



Media Release

9th November 2020

For immediate release

Film Hub Wales awards £52,000 in Covid-19 recovery funds to Welsh cinemas and festivals

Film venues put wellbeing at the forefront of their post-Covid-19 reopening programmes

Film Hub Wales (FW) has awarded £52,000 in National Lottery funding, through the BFI FAN Film Exhibition Fund, to 15 Welsh independent cinemas and film festivals as they plan for reopening.

Funds will be used to aid recovery, enabling venues to safely restart British and international film screenings, including through cabaret style seating and 'big screen bubbles', so that they can reconnect with the most isolated Welsh communities affected by lockdown.

Socially-distanced film activities will take place Wales-wide, creating safe spaces where people can still travel the world via the big screen, at affordable prices. Audiences will be at the heart of decision making, with their feedback valued by venues as they rebuild.

For example, TAPE in Old Colwyn is reinstating Sofa Cinema and will screen *Sanctuary* in partnership with a new local dating agency for people with learning disabilities. In Barry, the Memo Arts Centre will create 'big screen Bub-L' activities with digital and take-away crafts, and in Tywyn the Magic Lantern will 're-light the magic lantern', positioning the cinema as a bold, brave beacon for the future.

Since the pandemic began, many sites have been unable to open their doors to the public. With an uncertain future still ahead, they have been working to diversify their business models, develop robust health and safety procedures and secure critical alternative sources of income.

Hana Lewis, Strategic Manager of Film Hub Wales explains:

"We need to recognise the impact of cinemas in our communities and the potential loss we will all face if they close as a result of the pandemic. From Neuadd Ogwen, which provided food to 600 people via its foodbank, to the Magic Lantern and Theatr Gwaun, which both delivered medical supplies and mental health support to vulnerable patrons, independent venues have gone above and beyond to help those in most need. They have done this whilst also planning for their own uncertain futures, interrogating their business plans, reviewing their approaches to access and equality and exploring environmental sustainability. These funds will help them to restart crucial social, economic and cultural provision through on-screen activity."

Annie Grundy, Co-Director of The Magic Lantern:

“Getting this funding enables us to wrap a big ball of cotton wool around the British, independent and foreign language films in our programme which in the old days before the corona-coaster we underwrote ourselves. It ensures that even with a much reduced capacity (we have gone from 280 to 36 available seats due to social distancing) our audience can rock up to see an eclectic mix of fantastic films on screen at the Magic Lantern.”

Sue Whitbread, CEO of Theatr Gwaun adds:

“Film Hub Wales’ support means we can move ahead with our new film strategy. Theatr Gwaun will now focus on diverse, independent films refreshing interest and developing new audiences in our community. Funding is essential, but equally the expert advice, mentoring and enthusiasm of the Hub team has given us a tremendous boost.”

Blanche Giacci lives a few streets away from Theatr Gwaun and in normal times would attend screenings at least once a week:

“Theatr Gwaun is an essential part of our community, providing cinema, culture and entertainment for all age groups and interests. It is a social hub which improves the community’s well-being.”

Ben Luxford, Head of UK Audiences at the BFI adds:

“This year has shown the absolute importance and need of programming beyond the mainstream, and we’re pleased to be able to support exhibitors in Wales continue to do that.”

The BFI FAN Film Exhibition Fund is made possible thanks to National Lottery funding, repurposed by the British Film Institute (BFI) via its Film Audience Network (FAN). The fund offers critical relief and business continuity to exhibitors across the whole of the UK. Funds in Wales are administered by FHW via Chapter as the Film Hub Lead Organisation.

Ends

For images, please copy and paste the following link into your browser:

<http://bit.ly/BFIFilmExhibFund>

For more information, please contact:

Megan David, Marketing Officer, on 02920 311 057 / megan@filmhubwales.org (part time Tues-Thurs),

Lisa Nesbitt, Development Officer, on 02920 311 067 / lisa@filmhubwales.org

Hana Lewis, Strategic Manager, on 02920 353 740 hana@filmhubwales.org

Projects Supported

Region: North Wales

TAPE (Old Colwyn):

Working closely with their partner organisations, TAPE will reinstate weekly cinema screenings

in support of their community. With a focus on social isolation, mental health and wellbeing, TAPE offer a variety of engagement and supportive programmes to help people stay connected.

There will be all sorts on offer, from new Welsh releases, to youth led events and a screening of Sanctuary in partnership with a new local dating agency for people with learning disabilities. TAPE is also home to the Coastline Film Festival, BFI Film Academy, large scale outdoor cinema events and the inaugural inclusion film festival.

