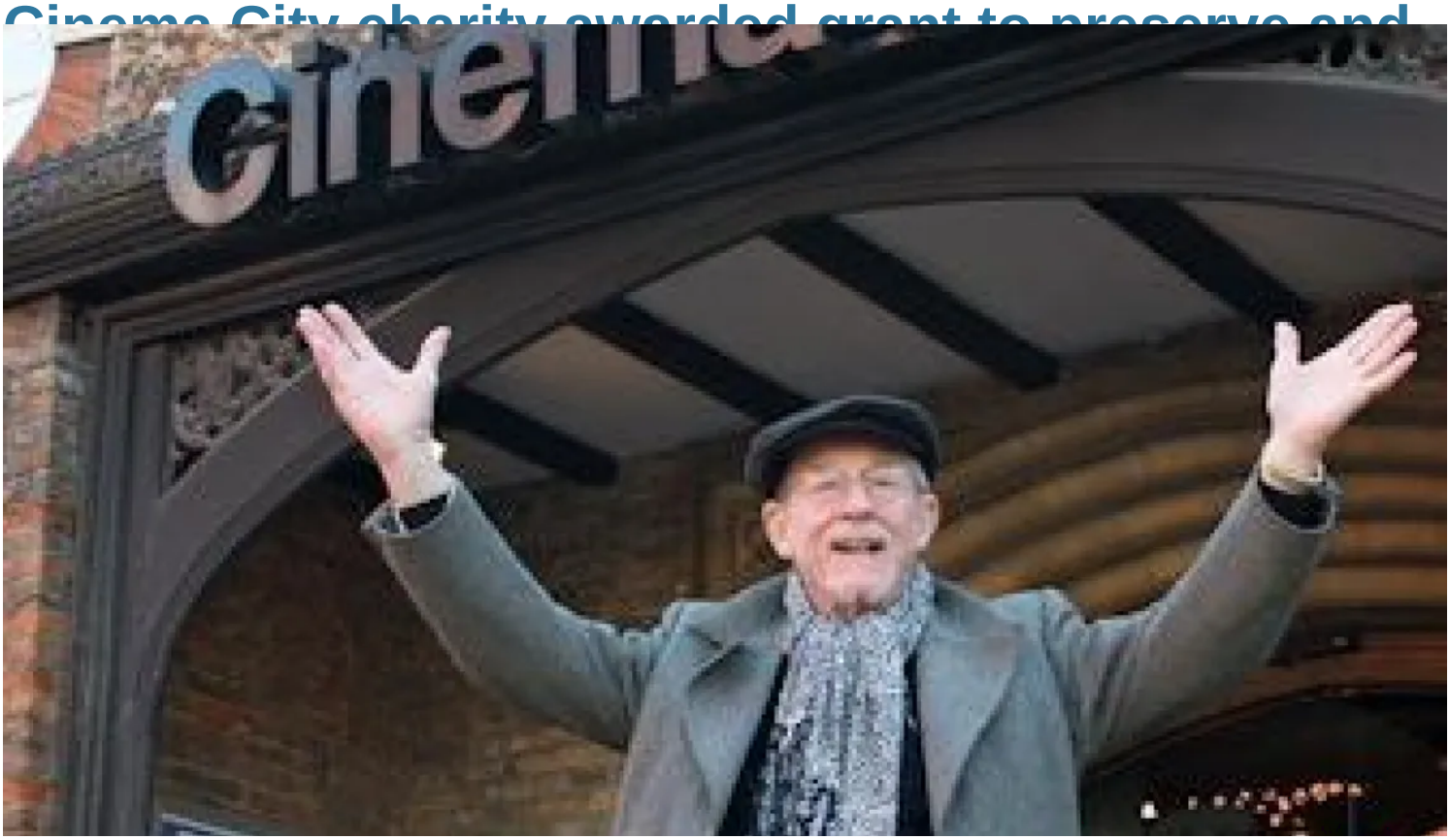
Cinema City charity awarded grant to preserve and



Patron John Hurt OBE outside Cinema City Norwich

The countywide project will enable more people to enjoy and learn from our fascinating cinema heritage both now and in the future.

Norfolk at the Pictures has two main strands. The first is to create a permanent archive of local people's memories, documents and artefacts that tell the story of cinema-going in Norfolk. Everyone can get involved in helping to capture and share this rapidly disappearing cinematic history as well as attending special events, screenings and heritage walks.

The second strand of the project is to create a new education and community space at Cinema City. The Screen Heritage Centre, designed by local architect Charles Emberson, will upgrade outdated rooms currently used for cinema education purposes and the installation of a lift will greatly improve access to this flexible and well-equipped new space. It will host a range of film education-related activities, screenings, talks and workshops that will explore the heritage of cinema in the region. In addition Cinema Plus, working in partnership with organisations including Equal Lives, Age UK and the Norfolk & Suffolk Dementia Alliance, is looking forward to holding more activities for currently underserved groups including people living with dementia and young people living with a disability.

This exciting project will be delivered in partnership with Picturehouse Cinemas Ltd, the UK's leading arthouse cinema operator that manages Cinema City's commercial screenings and activities. Picturehouse has invested £50k towards the development and delivery of this project, which will bring underused and underdeveloped areas of the building up to the standards of the rest of the site.

