinema

"When we used to have film viewings in Wales we used to bump into each other and we got to know each other rather better, but now there isn't anything that brings us together."

Film society/ community cinema

"My background is the film television industry but a lot of people involved in these things don't have any [knowledge of film]. They do jolly well, they look at Launching Films and Rotten Tomatoes, it's a very good list of films that we have, but help with it would be good."

Film society/ community cinema

Recommendation 9: In practice, ensuring previews are timely and accessible means:

- **Hosting events at a range of locations around Wales, including in rural community exhibition venues;**
- **Scheduling events at different points in the year to coincide with programming cycles (March/April is especially significant for film societies and community cinema whose screening year begins in September, as this is when autumn programme decisions are taken);**
- **Ensuring bursaries are available to attend Hub and other screening events (including festivals), in Wales and elsewhere.**

As with the ICO Screening Days, there is scope for partnerships in mounting these events: BFFS offers programming support through its Booking Scheme, including a planned Preview

Day in partnership with Film Hub North West Central. This latter initiative could be replicated in Wales, in association with the Hub, bringing a wider range of content to community exhibition programmers:

“Preview Days targeted at small, local areas where we can show the sorts of films groups might be particularly interested in that they’re not going to travel to London or wherever for a screening day: it’s that sort of activity I’d really like to get off the ground.”

Deborah Parker, BFFS

The research found evidence of demand, albeit from a minority of community exhibitors, for other types of programming, including archive film and shorts, which may otherwise be beyond the reach of programmers lacking the time, knowledge and wherewithal to organise such options themselves.

“The other thing we were thinking of doing when we have slightly shorter main films is to show an occasional short, which we don’t at the moment. I know there’s quite a few people in Wales making short films so that might be a valid purpose [for Film Hub Wales] as well.”

Film society/ community cinema

Recommendation 10: Film Hub Wales should consider ways of curating different types of content, suitably packaged for rural community exhibitors including rights clearance, programming notes and marketing materials. This could be achieved in partnership with Hub members with experience in this area, as well as other agencies and interested parties (like BFFS, which already offers screening licences for short film compilations⁴¹).

4.2.4 Understanding rural audiences

Time and again consultees demonstrated a keen knowledge and understanding of their existing audiences and members, built up from informal (close contact within local areas) and formal (research-based) sources. Yet there are blind spots across the sector as a whole, including around harder to reach groups (like young people) and in terms of the potential for audience development to extend both reach (attracting a wider audience base) and programming breadth.

Undoubtedly, further work is needed to better understand rural audiences in general, and how to best serve and engage them. Phill Walkley of Moviola suggested the following questions as a starting point:

“What is the core rural audience? Where is the untapped audience (and the answer to that will vary from place to place)? How does the rural cinema publicise and promote itself – who are the ‘gatekeepers’ and what is the publicity mechanism in such communities?”

Phill Walkley, Moviola

In this vein, one possible role for Film Hub Wales is in bringing together audience research and evaluation evidence across the range of rural community exhibitors in order to gauge audience demand for different types of provision and programming, and to encourage the sharing of innovative approaches and best practice models.

Recommendation 11: Film Hub Wales should ensure research, like the Understanding Audiences programme,

- **is sensitive to the particular character of rural community exhibition;**
- **that data capture and reporting requirements reflect the scale and capacity of operations and do not make undue calls on volunteer time;**

⁴¹ <http://www.bffs.org.uk/services/Shorts/>

- that it sells the idea of intelligence gathering as a benefit to community exhibitors, including for audience development, marketing and financial planning;
- and that sufficient provision is made for guidance and training so that rural community exhibition practitioners, particularly volunteers, are properly supported in their research and reporting activity.

4.2.5 Training and development

Few existing training and professional development needs were described by consultees, with many expressing satisfaction with available support from providers like the ICO and local CVCs.

One notable exception is in marketing, specifically use of digital channels (like web sites and email shots) and social media (like Facebook and Twitter).

In part this is a generational challenge, reflecting the older age profile of many of those involved in rural community exhibition, as both volunteers and staff.

