



PRESS RELEASE

30 May 2007

Minister Pledges Support for The Curzon

Staff and volunteers of the Curzon Community Cinema were privileged this week to receive a surprise visit from Government Minister Shaun Woodward MP.

Mr Woodward, Minister for Creative Industries and Tourism, took time out from his busy schedule for a visit to Clevedon and with it the chance of a behind the scenes guided tour of this historic local landmark, which has operated as an independent, community cinema for over 10 years. During his private tour, he was shown around many parts of the building not normally open to public view and provided with details of the plans to restore the building to its former art deco glory.

Mr Woodward was overawed by his visit, saying, "This really is an impressive example of social enterprise in action. That such a wonderful heritage asset can be saved from what seemed like certain closure, to establish itself on a firm financial footing is a testament to all the staff, volunteers and local community that have worked so hard over so many years."

"Against increasing competition from multiplexes, the strong influence of film distributors and the shortening window between cinema release and DVD release, it really is a tough environment for cinemas like The Curzon to survive. As Minister for Film it is great to see independent cinema thriving in the UK. Places like the Curzon are not simply cinemas, but shared places that help build sustainable communities. They are not only places that show films, but a focal point for local heritage, local history and places where communities come together. I am happy to lend my support to the plans to restore this fantastic heritage cinema and wish The Curzon every success in its bid to raise the funding necessary."

Curzon General Manager Jon Webber added, "It really is an honour to have a visit from the Minister for Film. Mr Woodward took a real interest in the history of The Curzon and our exciting plans for the future. To have someone in his position pledge support to our project means a lot to everyone involved. We are confident that what he takes from his visit here may in some small way influence Government policy on future funding for the independent cinema sector and also the competitive environment in which we operate."

"He was particularly interested in our recent success with the *Gotta Dance!* Film Festival and the fact that it received no outside funding. We are hoping that the restoration proposals, as with our next film festival, can attract significant private and public financial support to enable us to restore the building by its centenary in April 2012."

To commemorate his visit, Mr Woodward was presented with a copy of the Curzon's book *The Everlasting Picture Show*, which charts the history of cinema in Clevedon and Portishead, plus a copy of the Curzon's Strategic Plan and 10th Birthday brochure.

Notes to Editors:

1. *The Curzon is thought to be the oldest, purpose-built, continuously operated cinema in the world and, throughout this year, we are celebrating our 10th anniversary as a community cinema. We are committed to providing a high quality film experience and to be a thriving centre for cinema and the arts.*
2. *The Curzon has plans for a full restoration of this heritage treasure, at an estimated cost of over £5M. You can see details of our restoration plans on www.curzon.org.uk.*
3. *Shaun Woodward MP was born and educated in Bristol, and represents the constituency of St Helens South. He is the Minister responsible for creative industries and tourism, is a member of the advisory board of the Royal Shakespeare Company and is also a Director of English National Opera.*

**If you have any questions regarding the content of this press release please call
Chris Brain on 07919 018753.**

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