

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT FOR 2022-23

Season 42

This has without doubt been the financially most difficult year in my 30+ years of being a member of the club. Our club is not the only one to have seen a post Covid reduction in membership numbers, but our situation quickly had a significant impact on our finances.

The move during the Covid lockdowns to households watching at home “streamed” films and television programmes has undoubtedly been a factor in the reduced attendances we have experienced. It may also be that given the age profile of our audience, some may still feel vulnerable to catching the illness and have decided not to re-join.

Your Committee verbally reported earlier in the season that this year we would incur significant losses. Indeed such were the figures that the long term viability of the club was, and remains, a concern.

The Treasurer's report gives further details.

The Committee have discussed various options, including reducing the number of evenings in the season, not having double bills for the foreseeable future, but the bottom line is we need to increase the number of members.

We will be undertaking a promotional delivery to households in the Mayford area close to the hall, to alert residents to the club and extend a welcome to them.

The titles in our new season present an attractive range, including several that have only had a theatrical release this year and the season is I believe an attractive one for anyone who enjoys films. The club does ask all members to “spread the word”.

In terms of raising our profile, none of the present Committee are particularly knowledgeable about social media, which is increasing the default route used to promote clubs and events such as our film screenings. As a result I would appeal for any member with such skills to volunteer to help in our publicity drive.

This year Michael Widdup and Eugene Smith joined the club, and I'm sorry it's been a rather turbulent introductory experience for them! Both have thankfully been keen contributors to our meetings, offering fresh insight which has been welcomed.

Last year, Steve and Pauline Lock moved to Wiltshire and stood down from their roles in the club. However both have continued to be regular attendees and as no one volunteered to become the Membership Secretary, Steve has continued to cover that role.

Realistically however we need a new Membership Secretary as we cannot rely upon Steve's ongoing generosity.

I also wish to thank the other Committee Members for their hard work this year;

- Ishret Mirza has again been both Film Bookings Officer and our “library manager”, organising the loaning of discs the club has previously screened.
- Barbara and Jon Millington – Barbara has been the club secretary for many years and has again been on the “drinks crew” in the kitchen at our intervals.
- Michael Hipkins has been responsible for co-ordinating the film notes this year and I'd like to thank him and the note writers.

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- John Myall has again given countless hours to the club. His willingness to spend considerable time preparing the slides for the pre-film information, as well as calculating the arrangements for each screening, is something I wish to acknowledge.
- Steve Willson as the Treasurer has largely borne the brunt of the role of “bearer of bad news”, but again he is another diligent person, who alerted the Committee at the earliest opportunity to the projected financial shortfall.

Of course there are several other club members who without having a specific role provide considerable support to the club.

One consistent experience at the club is the delightful cakes, and I always smile at the interval to see the queue quickly form of those wanting sustenance!

Sheila Coles co-ordinates the rota and attends the table in the interval. She is one of the bakers, along with Freda Bishop, Diana James, Maggie Randall and Maureen Ward. Thank you all.

However in looking back at previous end of year reports, I note that the number on the rota is three fewer than 5 years ago, which is symptomatic of the changes we have experienced in membership.

The club also owes a considerable thank you to those who get to the hall early to set it up and then stay at the end to restore it. I salute you all.

Despite my best intentions, work commitments have meant that I've missed more films than I intended.

This July marks 30 years since my first date with Gill, having met at film screenings and each being “persuaded” by Tony Rozelaar to join the committee. As a result WNCC has played a significant part in our lives but this year I have found myself wondering how much longer can the club continue?

None of us are getting any younger;
we have seen membership numbers drop;
we have not appointed a new Membership secretary;
some Committee members have long term thoughts of moving away from this area;
publicising and promoting the club is a weakness;
we do not have a social media outlet
newspaper reading has declined dramatically;
journalism has also changed dramatically with few publications including listings of societies/clubs
film companies are releasing fewer films theatrically meaning we have fewer to choose from

I think this is the time for us to all to have a hard think about the long term future of the club. I'm convinced there is one but we need to determine how that can be achieved.

Finally, but not least, I thank my wife Gill, who has supported me in my role as Chairman for many years.

Wishing you all an enjoyable break, and I look forward to seeing you in September.

IAIN McGLASHAN