[Website](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

Region: North West Wales

CellB (Blaenau Ffestiniog):

Gwallgofiaid Cellb will re-connect audiences in Blaenau Ffestiniog to the wider world, post Covid-19, by exploring culture and climate change on screen. They aim to create a safe space where the community can travel the world through film, at affordable prices. They will start local with the history of Wales and take audiences to Patagonia, Latin America and beyond, where they will discover hidden languages and cultures. As a youth led enterprise, they work to expand access to the arts for young people in Blaenau but also support their elderly audiences through regular accessible screenings, forums and gift packs to keep them connected during isolation.

[Website](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

Dragon Theatre (Barmouth):

A safe steady approach to audiences' return to the Dragon Theatre, Barmouth, through diverse, non-mainstream content. Using Filmbank's booking deal to show eight films from January to March, they will offer 12 seats per screening with 'bubbles' in their stalls and balcony. Films for older audiences, with smaller bubbles will be introduced, enabling both regular and new audiences to enjoy the cinema experience in Snowdonia again.

[Website](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

Galeri and Galeri Youth Project (Caernarfon):

Activity covers Galeri's roadmap as they prepare to re-open the cinema programme: Engagement > reaching out > planning > programming > re-opening. They continue to develop accessibility, with a variety of relaxed screenings, LGBT+ youth led programming, the PICS film festival for young audiences, BSL supported marketing campaigns and the aim to become Makaton friendly by 2021.

Audiences will be at the heart of decision making as the venue reopens, empowering people to take part in the development post Covid-19.

Galeri will also take part in a year-long pilot led by Film London called the Young Audiences (YA) Generation Scheme, which will test a UK wide independent film ticketing scheme for young audiences aged 16-25.

[Website](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

Neuadd Ogwen (Bethesda):

Neuadd Ogwen, Bethesda, will be offering socially distanced film screenings, cabaret style, with table service for pre-arranged groups upon reopening. They will offer a safe, relaxed environment for extended households to reconnect and enjoy films together.

As Bethesda reaches its 200th birthday, audiences can expect some celebrations via home grown films from Wales as well as a range of family friend, environmental and adventure themes.

[Website](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

Canolfan Ucheldre Centre (Holyhead):

Canolfan Ucheldre aim to inspire audiences with a series of exciting, diverse and inspirational films screenings including the 6th SeeMôr Film Festival. There will be opportunities to get involved with decision making as the venue reopens.

The community will be able experience a range of different cultures and perspectives on screen, curated by a local programmer from a minoritised background, with lived experience.

[Website](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

Region: North East Wales**Wicked Wales Film / P&M Community Group (Rhyl):**

In addition to getting their community cinema back up and running, Wicked Wales have moved their youth led festival online in October 2020. A programme of short international films made by young people and the latest British and independent films to audience in Rhyl and beyond.

Schools and youth groups will have a menu of activities to choose from, including Into Film workshops and Welsh feature films. They are seeking out the young film makers in Wales through learning institutions, training organisations, industry and national partners to bring together a collection of films for a Wales only competition which will form part of a 'Emerging Film from Wales' day in March 2021.

[Website](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

Region: South East Wales**Memo Arts Centre (Barry):**

Memo Arts Centre (MAC) in Barry, will create affordable 'big screen Bub-L' activities upon reopening, designed to welcome both new and existing audiences. Visitors will experience the big screen in socially distanced bubbles, which have been created with accessibility and creative wellbeing in mind. Digital and craft activities will be available online and to take away, along with grown-up or family focused treat bags served to cabaret style tabled seats. MAC will listen to and incorporate feedback from their audience as they shape new and diverse programming strategies post Covid.

[Website](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

Savoy Theatre Monmouth:

Occupying the oldest known theatre site in Wales, the historic Savoy Monmouth, aims to reopen for select cinema events from late October. They are working hard to reconnect with audience members during the pandemic and will present a selection of films with Welsh connections, for young and older audiences alike, including the BFI-backed films Saint Maud and Eternal Beauty.

[Website](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

Region: West Wales

Commodore (Aberystwyth):

The Commodore in Aberystwyth is a family run cinema in a university town, offering many young people their first cinema experience. They will bring a programme of mainstream, British and international film back to local audiences post Covid-19 to support local, rural, communities including young people from primary to student age.

[Website](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

Magic Lantern (Tywyn):

The team will 'Re-Light the Magic Lantern,' presenting an exciting and diverse reopening programme of film from mid-October through to end of March, offering audiences an opportunity to discover life on the other side of the world, whilst also reflecting local people's lives, loves and situations.

At least 50 Independent, British or World cinema screenings alongside a mainstream programme, will reflect and respect the diversity and desires of their audience. Having made adjustments to the space, they hope to offer accessible, greener, affordable events that don't compromise the audiences experience post Covid. Bold, brave and a beacon for the future.