Although computer and Internet use is generally lower in older age groups, and broadband infrastructure is less developed in rural areas, the benefits of digital communication tools (as a speedy and cost-effective means of maintaining contact with large numbers of people) coupled with the rise of social media as a primary means by which people organise their private lives and leisure time, are too significant to ignore, a point recognised, however reluctantly, by many rural community exhibitors.

“It feels to me there has to be another way of using digital marketing that is cleverer than what I see. A lot of it is just tweets or Facebook messages going out that say “We’ve got an offer on”, and it seems there must be cleverer ways of using it.”

Mixed use venue

“My wife is a Facebook fan so basically we post the information about the next show. There are a number of Facebook pages so she posts the next movie on whatever sites but that’s the extent of our Facebook marketing. I guess there’s more we could do with that.”

Film society/ community cinema

“There might be [some interest in social media training]. I know those that are involved in the other venues are mostly in my age bracket, 60+, but not entirely. So there could be interest.”

Film society/ community cinema

Recommendation 12: Film Hub Wales should encourage training providers, like ICO and CVCs, to offer and promote digital marketing training aimed at the full range of competencies, from beginners to more advanced users; and help to promote existing training provision to community exhibitors (including through bursaries). In addition to training events and courses, options should be explored for offering distance learning opportunities, so participants do not have to travel and can accommodate digital marketing training alongside other commitments.

In interview, Fiona Liddell, WCVA’s Volunteering Development Officer, described the potential for formalising skills development among volunteers involved in community exhibition through accreditation schemes. This could help to attract younger volunteers looking for development opportunities, who are currently under-represented in the volunteer pool of most community exhibitors.

“[Accreditation] is really about personal development and skills, whatever you’re doing you

would gain the kind of evidence needed to build a portfolio and do the reflections that would get you this qualification. There are costs involved of registering and assessment and so on, and there are implications.”

Fiona Liddell, Wales Council for Voluntary Action

One option would be for a single organisation with sufficient capacity (or a partnership of different organisations, e.g. Film Hub Wales and ICO) to manage the accreditation process on behalf of smaller community exhibitors, ensuring the involvement of trained expertise and maintenance of national standards.

Recommendation 13: Film Hub Wales should consider what opportunities exist for developing accredited learning pathways for volunteers involved in rural community exhibition as a way of attracting younger people into the sector, and assess the feasibility, costs and benefits of such an approach.

At a more general level, there is scope for Film Hub Wales to raise awareness among community exhibitors of local training opportunities offered through the WCVA's Courses for Communities programme (<http://www.wcva.org.uk/training-and-events/courses-for-communities>).

4.2.4 Further opportunities for collaboration

In the course of the consultation, the following suggestions were made for other possible collaborative opportunities with Film Hub Wales:

- BFFS intends to upgrade its loan equipment with funding from the BFI, making it available across the UK in partnership with local groups who will help administer the scheme and provide peer-to-peer support.

Working with the newly established BFFS Welsh Group, there is potential for Film Hub Wales members, including Core Hub Member venues, to act as gatekeepers for this loan equipment on BFFS's behalf.

“We need the kit on the ground, we need people we can trust who can look after that kit and manage the loans on our behalf.”

Deborah Parker, BFFS

- In common with BFFS plans, Sinemau Cymru is considering the merits and feasibility of hiring portable screening equipment to community exhibitor members, so there is further potential for a joined up approach.

“One thing which Sinemau Cymru was looking at at our last board meeting was the possibility of hiring out equipment for community cinemas. Venues such as Chapter have the expertise and resources [to hire equipment] out to community groups.”

Siobhan Ashe, Sinemau Cymru

- Moviola has never actively marketed its Associate Scheme, which developed in Wales through word of mouth recommendation and Local Authority encouragement. Moviola would welcome a reciprocal relationship with Film Hub Wales, promoting the Associate scheme in exchange for Moviola's advice about programming for rural audiences.

“We would be delighted for Film Hub Wales to promote the Associates scheme and for us to work in any advisory role on ‘rural programming’ or dissemination of good practice. I am sure there are huge advantages for rural venues to band together for programming and film booking – both financial and advice/specialism.”