Lyn Goleby, Managing Director Picturehouse Cinemas, said: "We have worked in close partnership for many years with Cinema City Ltd as part of the continued joint development of the cinema and its associated spaces. This funding from HLF will contribute towards an even more wonderful Cinema City."

The eighteen-month project, which now has the greenlight, has a total cost of £667,000 with the Screen Heritage Centre expected to open Autumn 2015. The Heritage Lottery Fund's go-ahead means the project can get underway but Cinema Plus must now raise an additional £50,000 to complete the Screen Heritage Centre at the Grade I listed Cinema City site.

Claire Chapman, Project Director for Norfolk at the Pictures, thanked the Heritage Lottery Fund for their ongoing support and said: "We are delighted that the HLF has awarded such a significant grant to this project and we will now focus on raising the additional £50,000 required to complete the project with the help of our supporters and partners including our patron, actor John Hurt, OBE."

Cinema Plus has already received welcome financial support from local charities, trusts and foundations such as the Geoffrey Watling Charity, the John Jarrold Trust and the Timothy Colman Charitable Trust. In-kind supporting partners include Norwich City Council, English Heritage, University of East Anglia, East Anglian Film Archive, Norfolk Record Office, The History of Advertising Trust, Writers Centre Norwich, Archant, Norwich University of the Arts and Norwich HEART.

The public appeal invites further grants and donations; it also offers a Cinema City seat dedication scheme, sponsorship opportunities and will soon be launching both a Kickstarter and crowdfunding campaign. Details on how to donate can be found on the Norfolk at the Pictures website.

Chair of Cinema City Ltd (formerly known as Norfolk and Norwich Film Theatre Ltd) Roy Townsend also welcomed the support from the Heritage Lottery Fund: "It will make an enormous difference to our education work across Norfolk, raise the profile of Cinema Plus and its active role in cinema education at Cinema City and contribute towards our long-term sustainability."

Robyn Llewellyn, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund East of England, said: "Norfolk's cinema history can now become a topic for future study. Local people will contribute their own memories of going to the pictures in years past but can look forward to a wide range of education events, talks, workshops and screenings."

Simon Wright, Member of Parliament for Norwich South, added: "I'm really pleased that more people across Norfolk will be able to enjoy and learn from our county's cinema heritage. The partnership work is particularly welcome because it will allow groups of people who are often excluded, such as those living with dementia or a disability, to access and benefit from the project."

The first Norfolk at the Pictures events begin this month with a special Heritage Open Days archive film screening at Cinema City on Sunday 14 September and a screening of the silent film classic Nosferatu, with a live score, at St Lawrence's Church on St Benedict's Street on Friday 10 October. For more information go to the Norfolk at the Pictures events webpage.

Notes to editors

Norfolk at the Pictures will instigate a countywide initiative to create a permanent collection of research, individual memories, documents and ephemera, which can be used to engage the Norfolk community in its cinema heritage. It will include special events and screenings, cinema heritage walks in Great Yarmouth and Norwich, a commemorative magazine and a new website. Currently the first floor education and conference rooms at Cinema City, where the new Screen Heritage Centre will be located, are difficult to access for anyone with limited mobility. Planning permission and listed building consent has been granted for alterations, designed by local architect Charles Emberson, to improve accessibility to the first floor. For more information visit the Norfolk at the Pictures website.

Cinema City Ltd

Cinema City Ltd (formerly known as Norfolk & Norwich Film Theatre Ltd) has been dedicated to using the power of the moving image for education and learning since the charity was founded in 1966. In 1968 it developed Britain's first Regional Film Theatre, in collaboration with the British Film Institute, and since 1978 has been based at Cinema City in Norwich, a Grade I listed heritage site. The charity cares for the historic site and provides inspiring education opportunities for people across Norfolk through its education arm Cinema Plus. Cinema Plus aims to develop cultural participation irrespective of age or ability and offers an extensive, year-round programme of activities, workshops and courses to enable people across the county to engage with the moving-image. In 2007, following a significant capital programme, Cinema City reopened in partnership with City Screen (now Picturehouse) as a three screen cinema with some of the most modern facilities of any cinema in the country. For more information visit the Cinema Plus website.

Picturehouse Cinemas Ltd

Norfolk at the Pictures will be delivered in partnership with Picturehouse Cinemas Ltd, the independent cinema operator that runs Cinema City's film programming, on-site restaurant and bar. Picturehouse has committed significant partnership funding to this project in order to create a new Screen Heritage Centre and bring underused and underdeveloped areas of the building up the standards of the rest of the site. Now owned by Cineworld, Picturehouse was formed in 1989 to challenge the multiplex model and provide cinemas that serve their communities in city-centre locations. Independent, arthouse and foreign-language films have always been central to their profile. Each of their cinemas is programmed in response to its local audience, and most of its venues have mainstream blockbusters and quality crossover titles in the mix.

Further information

For further information, images and interviews please contact Stephanie Potts on 01603 661 459 or steph@sfppr.co.uk.