



***Hebden Bridge Community
Association***

Media release

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Discussions under way to secure Hebden Bridge Picture House future

Hebden Bridge organisations are in discussions with Calderdale council to ensure that the town's popular Picture House cinema will continue to operate, despite the very difficult financial situation for local councils.

The cinema is one of only a handful in Britain which are local authority run. Its creative programming policy, including its provision for community events, makes it appreciated to many in Hebden Bridge and Calderdale. In recent years it is believed to have broadly broken even financially.

A consortium of local organisations has begun discussions with senior Calderdale council staff over ways in which the cinema's long-term future can be secured. One possibility being considered is a transfer of the building and its operation into local ownership, similar to that undertaken earlier this year for Hebden Bridge Town Hall. The consortium, which is led by Hebden Royd Town Council, also includes Hebden Bridge Community Association (which runs the Town Hall), Hebden Bridge Partnership and representatives of Hebden Bridge Arts Festival and other local groups.

Cllr Robin Dixon, one of the town councillors involved in the initiative, says:

“The Town Council is being proactive in this, and as a result of a recent meeting with Calderdale's chief executive it has now written to request financial details of services, and a building survey of the Picture House.”

Andrew Bibby, trustee of Hebden Bridge Community Association, says:

“Hebden Bridge is playing a pioneering role nationally in respect to community control of our Town Hall. Something similar may well be possible for the cinema, and our experience of negotiating an asset transfer is available if it is needed.”

Cllr Pauline Nash, Calderdale Cabinet member, Safer and Stronger Communities, says: “These are challenging times for local authorities, and we need to think creatively about how we deliver the services local people value. We have welcomed interest from a number of groups who are keen to become more involved in the running of a range of community facilities and services, but no decisions have been made. As with any asset transfer, we would need to go through formal consultation before taking a report to the Council’s Cabinet.”

Local people interested in being involved in this initiative are invited to make contact with Jason Boom, town clerk, on 01422 842181.