Phill Walkley, Moviola

- One consultee, looking to develop their venue's film education offer, suggested Film Hub Wales could play a role in brokering relationships between venues with education experience and rural community exhibitors wishing to do more in this direction. This is an area that would also benefit from collaboration with Ffilm Cymru Wales, which has lead responsibility for 5-19 film education in Wales, alongside Into Film.

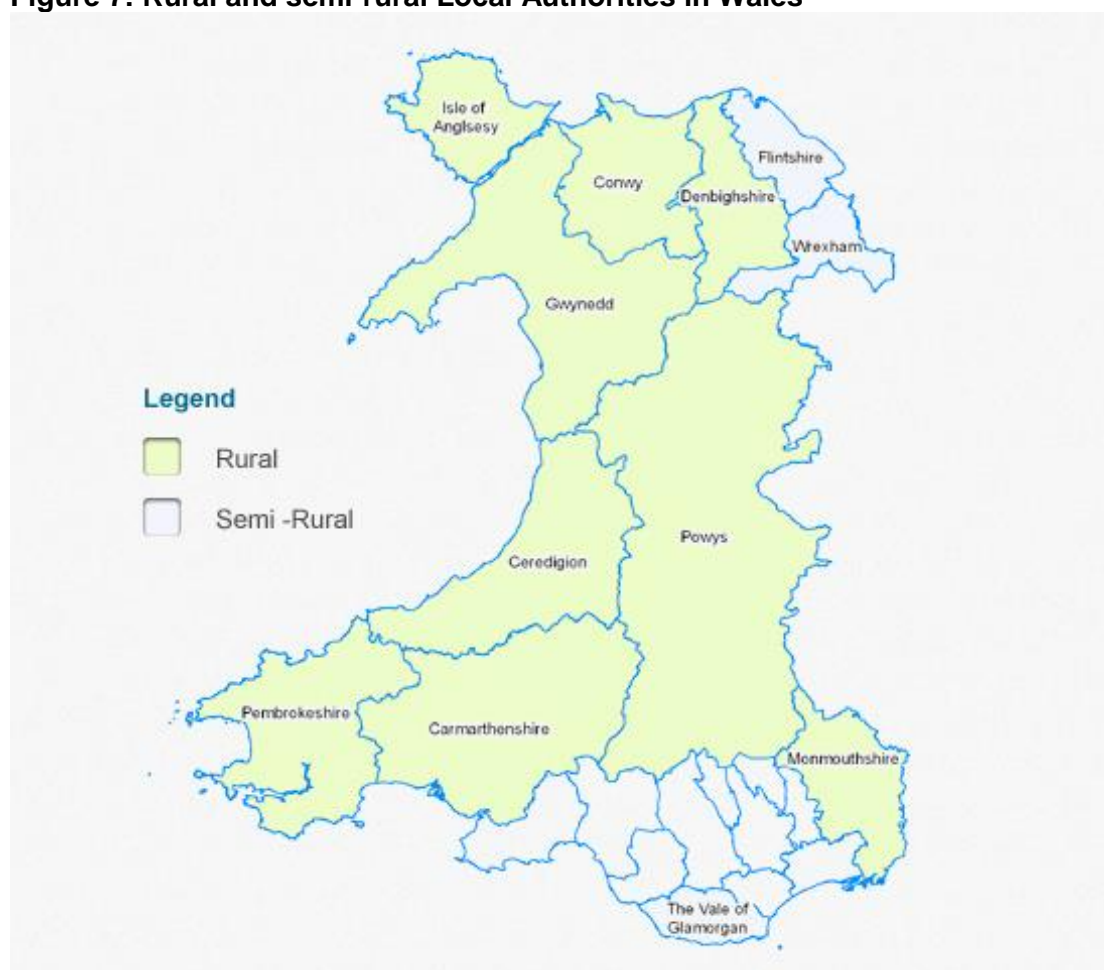
"We don't have education for cinema. And I'm not a film trained person, I don't have a degree in film studies so I don't think I'm really the person to be teaching film appreciation. I think it would be really good to do more particularly with young people on film appreciation."

