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**First Minister of Wales Mark Drakeford MS/AS expresses his support for** **Welsh Film Festivals coming together to provide a new platform for young talent in Wales**
**‘Watch The Three Films Festival online Friday 31st July – 2nd August’**

In this period of challenge and uncertainty for the creative industries, film Festivals in Wales have responded by coming together to promote the importance of Festivals in our communities and provide a new national and international platform to celebrate young talent in Wales. This initiative has been led by the Wicked Wales International Youth Film Festival in Rhyl and supported by Film Hub Wales as part of the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN), made possible by the National Lottery.

First Minister for Wales Mark Drakeford MS/AS says *“At a challenging time for the arts, it is inspiring to see Welsh film festivals coming together to give young film makers this opportunity to share their creativity.*

*“The creative industries sector is one of the fastest growing in Wales and we are very proud our country is recognised as a centre for film and TV production. Innovative events like this will help to nurture the incredible pool of future talent we have, even in the most difficult circumstances.*

*“I would like to wish the Three Film Festival the very best of luck and congratulate Wicked Wales and everyone who has brought this to life.”*

Festivals from all corners of Wales have joined together in a new Wales Youth Festival Network WYFN. The WYFN Network is being launched with a new national ‘Three Films Festival’. The Festival will screen up to three films from each of the many established film festivals in Wales and has also welcomed films from S4C, Hijinx and Into Film. The films screened have all been made by or for young audiences aged approximately 15-25.

The Festival this year will be online and will take place between Friday 31st July and Sunday 2nd August. The programme will include film screenings and an industry programme supported by Film Feels Connected on aspects of filmmaking.

Lorraine Mahoney, WYFN Coordinator says:

*“Three Films Festival demonstrates the commitment by film festivals across Wales* *to want to help support and develop the next generation of cinema goers and filmmakers with this inspiring online showcase of films and events. It is a coming together and a celebration of the

work begun by WYFN and its film festival partners, who are all working together to screen a wider range of films to young audiences in Wales.”* Rhiannon Hughes, Director of Wicked Wales Festival adds:

*“Wicked Wales Festival has benefited enormously from belonging to an international youth film festival network ‘Youth Cinema Network’ (YCN) in terms of sharing ideas and best practice, collaborating on projects and raising funds together. It was this experience which we wanted to introduce to Wales to strengthen support for Festivals in Wales. We are grateful for the support of Film Hub Wales who have worked with us for a number of years to develop the new network.”*

Mark Williams, Iris Prize Outreach and Education Manager:

*“We’re delighted to be sharing some of the films we have made with young people. We’ve been inspired by the creative talent we have here in Wales, as our next generation of filmmakers begin their journey. We hope people enjoy watching these films as much as we’ve enjoyed making them.”*

The full festival programme will be available on the [www.wickedwales.com](http://www.wickedwales.com) website and [WYFN Facebook page](https://www.facebook.com/WYFNetwork/). from Monday 20th July

Follow twitter [@wales\_youth](https://twitter.com/wales_youth) for regular updates and subscribe to the [YouTube festival channel](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ktZyZ2uFuMQ) to watch the free online film festival. And visit our facebook @WYFN Wales Youth Festival Network or @Cinemacidwm/Wickedcinema

**Ends**

For more information, please contact: **lmahoney.WYFN@outlook.com**

**WYFN**

WYFN is an informal network of Wales based film Festivals and film organisations that screen films for and/or made by young people aged approximately 15-25. The Network aims to meet three or four times a year with the intention of building partnerships between its members, developing shared projects and events for young audiences. Supported by Film Hub Wales, Wicked Wales Film and other regional partners. WYFN hopes to help build a robust appetite for British and International films amongst people in Wales.

**Wicked Wales Film**

Wicked Wales was set up 5 years ago by the Prestatyn Youth Pop In Centre to run an international youth film festival, screening short films made by young people from all over the world. This Festival has been organised and run by young volunteers with support and is now a BAFTA Cymru supported Festival. The young Wicked volunteers have an office at Rhyl Little Theatre where 3 years ago they set up an affordable Pop Up community cinema,

Wicked Cinema. As Wicked volunteers the young people have access to year round training in film and media both in the UK and including attendance at other international youth film festivals.

**About Film Hub Wales:**

Film Hub Wales aims to bring more films, to more people, in more places around Wales. Part of the BFI Film Audience Network and supported by National Lottery funding, FHW regularly develops inventive ways for people in Wales to go to the cinema with its independent member venues.

Film Hub Wales (FHW) is one of eight UK wide ‘hubs’ part of the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN) and supported with National Lottery funding, with Chapter appointed as the Film Hub Lead Organisation (FHLO) in Wales. We aim to develop the exhibition sector through dedicated research, training and audience development project support. Since Film Hub Wales set up in 2013, we’ve supported over 225 exciting cinema projects, reaching over 465,000 audience members.

We are also proud to lead on the UK inclusive cinema strategy on behalf of BFI FAN.

