

REPORT FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CULTURE AND LEISURE SCRUTINY PANEL

Unfortunately, over the last 30 years, more than 40 cinemas closed down in Portsmouth, There being economic reasons as well as social reasons for this. Technology brought cinema into our homes with super film channels like Sky Cinema. When I arrived in Portsmouth in 2005, there was no art cinema provider in the city. I found that the cinema audience, including myself, had to travel to Chichester Cinema at New Park and Harbour Lights, Southampton - Picturehouse Cinemas. After No6 Cinema opened at the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard, the audience started to flock there but its programme was limited. It was quite a distance from the essential (Southsea) audience based in the PO4 (Southsea, Milton and Eastney) and PO5 (Southsea and Somerstown) postcode areas.

Data tells that most of the local film enthusiasts are based in this area and happy to travel to PO1 (including City Centre, Fratton, Buckland, Portsea, Landport and Kingston) to watch films. The PO3 (Copnor, Baffins, Anchorage Park and Hilsea) and PO1 areas remain the least populated with such a demographic. However, this only indicates the wide location within the city of Portsmouth Film Society (PFS) members.

When looking at statistics, the South East region has a total of 450 screens, with just 33 of these being specialised. The South East region has 73% of seats within commercial cinemas (59% in multiplexes), 12% are in mixed-use venues, and 8% in venues used by film societies and community cinemas. Cinema For All's Community Exhibitor Survey 2013/14 (2015) indicates 45% of responding societies (37 in number) were established since 2005: in that year film societies doubled the number of screenings of British films, documentaries, short films and alternative content (theatre and concerts).

The focus on multi-cultural programmes and events has been neglected over the last 10 years. Events such as the multicultural festival held at Castle Field are urgently needed. Portsmouth Race Equality Network Organisation (Preno) was a catalyst for bringing organisations together and help people from different races, cultures and communities. Sadly, both of them lost funding opportunities locally and regionally.

In reality, our festival films are either not reaching the particular target group(s), or, they are reaching those group(s) but those group(s) do not seem that interested in attending such festivals. The African Women's Forum (AWF) has not attended the Black History Month

festivals. We would like to engage with diverse groups from communities such as the Chinese, Bangladesh, India, Polish and Turkish to tailor programmes that encourage multi-cultural understanding and engagement. My observation is that cultural groups across the city are polarised and stay within their own community centres or places of worship or set their personalised meetings.

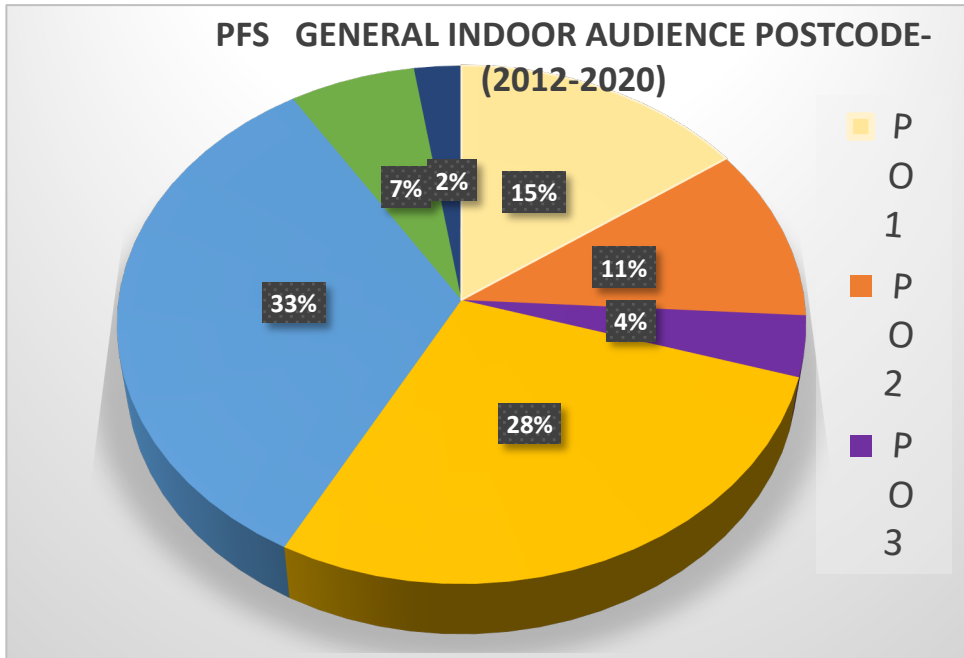
From our perspective, we host LGBTQ+, Black History Month and Recovery festivals, all including panels and speakers, which always receive positive feedback from attendees even though we are often not attracting a broader attendance that would benefit the target audience. We believe these festivals are needed in our city and help to close cultural gaps.