Mixed use venue staff

Appendix 1: Research methods

This research employs the definition of rural and semi-rural Local Authorities applied by the Wales Rural Observatory (see Figure 7).⁴²

Figure 7: Rural and semi-rural Local Authorities in Wales



Source: Wales Rural Observatory

In order to identify all community exhibitors currently active in rural and semi-rural Local Authority areas in Wales, a database was compiled from existing sources and supplemented with additional desk research.

The following sources were consulted:

1. British Federation of Film Societies Community Cinema list (<http://www.bffs.org.uk/communitycinema/>);
2. Independent Cinema Office exhibitor map (<http://www.independentcinemaoffice.org.uk/resources/cinemas/default.aspx>);
3. Directory of Moviola Associates (<http://www.moviola.org/AssocVenues.htm>);
4. National Lottery awards database (<http://www.lottery.culture.gov.uk/AdvancedSearch.aspx>);
5. Film Hub Wales, BFFS and Sinemau Cymru membership records.

⁴² <http://www.walesruralobservatory.org.uk/>

Information from these sources was cross-referenced and an online search was performed to check community exhibitors were active at the time of the research.

The database was populated with the following variables:

- Name of organisation
- Web site address
- Village/town
- Local Authority
- Exhibitor type
- Programme type
- Venue type
- Projection format
- Membership of BFFS/ Sinemau Cymru/ Film Hub Wales/ Moviola

The second stage of the research comprised desk research to identify support and services for rural community exhibitors offered by Local Authorities. This was supplemented by direct contact (via email and telephone) with local government officers in arts, leisure and rural regeneration teams within each rural and semi-rural Local Authority included in the study.

The final element of the research involved interviewing:

- a cross-section of rural community exhibition staff and volunteers, selected from across Wales;
- representatives of film and non-film agencies that support rural community exhibition in Wales.

Telephone interviews were conducted between January and April 2014 with 15 individuals, as follows:

Table 14: Interviewees

Name	Organisation	Local Authority	Notes
Judith Fiton	Brecon Film Society	Powys	Film society/ community cinema
Rob Stephen	Denbigh Film Club	Denbighshire	Film society/ community cinema
Joy Green	Haverfordwest Film Society	Pembrokeshire	Film society/ community cinema
Kendall Evans	New Quay Memorial Hall	Ceredigion	Film society/ community cinema
Susanna Capon	Theatr Mwldan Film Society	Ceredigion	Film society/ community cinema
Julia Grime	Clywd Theatr Cymru	Flintshire	Mixed use venue
Tracy Thomas	Crosshands Hall and Cinema	Carmarthenshire	Mixed use venue
Andrew Kerr	Monmouthshire Mobile Movies	Monmouthshire	Mobile cinema network
Ian Kerry	Flicks in the Sticks	Powys	Mobile cinema network
Phill Walkley	Moviola	Various	Mobile cinema network
Deborah Parker	BFFS	-	Film support agency
Emma Flatley	Ffilm Cymru Wales	-	Film support agency
Siobhan Ashe	Sinemau Cymru	-	Exhibitor network
Fiona Liddell	WCVA	-	Non-film support agency
Janet Thickpenny	Big Lottery Fund Wales	-	Non-film support agency