[Website](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

Region: South West Wales

Torch Theatre (Milford Haven):

The Torch hope to reignite passion for film and re-engage their diverse audiences, both old and new, encouraging a return to the cinema after being closed for over 7 months. Using digital and traditional marketing and their community networks, they aim to support and inspire underrepresented and vulnerable audiences whilst developing the next generation of cinema goers. Audiences can expect a movies and memories strand, the Into Film Festival alongside their young ambassador's programme and an eclectic mix of specialist themed seasons.

[Website](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

Theatr Gwaun (Fishguard):

As a community owned and run cinema located in the heart of rural Pembrokeshire, Theatr Gwaun plan to reopen as a cinema from mid-November, offering a refreshed film programme of 6 socially distanced screenings per week. Reflecting on the diversity of their film programme,

Gwaun will offer supported screenings of new releases and screen favourites, for those with barriers from travel, to cost, and wider social issues. Audiences can expect event nights, audience reviews and a chance to get involved in online forums.

[Website](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

Region: Wales - Wide

WOW Film Festival:

WOW will open their twentieth anniversary festival on International Women's Day with an online WOW Film Club screening and panel discussion led by Dr Nilu Ahmed. Their live festival of 10 – 12 films in Aberystwyth at and Kinokulture plus online events, will aim to reconnect with their loyal audiences and offer a 'Pay What You Feel' online programme of UK premieres and events to audiences anywhere in Wales and UK-wide.

They will run a 'Best of WOW' strand that can be voted on by the audience prior to the festival, allowing them the chance to directly influence the film programme. They will work with diverse and seldom seen audiences, such as refugees and asylum seekers, to co-create the events and run discussions alongside the films.

[Website](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

Notes to Editors:

About Film Hub Wales

Film Hub Wales aims to bring more films, to more people, in more places around Wales. Part of the BFI Film Audience Network and supported by National Lottery funding, FHW regularly develops inventive ways for people in Wales to go to the cinema with its independent member venues.

Film Hub Wales (FHW) is one of eight UK wide 'hubs' part of the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN) and supported with National Lottery funding, with Chapter appointed as the Film Hub Lead Organisation (FHLO) in Wales. We aim to develop the exhibition sector through dedicated research, training and audience development project support. Since Film Hub Wales set up in 2013, we've supported over 225 exciting cinema projects, reaching over 465,000 audience members.

We are also proud to lead on the UK inclusive cinema strategy on behalf of BFI FAN.

[Website](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

About the BFI Film Audience Network

Supported by National Lottery funding, the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN), is central to the BFI's aim to ensure the greatest choice of film is available for everyone. Established in 2012 to build wider and more diverse UK cinema audiences for British and international film, FAN is a unique, UK-wide collaboration made up of eight Hubs managed by leading film organisations

and venues strategically placed around the country. FAN also supports talent development with BFI NETWORK Talent Executives in each of the English Hubs, with a mission to discover and support talented writers, directors and producers at the start of their careers.

BFI FAN Film Hubs are:

- Film Hub Midlands is led by Broadway, Nottingham working in partnership with the Birmingham-based Flatpack
- Film Hub North is led collectively by Showroom Workstation, Sheffield and HOME Manchester
- Film Hub South East is led by the Independent Cinema Office
- Film Hub South West is led by Watershed in Bristol
- Film Hub Scotland is led by Glasgow Film Theatre
- Film Hub Northern Ireland is led by Queen's University Belfast
- Film Hub Wales is led by Chapter in Cardiff
- Film Hub London is led by Film London

[Website](#)

About the BFI

The BFI is the UK's lead organisation for film, television and the moving image. It is a cultural charity that:

- Curates and presents the greatest international public programme of world cinema for audiences; in cinemas, at festivals and online,
- Cares for the BFI National Archive – the most significant film and television archive in the world,
- Actively seeks out and supports the next generation of filmmakers,
- Works with Government and industry to make the UK the most creatively exciting and prosperous place to make film internationally.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.

[Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)

About the National Lottery

Thanks to National Lottery players, up to £600 million of funding has been made available to support communities across the UK during the Coronavirus crisis.

The National Lottery is playing a critical role in supporting people, projects and communities during these challenging times.

By playing The National Lottery, you are making an amazing contribution to the nationwide-response to combating the impact of COVID-19 on local communities across the UK.

[Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)

About Chapter

Chapter is one of Europe's largest and most dynamic arts centres with cinemas, theatres, exhibition spaces, studios, a café, award-winning bars, over 60 cultural workspaces and more.

Chapter has an international reputation for excellence, innovation and collaboration. It offers an ever-changing programme of the best performance, films and exhibitions from Wales and from around the world.

[Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)