

# Taking your Cinema Outdoors

As cinemas around us contemplate re-opening and festivals plan for the future, you're undoubtedly trying to decide what makes most financial sense for your organisation, whilst also keeping a connection with your audience. Around the world we've seen an increase in drive-in cinemas and pop-up screenings in outdoor spaces. This resource is designed with the input of experienced providers, to help you decide whether outdoor cinema is right for you.

## Top Tips

1

**Get inspiration from others to decide if you want to run something in house, or if a hire/partnership with an established operator, is a better fit for you:**

- [Torch Sunset Cinema](#), Milford Haven (available for hire, including DCP),
- [TAPE Music and Film](#), Colwyn (Nano and 16" inflatable Airscreens available for hire),
- [SiniMôn](#), Anglesey (available for hire),
- [Flicks in the Sticks](#), Powys (available for hire),
- [Lost Lands Cinema](#), Cardiff (available for hire),
- [University of South Wales](#) (available for hire),
- [Magic Lantern](#), Tywyn,
- [Street Food Cinema](#), Cardiff,
- [Adventure Drive-In](#), Margam Park (in association with Tesco),
- [@The Drive-In](#), Sully (in association with Suzuki),
- [Paul Williams Events](#), Fonmon Castle,
- [Luna Cinema](#), UK wide,
- [Cinema and Co](#), Swansea (more info coming soon).

2

**Your event plans are compliant with Covid-19 safety regulations. Review Government guidance and have a full plan and risk assessment ready to discuss with local police, fire stations, your MP and council.**

- Culture and heritage destinations and venues: [guidance for a phased return](#),
- [UKCA guidance: Drive-in and Other Outdoor Cinemas](#) – keeping workers and customers safe during COVID-19,
- Consider site capacity and how weather conditions and cleaning requirements might affect this. You could ask audiences to bring their own chairs but draw sections on the ground to regulate social distancing,
- Have enough staff in place to implement regulations and a plan for action in the event of anti-social behaviour,
- Sign up to the track and trace system.

3

**Make sure that you have the correct licenses in place. If the event is not covered under your premise license, you may need a temporary event notice from your local council:**

- See the [licensing act 2003](#),
- Temporary [event notice](#).



Sunset Cinema © Torch Theatre

4

Check you have the correct film license for outdoor screening. Some distributors have a separate process for outdoor events and approve each one individually. You may be able to link the event to your main theatrical cinema account in some cases.

- Filmbank Media [outdoor screenings\\*](#),
- Filmbank Media [drive-in screenings\\*](#),

\*Filmbank pricing starts at £139 (exc. VAT) per screening or 40% of your Box Office return. They are currently accepting cancellations in writing up to 24 hrs before event.

5

Consider the format. Torch Theatre have a portable DCP solution for hire but the majority operate with Blu-Ray and some titles (like *Twin Town*) are only available on DVD. 4K UHD discs are another option for some titles.

6

Give careful consideration to the kit you need and make sure it's suitable for outdoor use:

- Consider your screen including the size you need. Fast fold screens must be secured, with both cable and screen protected from weather conditions. Inflatable air screens and high definition LED screens are often more robust but expensive and heavy to transport,
- You may also want to consider brightness, colour contrast, IP rating, length of guaranteed pixel life, pixilation tolerance and refresh rate control.
- Source a weatherproof PA for sound outdoors and consider pitch,
- For drive-ins, apply for a [radio broadcast license](#) from Ofcom. Bluetooth speakers are an option but less practical during Covid-19 and they can have a time-lag problem compared to FM transmission,
- Consider your power source and consumption. Generators need to be risk assessed carefully and can they can create sound issues,
- Recommended suppliers include:
  - Stage and Sound [Services](#)
  - [Jack Elderfield](#) - Lecturer in Sound, Lighting design and Live Production, Technology at the University of South Wales (USW),
  - [SWG events](#) Bristol for LED screen hire,
  - [Tantrwm](#) for LED screen and full outdoor event kit,
  - [Transition Video](#),
  - [Urban Cinema](#), Sheffield,
  - [Skylight Cinema](#),
  - [Purple Cat](#).

