



Media Release
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For immediate release

Film Hub Wales to Support Seven Welsh Cinemas with the Cost of Living Crisis

Seven independent cinemas across Wales will receive funding from Film Hub Wales to support their venues with rising costs this spring.

As venues balance significant financial pressures, funds will be used to ensure that the best UK independent and international films continue to reach communities at affordable prices.

At Cellb in Blaenau Ffestiniog, their energy bills have escalated by 700% in the last quarter. So this youth-led venue is getting creative to maintain the modern cinematic entertainment offer that the community knows and loves, at reasonable prices. They are redeveloping their Blaenau Vista Ffilm Club with specialist Q&A screenings such as *Enys Men* and Welsh made *Y Sŵn*, which will screen with a Director Q&A on March 10th in celebration of Cellb's 16th birthday, at £5 per ticket. It will be followed by a Q&A for young audiences around the theme of protest with Lecturer Selwyn Williams and local renegade Ceri Cunnington.

At Theatr Gwaun in Pembrokeshire, the cinema is working with its Community Film Panel and Fishguard Film Society, to recover audiences post pandemic, while balancing the financial pressures resulting from inflation. They are leading the way with an exciting programme that puts audiences first. Funds will support their independent cinema screenings from January to April 2023 with films such as South Korean mystery *Decision to Leave* and West Walian Western *The Toll*, plus their affordable £3 Saturday Morning Kids Club and POINT Presents initiative in partnership with their local youth centre.

Paul Howe, Manager at Theatr Gwaun explains how the cost of living crisis is affecting cinemas:

"These are very tough times for cinemas. Like many small, single screen, independent cinemas across Wales, Theatr Gwaun is grappling with the challenges of the cost of living crisis; determined to weather the storm. Our operating costs are under pressure from a combination of increasing fuel / trading costs and inflation / government policy driving an inevitable and much needed increase in staff wages. That is only one side of the story of course. Our audiences are also making tough decisions about their domestic budgets. A laser focus on costs, balanced with innovative, creative programming, engaging marketing and greater collaboration with supportive funding bodies such as Film Hub Wales are strategy threads that have never been so important as we navigate our way through these difficult times."

The Magic Lantern Cinema in Tywyn faces the same steep rise in energy costs as the people in its community. Based in a rurally isolated area, where income is often connected to seasonal tourism, the cinema is a vital social space but audiences have confided that the cost of living crisis is impacting on their cinema-going.

Annie Grundy at The Magic Lantern explains:

"Our audiences have told us that they can't afford to see all the films they want to but it's never been more important for us that they are able to attend. So we're launching our

'Wonderful Wednesdays' £3 offer in March as well as partnering with Gwynedd Youth Services to offer free screenings for 11-25-year-olds. We're also holding an open day to start a conversation about what we can do to help both young and older audiences who are feeling the pinch. Seeing a film on the big screen with surround sound is great value for a quality night out in Tywyn and we keep our prices as affordable as we can.'

Funding has also been confirmed at Wyeside Arts Centre (Builth Wells), The Torch (Milford Haven), The Dragon Theatre (Barmouth) and Pontardawe Arts Centre (Swansea Valley).

Hana Lewis, Film Hub Wales Manager explains why the fund was launched:

"We've seen a number of much loved cinemas close across the UK in recent months, such as Kinokulture on the Welsh border and Cardiff's Premiere Cinema. Cinemas are impacted by the cost of living crisis on many levels, from rising supply costs to standstill or reduced funding. We are also in a new normal, still rebuilding audiences post-Covid and evolving as organisations. We know that this funding can't solve the crisis for these venues but as the heart of many Welsh communities, we're delighted to support them in whatever way we can and give people a chance to escape to a new world on screen."

Film Hub Wales is made possible thanks to funding from the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN), awarding funds from the National Lottery. BFI FAN offers support to exhibitors across the whole of the UK, to boost cultural programming and engage diverse audiences. In Wales, activity is led by Film Hub Wales, managed by Chapter.

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Notes to Editors:

Venue Activity

North West Wales

Cellb (Blaenau Ffestiniog)

With their energy bills escalating by 700% in the last quarter, this youth-led venue is getting creative to maintain the modern cinematic entertainment offer that the community knows and loves, at reasonable prices. They are redeveloping their Blaenau Vista Ffilm Club which started in 2014, with specialist Q&A screenings such as *Enys Men* with a talk on Super 8 film with Clare Marie Bailey (YNYS MON). Welsh made *Y Sŵn* will also screen on March 10th in celebration of Cellb's 16th birthday with a Director Q&A with Roger Williams (*Gwledd*), plus school screening Q&As around the theme of protest with Lecturer Selwyn Williams and local renegade Ceri Cunningham. On April 21st, Mark Jenkin (*Enys Men*, *Bait*) will join the film club to show some shorts from his collection, followed by Super 8 film workshops with young people to celebrate 20 years of Gwallgofiaid - their not for profit social enterprise that provides creative training for the young people of Blaenau Ffestiniog.

