



The Curzon Community Cinema 46 Old Church Road Clevedon North Somerset BS21 6NN

20 January 2003

PRESS RELEASE

£5,000 Curzon Bill for Bomb Damage!

Specialist Stone Masons were this week called in urgently by The Curzon Cinema to deal with a problem of crumbling stonework at the historic local landmark building – and the identified repairs are likely to cost in excess of £5,000.

Curzon Manager Jon Webber noticed small pieces of masonry on the pavement and, being alerted to a potential problem, immediately called in local stonemasons to review the condition of the stonework around the building. “Their report is not good news.” Said Jon Webber, “It seems that the bomb damage that was caused to the Curzon during the war has allowed water and frost to penetrate the fabric, resulting in gradual deterioration. We always knew that the stonework would need attention as part of the restoration, but we didn’t appreciate how serious the situation had become.”

This is the second body blow for The Curzon in a week, following on from the news that Clevedon Town Council had decided to cut a £3,000 annual grant, and also cut an intended £50,000 contribution to the Curzon’s restoration fund.

“The cost of stonework repair will exceed £5,000 and it is something we simply have no budget for. I am not sure yet where the money will come from, but I have had to commission urgent repairs to make sure everything is safe..” added Jon Webber “It is rotten timing for us, and highlights the importance of the restoration proposals if The Curzon is to survive.”

“When The Curzon was saved from closure in 1996 we inherited a history of starvation of investment, in both facilities and the building fabric. We have over the years made great improvements to audience facilities with the addition of a hearing loop and disabled toilet as well of course as a new screen and the installation of the very latest Dolby Digital Surround Sound. But we have not had the money to tackle the bigger building issues that the restoration will resolve.

Asked how the loss of the Clevedon Town Council grants would affect The Curzon, Jon Webber replied “The loss of the £50,000 donation to the restoration fund is the biggest disappointment of all. Not only is this money we shall have to now raise from other sources, it does not send a positive message to the HLF (Heritage Lottery Fund) who are currently considering our bid for £4.7m.

The Curzon Clevedon Community Centre for the Arts is a Registered Charity No 1058389

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The HLF insist on seeing demonstrable financial support from local authorities and the loss of this money could place our lottery bid in jeopardy.

“Although The Curzon’s finances are relatively stable, we simply do not make sufficient trading surpluses to tackle major building repairs. Since 1996 we have only been able to do patch repairs as problems arise. We can only deal with the inherited repair problems through complete restoration. If the restoration is in jeopardy then so is the entire survival of the Curzon. All we can hope is that the new council elected in May will be as supportive of the Curzon as the previous administration and reinstates our grant.”

Notes to Editors:

1. The Curzon Community Cinema is believed to be the oldest purpose-built, continuously operated cinema in the world, having first opened its doors on 20th April 1912.
2. The Curzon has been operated as a Registered Charity since 1996, when it was saved from closure by overwhelming public subscription.
3. There are plans for a £4.7m restoration of the Curzon to bring it back to its art deco glory, which relies on a successful bid to Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF).
4. Attached photos show the deteriorated stonework and the recent inspection by specialist stonemasons, Carrek Masonry.

If you require any further information regarding this press release please contact Chris Brain on 01275 341101