Young people aged between 16 and 25 include the students needing a safe space to interact and come together. Currently we are not identified or been popular for this type of audience; however, we have some university students coming to the cinema from different countries (eg the EU). We are very grateful that the University of Portsmouth (UoP) supports us for our events and sharing social media.

Southsea Cinema & Arts Centre offers a much needed venue for art exhibition space to showcase, send to and promote local artists' work. It is reserved until May. We have completed and will continue to run art workshops, filmmaking courses and training in our centre. These are especially important for the youth but the £200 fee for the film making (£20 for two hours for 10 weeks) is not affordable for many. At the cinema we run weekly club screenings for targeted audiences, eg KIDS AM (the most popular), Babes in Arms (for mothers and babies) and seniors. A good example of collaboration is our participation throughout February showing films during the Portsmouth BookFest for films adapted from books.

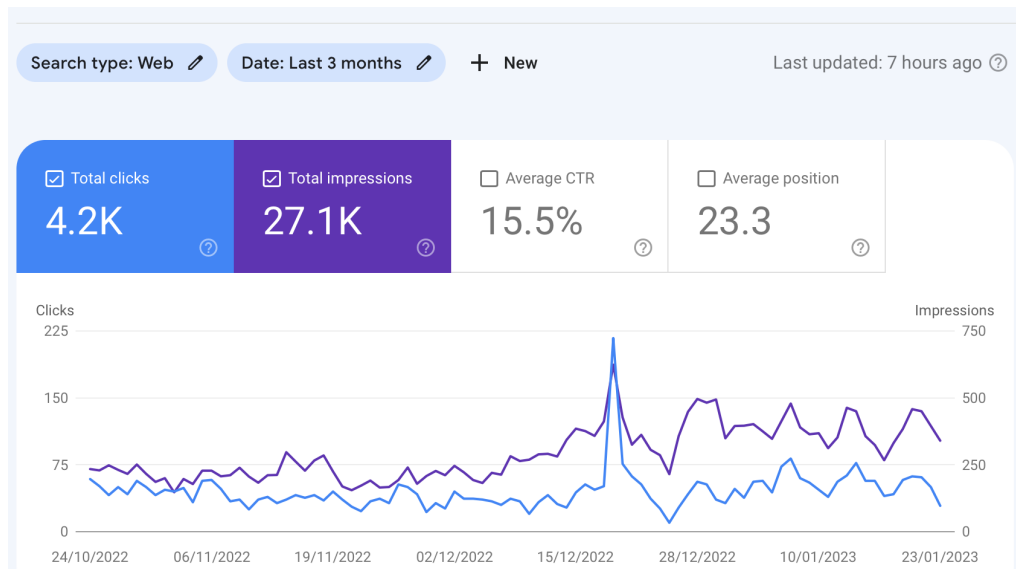
Several of our grant applications over the last year have been rejected by Arts Council England for courses for young people, film festival and art projects, including the use of the wall space outside of cinema wall for a pink panther mural, a project twice rejected by Arts Council England.

With promotional and financial support our economic situation is tenuous. We have 70 volunteers and they have limited time for working with us on a regular basis.



Demographics	City	Users	% Users
Language	1. Portsmouth	10,022	35.42%
Country	2. London	5,124	18.11%
City	3. Southampton	2,202	7.78%
System	4. (not set)	1,440	5.09%
Browser	5. Havant	1,089	3.85%
Operating System	6. Waterlooville	815	2.88%
Service Provider	7. Fareham	456	1.61%
Mobile	8. Ashburn	371	1.31%
Operating System	9. Bristol	322	1.14%
Service Provider	10. Chichester	255	0.90%
Screen Resolution			

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PFS Website Google Analytics Demographics (6 months)

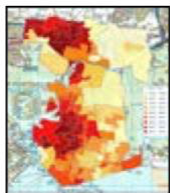
****What is specialised film?***

With a repertory programme, in addition to new releases, the cinema will work alongside local schools, film festivals etc to ensure that the cinema continues to champion the British Film Institute (BFI) standard of specialised film as the chosen programmed content. The research follows Film Hub South East's definition of specialised film: 'Independent British film, foreign language, documentary, archive (film from 1895 onwards), artists' work, short films, and work with stories and subjects relating to diversity for example Black, Asian, minority and ethnic; disability; LGBT+.'