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

The Dragon Theatre (Barmouth)

The theme of the Dragon's programme this spring is humour. They aim to raise audience spirits during the cost of living crisis. Linking to their live comedy weekend at the end of March, teaser posters will appear around the town with joke competitions online. The Happy Dragon café will be open on Mondays, as part of Gwynedd Council's warm spaces,

providing free tea/coffee, hot lunch and supper. The films will provide afternoon entertainment and build their audience. On Fridays between 10am and 3pm lunch is offered with an afternoon film for older audiences as part of Gwynedd Council's community food scheme and loneliness and isolation project.

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

West Wales

The Magic Lantern (Tywyn)

Launching their 'Wonderful Wednesdays' £3 offer in March, The Magic Lantern have been listening to their audience feedback that they can't afford to see all the films they want to. They will have an open day to start an open conversation about what they can do to help, with both young and older audiences feeding back that they feel the pinch. Films such as *Blue Jean*, *A Bunch of Amateurs* and shorts on outdoor pursuits will be on offer, with the aim of welcoming audiences regularly in to the venue, supporting the Lantern as they face steep increases in energy costs.

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

Mid Wales

Wyeside Arts Centre (Builth Wells)

At Wyeside Arts Centre in Builth Wells, funds will support the cinema to screen the best new independent films such as *Blue Jean*, along with anticipated Welsh language feature *Y Sŵn*. Their Thursday subtitled screenings, relaxed screenings for children with autism and monthly matinees for older age groups aim to welcome audiences from across the local community.

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

South West Wales

The Torch (Milford Haven)

In Milford Haven, The Torch have seen increasing operational costs and competition from streaming services. To support their audiences, they have a new, reinvigorated, film guide and an exciting programme of films from *India Sweets and Spice* to *She is Love*, *Corsage* and *Enys Men*. Midweek matinees and early evening screenings make the film accessible to all ages, particularly for rural audiences travelling by limited public transport. The cinema offers subsidised tickets and meal discounts at their in-house café alongside certain films, plus they have a cinema loyalty card. They are also connecting with the local Milford Haven Pride event organisers and LGBTQIA+ groups to hold a special event around *Blue Jean* which explores the impacts of the Section 28 legislation.

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

Theatr Gwaun (Fishguard)

In Pembrokeshire, the cinema is working with its Community Film Panel and Fishguard Film Society, to recover audiences post pandemic, while balancing the financial pressures resulting from inflation. They are leading the way with an exciting programme that puts audiences first. Funds will support their independent cinema screenings from January to April 2023 with films such as South Korean mystery *Decision to Leave* and West Walian Western *The Toll*, plus their affordable £3 Saturday Morning Kids Club and POINT Presents initiative in partnership with their local youth centre.

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

South Wales

Pontardawe Arts Centre

Pontardawe are keeping their film offer affordable and accessible. Screening between Jan – April audiences can look forward to a special screening of *Pride* for LGBTQ+ history month, which will include interviews with cast, an introduction to the film and trivia quiz. They can also watch *Y Sŵn* which will have a Q&A with cast and crew and live translation hosted by

Menter Iaith. A host of other UK and international films will be on their big screen, including *Hit the Road*, *Alcarras*, *Empire of light*, *A Bunch of Amateurs*, *Corsage*, *She worked in a terrified state* and *The Quiet Girl*.

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

About Film Hub Wales

Film Hub Wales (FHW) celebrates cinema. We support organisations that screen film, from film festivals, to societies and mixed arts centres. Working with over [315 Welsh exhibitors](#), we aim to bring the best British and international film to all audiences across Wales and the UK. Since Film Hub Wales set up in 2013, we've supported over 300 exciting cinema projects, reaching over 560,000 audience members.

We're part of a UK wide network of eight hubs which forms the British Film Institute (BFI) [Film Audience Network](#) (FAN), made possible thanks to National Lottery funding. Film Hub Wales is managed by [Chapter](#).

We are also proud to lead on the UK [inclusive cinema](#) strategy on behalf of BFI FAN.

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

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 UK 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 Hubs in England, 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

We are a cultural charity, a National Lottery distributor, and the UK's lead organisation for film and the moving image. Our mission is:

- To support creativity and actively seek out the next generation of UK storytellers
- To grow and care for the BFI National Archive, the world's largest film and television archive
- To offer the widest range of UK and international moving image culture through our programmes and festivals - delivered online and in venue
- To use our knowledge to educate and deepen public appreciation and understanding

- To work with Government and industry to ensure the continued growth of the UK's screen industries

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

[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](#)