Appendix 2: Rural community film exhibitors in Wales

Table 15: Community exhibitors in rural and semi rural Local Authority areas

Community cinema	Local Authority	Exhibitor type
Abergavenny Film Society	Monmouthshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Aberystwyth Arts Centre	Ceredigion	Mixed use venue
Bangor University Film Society	Gwynedd	Film society/ comm. cinema
Brecon Film Society	Powys	Film society/ comm. cinema
Brynamman Public Hall Cinema	Carmarthenshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Bulwark Community Centre	Monmouthshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Cadog Film Club	Carmarthenshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Carmarthen Bay Film Festival	Carmarthenshire	Film festival
Catbrook Memorial Hall	Monmouthshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Cinema'r Byd (Gwallgofiad) - Cell B	Gwynedd	Film society/ comm. cinema
Cinematic - Gisda	Gwynedd	Film society/ comm. cinema
Clwyd Theatr Cymru	Flintshire	Mixed use venue
Colwinston Village Hall	Vale of Glam.	Film society/ comm. cinema
Cowbridge Big Screen	Vale of Glam.	Film society/ comm. cinema
Crosshands Hall and Cinema	Carmarthenshire	Mixed use venue
Cwmyoy Memorial Hall	Monmouthshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Cyfeillion Hen Ysgol Llangwnnadl	Gwynedd	Film society/ comm. cinema
Cymuned Pennant Community Hall	Ceredigion	Film society/ comm. cinema
Denbigh Film Club	Denbighshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Dragon Theatre	Gwynedd	Mixed use venue
Drill Hall Film Night	Monmouthshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Film Night at Pelham Hall	Monmouthshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Films On The Narth	Monmouthshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Fishguard Film Society	Pembrokeshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Galeri Caernafon	Gwynedd	Mixed use venue
Glyndwr University Film Club	Wrexham	Film society/ comm. cinema
Harlech Film Society	Gwynedd	Film society/ comm. cinema
Haverfordwest Film Society	Pembrokeshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Llancarfan Community Cinema	Vale of Glam.	Film society/ comm. cinema
Llanddewi Rhydderch Village Hall	Monmouthshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Llandovery Community Cinema	Carmarthenshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Llandrindod and District U3A	Powys	Film society/ comm. cinema
Llanfair Kilgeddin	Monmouthshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Llanfoist Village Hall	Monmouthshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Melin y Coed Community Cinema	Conwy	Film society/ comm. cinema
Memo Arts Centre	Vale of Glam.	Mixed use venue
Montgomery Movie Club	Powys	Film society/ comm. cinema
Murchfield Hall Community Cinema	Vale of Glam.	Film society/ comm. cinema
Narberth Film Society	Pembrokeshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Neuadd Buddug	Gwynedd	Mixed use venue
Neuadd Dwyfor	Gwynedd	Mixed use venue
New Quay Memorial Hall	Ceredigion	Film society/ comm. cinema
Newport Memorial Hall	Pembrokeshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Occasional Cinema	Gwynedd	Film society/ comm. cinema
Penarth Pier Pavillion	Vale of Glam.	Mixed use venue
Peterston super Ely Village Hall	Vale of Glam.	Film society/ comm. cinema
Presteigne Film Society	Powys	Film society/ comm. cinema
Savoy Theatre	Monmouthshire	Mixed use venue

Community cinema	Local Authority	Exhibitor type
Scala Cinema and Arts Centre	Denbighshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Screen at Hay, The	Powys	Film society/ comm. cinema
Silver Screen Usk	Monmouthshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
South Ridgeway Comm. Association	Pembrokeshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
St Arvans Memorial Hall	Monmouthshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
St Donats Arts Centre	Vale of Glamorgan	Mixed use venue
Talybont Flix	Powys	Film society/ comm. cinema
The Barn at West Farm	Vale of Glamorgan	Film society/ comm. cinema
Theatr Colwyn & Rialto Film Club	Conwy	Mixed use venue
Theatr Gwaun	Pembrokeshire	Mixed use venue
Theatr Mwldan Film Society	Ceredigion	Film society/ comm. cinema
Tintern Film Nights	Monmouthshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Torch Theatre	Pembrokeshire	Mixed use venue
Trinity St Davids Film Nights	Pembrokeshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Ty Mawr Mansion Country House	Ceredigion	Film society/ comm. cinema
Ucheldre Centre	Anglesey	Mixed use venue
Undy Film Night	Monmouthshire	Film society/ comm. cinema
Valleys Film Society	Powys	Film society/ comm. cinema
Venue Cymru	Conwy	Mixed use venue
Wales One World Film Festival	Ceredigion	Film festival
Wyeside Arts Centre	Powys	Mixed use venue
Yr Hen Ysgol Film Club	Pembrokeshire	Film society/ comm. cinema

Sources: BFFS, ICO, Ffilm Cymru Wales, Big Lottery Fund Wales, Bigger Picture Research

* Associate Members of Moviola

[end]

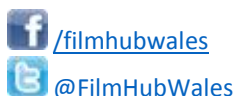
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Film Hub Wales
Canolfan Ffilm Cymru



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