### IP (Ingress Protection) Ratings Guide

SOLIDS		WATER	
1	Protected against a solid object greater than 50 mm such as a hand.	1	Protected against vertically falling drops of water. Limited ingress permitted.
2	Protected against a solid object greater than 12.5 mm such as a finger.	2	Protected against vertically falling drops of water with enclosure tilted up to 15 degrees from the vertical. Limited ingress permitted.
3	Protected against a solid object greater than 2.5 mm such as a screwdriver.	3	Protected against sprays of water up to 60 degrees from the vertical. Limited ingress permitted for three minutes.
4	Protected against a solid object greater than 1 mm such as a wire.	4	Protected against water splashed from all directions. Limited ingress permitted.
5	Dust Protected. Limited ingress of dust permitted. Will not interfere with operation of the equipment. Two to eight hours.	5	Protected against jets of water. Limited ingress permitted.
6	Dust tight. No ingress of dust. Two to eight hours.	6	Water from heavy seas or water projected in powerful jets shall not enter the enclosure in harmful quantities.
Rating Example: <b>IP65</b> INGRESS PROTECTION		7	Protection against the effects of immersion in water between 15 cm and 1 m for 30 minutes.
		8	Protection against the effects of immersion in water under pressure for long periods.

Example of LED screen benefits © USW

- **Recommended Manufacturers include:**

- Leyard Optoelectronics Co. Ltd
- Shenzhen AOTO Electronics
- SiliconCore Technology
- Christie Digital
- Daktonics
- Novastar
- NEC Display Solutions
- ProLights
- Lighthouse Technologies
- ROE creative display
- Absen
- Unilumin
- PixelFLEX
- Barco
- NanoLumens
- Panasonic
- Planar
- SGM
- Martin P3
- ADJ

7

**Consider screening month and start time:**

- May, August and September can be better times for outdoor cinema. Many pick films according to time in the calendar year i.e. shorter films in July, If screening in autumn or winter, it is possible but tell your audience to wrap up warm,
- A benefit of high definition LED screens is that they can be used at all times of day,
- Do site visits at different times and be aware of lights coming on in the area after dark.
- Consider your viewing angle and/or car placement. Calculate your viewing distance:

### Pixel Pitch Viewing Distance Calculation

As a rough rule of thumb for an image to look 'good', i.e. pixels begin to become indistinguishable:

Pixel Pitch x 2.5m for good viewing angle  
 $10\text{mm pitch} \times 2.5\text{m} = 25\text{m}+$   
 $1.9\text{mm pitch} \times 2.5\text{m} = 4.75\text{m}+$

**The smallest viewing distance and LED display specification**

Viewing Distance (m)	3 ~ 5	5 ~ 8	8 ~ 10	10 ~ 12	12 ~ 16	16 ~ 20	20 ~ 25	> 25
Viewing Distance (ft)	10 ~ 16	16 ~ 26	26 ~ 33	33 ~ 39	39 ~ 52	39 ~ 66	66 ~ 82	> 82
Pixel Pitches used depending on pixilation tolerance	P3 P4.75	P4.75 P5 P6 P7.62	P7.62 P8 P10	P10 P12	P12 P14 P16	P16 P20	P20 P25	P25 P31.25

nanolumens(2017)

© USW

8

**Prioritise accessibility for your audience:**

- Consider use of accessible formats (subtitling and audio description) where possible,
- Use signs at entrances to enable audiences to instruct staff as to whether they need access to facilities (with closer parking available and traffic management),
- Consider how flat the surface is for your event,
- Consider pricing. Some offer free tickets as a tool from community engagement, others offer discounts on the back seat tickets for drive ins where view is obstructed.
- Book accessible toilets:
  - o [Abba Loos](#), Aberystwyth,
  - o [A1 Group](#), Bridgend.

Check out [inclusivcinema.org](http://inclusivcinema.org) for more support.

9

### Consider your content:

- Avoid sing-alongs during Covid-10. Choose safe live performances and extra features such as pre-corded or streamed video and audio Q&As. TAPE did a special add on with Rhyl Model Aeroplane club during *Close Encounters*, where drones flew up behind the screen with the Mothership!
- Feel good films are proving popular,
- Some titles are not available or need extra approval,
- Add-ons like food offers may be prohibited due to Covid-19. Check Government guidance.



Sinemaes © BAFTA Cymru

10

### Plan your budget:

- Know your breakeven point,
- Weigh up the benefit to your organisation and marketing impact if you did make a loss,
- Do you need funding to buy kit and deliver the programme and is this available? Do the costs of kit ownership/maintenance exceed rental?
- Is it more cost effective to work in partnership.

# Get in touch



@FilmHubWales  
[www.filmhubwales.org](http://www.filmhubwales.org)

Hana Lewis,  
Strategic Manager  
02920 353 740  
[hana@filmhubwales.org](mailto:hana@filmhubwales.org)

Lisa Nesbitt,  
Development Officer  
02920 311 067  
[lisa@filmhubwales.org](mailto:lisa@filmhubwales.org)

Megan David,  
Marketing Officer  
02920 311 057  
[megan@filmhubwales.org](mailto:megan@filmhubwales.org)