The BFI itself states that "The BFI's definition of 'specialised film' relates to those films that do not sit easily within a mainstream and highly commercial genre. The BFI believes in the diversity of film and of audiences. We want films to find their audiences and audiences to build their appreciation of a wide range of films. A wider knowledge of film gives us a wider knowledge of different cultures and ideas. We believe that the on-going development of film culture relies on both familiarity with the great titles of film history, and on experimentation with new ideas and forms. "

Key facts about Portsmouth's levels of deprivation:

- Despite Portsmouth's attractive waterfront location in one of the UK's wealthiest regions, the city has pockets of deprivation that are some of the worst in the country.
- Results from the 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation show that Portsmouth's relative position has deteriorated compared with 2007 compared with England – Portsmouth is ranked 76rd of 326 local authorities in England, compared with 93rd of 354 authorities in 2007 (where 1 is the most deprived).
- For the overall index, 14 areas in Portsmouth are placed in the worst 10% of areas in England, an increase from 12 in the 2007 Index.
- 15% of Portsmouth's residents are income deprived based on the 2010 Indices of Deprivation.



The map on the left (click to enlarge) shows overall scores (taking account of all seven indicators: Income, Employment, Health deprivation and disability, Education, skills and training, Barriers to housing and services, Crime and disorder, and Living Environment) for deprivation levels in Portsmouth.

- The map indicates that Charles Dickens, Paulsgrove, Cosham and St. Thomas wards have LSOA areas with some of the worst deprivation levels in Portsmouth.
- Drayton & Farlington and Copnor are wards with least deprivation in comparison with the rest of Portsmouth.
- More people are suffering from employment deprivation (11,300 residents) than in 2007, when the figure was 10,500.

Please see the JSNA website for more information on deprivation in Portsmouth: www.portsmouth.gov.uk/living/19067.html.

because it is used for the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard's Action Stations. They sometimes screen content similar to a typical PFS programme, such as quality world cinema. However, unlike No6, Southsea Cinema's policy will be to have multiple screenings of the same film, giving the audience a greater opportunity to view it and engaging the audience with pre-screening speeches provided by specialists. This would allow the audience to address questions before and even after the screening.

Cruzon Cinema chain is planning to start the cinema (two screens) at the Knight and Lee from 2024 Spring. We hope this will affect more intersections for the local audience. The cinema is specialising in [art house films](#). They also have a [video on demand](#) service, [Curzon Home Cinema](#)

There are several local chain cinemas: Vue Cinema Portsmouth – 14 screens, 1,274 seats; ODEON Port Solent – 13 screens, 1,409 seats; Cineworld Cinema - Whiteley – 9 screens, 1,416 seats); however, due to the programming our main competitor is No6 Cinema. This is a part-time, 275 seat cinema, screening 3 films a week with CinemaPlus once a month and programmed by Picture House (the summer months may be a good time to launch as Picturehouse closes for 2 months).

In terms of location, No6 Cinema is not as central as the Southsea Cinema & Arts Centre and does not have access to the same passing trade that the Southsea Cinema would expect. No6 is based in the Portsmouth Historic Dockyard so they have an historic location. However, the venue is not available during the day

Personal Statement :

In 2009 I founded Portsmouth Film Society (PFS) and have since served as committee member and co-ordinator. I have completed training courses on programming and audience development from Cinovate and the Independent Cinema Office (ICO).

Although I have been a filmmaker for more than 20 years, I have gained a different kind of experience since founding PFS. There were challenges to the survival of the society, to the continuance of the film society as a volunteer-run operation, and there still is. This has only been escalated by the current pandemic.

In February 2017 I began my PhD project on film audience in non-theatrical exhibition at the University of Portsmouth. I wish to create a publication and reflect on it. My PhD project received references from: Cinema For All, ICO and Film Hub South West, Watershed- BFI Film Audience Network (FAN).

Portsmouth is an underserved area for cultural development, as well as cinema exhibition where specialised programming is limited to a part-time provision. My personal drive was also ignited by a wish to live somewhere with a suitably diverse range of options and choice. Weary of working under corporate provisions, I have a strong desire to operate out of my own artistic vision as well as this years-long interest in film exhibition. PFS/Southsea Cinema regularly shows an eclectic mix of films and have organised pop up cinema at open air events in Southsea and in the Isle of Wight. However, we have been without a secured venue for over a year at this point, and I grow increasingly worried about our mission fading. I hope this plan has demonstrated that opportunities to tap into the prosperous and youth-oriented environment of central Southsea are limitless. We need the Southsea Community Cinema and Arts Centre so please lead this initiative and give our volunteers' long-term service the home it deserves.

28.January.2023
