

## Star and Shadow Cinema

Self-building a community cinema, music and arts hub in Newcastle-upon-Tyne



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Organisation type:	<b>Community cinema</b>
Award amount:	<b>£100,000</b>
Location:	<b>Newcastle-upon-Tyne</b>
Ownership:	<b>Community Benefit Society</b>
Award date:	<b>May 2017</b>

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### **Award purpose**

The grant will be used to refurbish a building and reopen the community cinema, arts, and music venue, providing a much-needed cultural heart for the area.

### **Trading for the benefit of the local community**

Money generated from ticket sales and hire rates will be reinvested in running more events, films and activities that local people want.

### **Accountable to the local community**

Over 3,000 volunteers have a say in how the business is run. Lifetime membership costs £1 to ensure even the most marginalised can be included.

### **Improving social cohesion**

Film, art, music programming will be set by local people, including marginalised groups such as refugees, unemployed and LGBT, and encourage social mixing.

In 2014, after 10 years of offering an eclectic and internationally renowned programme of films curated by local people, the Star and Shadow cinema in Newcastle closed as their rented building was put up for development. But rather than seeing this as a set-back, volunteers who all have a say in the running of the business, decided to find their community cinema a permanent home. They raised over £40,000 through crowdfunding and were awarded grant funding from several foundations and trusts. With this, they secured a mortgage from Newcastle County Council, and purchased a building in Sandyford, an area with few community spaces, facilities or events.

As a co-operative owned by its members and run by local people for local people, the rebuild of the Star and Shadow cinema is also being done by local people. Power to Change awarded Star and Shadow a £100,000 grant towards the building materials needed for the self-build refurbishment. The grant will also cover the cost of a digital projector, public address system and speakers to

improve the quality of facilities. Opening in the winter of 2017, the new Star and Shadow will become a community multi-arts venue, including an 89-seat cinema, gig venue, recording studios, a café, a library, and a community garden serving 6,000 local people between the student areas of Sandyford and Heaton, where it's set to become one of Newcastle city centre's largest community spaces.

The new and improved Star and Shadow Cinema will be open during the day to provide simultaneous screenings, workspace and community events thanks to improved sound-proofing, music recording studios, space hire and both 16mm and 35mm projector and digital screenings. The building will be fully accessible with ramps, a hearing loop and toilets to accommodate people with disabilities and make sure it is welcoming the whole community.

### **Built and run by local people**

Anyone can become a volunteer of Star and Shadow cinema. Volunteers have an induction, a handbook and can become a member after three months of contributing. A life membership costs £1 and gives you the right to take part in business decisions.

During the refurbishment works, volunteers on site are doing everything from plasterboarding to pouring concrete. When the building opens, they could be working in the cafe, organising gigs, programming films or hosting workshops, among other activities.

It's a kaleidoscope of community experiences; we have refugees, unemployed people looking for work experience, there's such a variety – it really does tackle the misconceptions that you see in the media.

### **Nyree Denney**

Star and Shadow volunteer since 2007

In this non-hierarchical structure, every volunteer's input and voice is equally important.

#### **For local people**

Serving three heavily deprived neighbourhoods, the Star and Shadow will again become a stepping stone for socially vulnerable and marginalised groups to access Newcastle's wider cultural offer. Many of the other cultural organisations in the area can be intimidating or inaccessible – the Star and Shadow's volunteer-led programme will be a point of entry to the region's rich arts scene for people who might otherwise never access it.

The Star and Shadow is whatever anyone wants  
to make of it. We allow the space for that to  
happen. It's a place to make as well as show.

### **Stephen Turner**

Star and Shadow volunteer since 2010

Communities from the surrounding areas will be drawn into both experience and direct the Star and Shadow artistic programme. There are few opportunities like it in the region for individuals, no matter their background, to get involved with artistic programming of high-quality art, music, and film events. Historically the Star and Shadow has been an incubator for emerging multi-disciplinary directors from socially marginalised backgrounds, and will resume being so again.