

## **CASE STUDY:**

### **LOST IN FILM**

Lost In Film are a film society based in Lostwithiel, Cornwall, and were founded in 2008. They show recent releases on the second and last Monday of the month, as well as running occasional special screenings.

Lost In Film initially started running dementia-friendly screenings with support from Cinema For All's Reaching Communities project. Kat Smith from Lost in Film spoke to us about her experiences as part of this project.

#### **Which partner organisations did you work with to put on these screenings? How did you establish relationships with them, and what kinds of requirements did they have?**

We worked with Memory Matters SW, who run memory cafes as well as activity clubs, care home sessions, and training. We visited the memory cafe in advance to meet the people who ran it and those who attended, and got a few film title suggestions from organisers and carers. We worked with Memory Matters SW and Lostwithiel Rotary Club to plan the films and practical details about the screenings. We screened the films in the Community Centre – this is not our regular screening venue but the building where the memory cafe meets, and somewhere with good disabled access, parking, and toilets. They were very supportive in giving us the space we needed, and in providing refreshments.

#### **What did you have to do differently from your regular film screenings?**

We showed the films in the afternoons, not in the evening. Arriving and leaving in daylight was important. We had tea and cake before the film - normally we have a bar. The audience seemed to enjoy the cake as much as the film! We chose older films that others had suggested; normally our film committee chooses the films, and we have a policy of not showing films more than two years old. We didn't completely black out the room so that people would have enough light to come and go as they needed.

#### **How did you let people know about your dementia-friendly screenings?**

We put posters up around town, ran articles in the local paper, advertised in local newsletters, sent emails to our subscribers and advertised on our website, Facebook, and Twitter. Memory Matters shared information with the memory cafes network across Cornwall. They also directly contacted local care homes but unfortunately it wasn't possible to arrange for any of their residents to attend. We connected with dementia groups through social media who promoted the screenings. We also advertised in the local parish newsletter which we don't normally do, which reached a different audience. Ultimately we reached most people through the memory cafe organisers.

### **How do you help make audiences feel comfortable at these screenings?**

Tea and cake before the film was the best ice breaker! Everyone chatted in groups and was very sociable. Using a venue the attendees were familiar with was important. And we were able to source chairs which were a bit more padded and which had arms, making it more comfortable for a number of audience members who normally sat in wheelchairs. The films we chose were light comedies: *Saving Grace* (which had a Cornish connection), *The Artist*, and *Magic in the Moonlight*.

### **What were some of the challenges you faced?**

It was hard to let individuals and carers know about the films, and even harder to encourage them to come to an event that wasn't part of their regular routine. We tried to discuss films and cinema with memory cafe members, but weren't able to get any particular film title suggestions - those came from carers and organisers, plus our own ideas. In the end it was the occasion, not the actual choice of film, that seemed most important. Finding volunteers to help at an additional screening event, particularly during the day when most of our committee are at work, was also difficult.

### **What were some of the highlights?**

We had some lovely thanks and comments as people left the film; they really enjoyed the experience. Memory cafe members look forward to meeting, but our film screenings were a special treat. It was great to see a room full of people chatting and enjoying tea and cake before the film - it almost seemed a shame to stop them and to start the movie! It also meant a lot to us that the screening had been enjoyed by organisers and carers as well as memory cafe members.

### **What advice would you give to other community cinema groups who want to put on dementia-friendly screenings?**

Connect with other groups who already have a connection to your target audience - residential homes, support groups, memory cafes, or other health services. Don't label screenings as "dementia-friendly" - Memory Matters advised us that the "d" word can have a stigma attached. We changed it to "friendly afternoon screenings" and aimed it at "those with living memory problems". There's no reason the same screening wouldn't work for those with learning disabilities, autism, or anyone who would benefit from a relaxed, daytime screening. It can take time to build trust and gain regulars. The memory cafe members have a fairly tight routine; they don't spontaneously go to events. Regular, reliable events where they know the venue, the organisers and the schedule work best.

For bespoke advice, get in touch with Cinema For All on 0114 2210314 or email [info@cinemaforall.org.uk](mailto:info@cinemaforall.org.uk)

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