

Media Release

Embargoed until Monday 22nd February

Hollywood star Rhys Ifans opens new community screen room at Blaenau Ffestiniog's cinema, CellB

On Saturday February 20, CellB's second cinema screen was officially opened by none other than The Amazing Spiderman & Kingsman star Rhys Ifans, in a virtual livestream event. The screen has even been named after him as a gesture of appreciation for all his community youth work during the pandemic.

This marks an exciting step forward for the local arts and culture industry, as well as creating more opportunities for youth projects, all of which have suffered greatly over the last year due to the Covid crisis.

CellB is run by Gwallgofiad, a not for profit social enterprise that has been providing creative training for the young people of Blaenau Ffestiniog since 2003. Situated in the old police station, it has been a hub of activity over the years, hosting a range of gigs and youth projects, then expanding into a hostel, bar, restaurant and now most recently, a cinema.

Owner and Blaenau local Rhys Roberts has always believed in broadening the horizons for young people, a core value behind CellB's 'Clwb Clinc', a Welsh language youth club providing a range of free creative arts and media workshops. When the pandemic first struck in spring 2020, these workshops had to move online. Members still benefited from structured virtual meetings, and were also treated to Q&A sessions with Rhys Ifans and Radio 1 DJ Huw Stephens. Since his first zoom appearance in May last year, Rhys Ifans proved a hit with the kids, forming a lasting mentorship and inspiring them to create their own videos, as well as committing to support future creative projects for the youths.

Thanks to support from [Art Council Wales](#), [Community Foundation Wales](#), [Cist Gwynedd](#), [Ffilm Cymru Wales](#) and Film Hub Wales as part of the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN), made possible by the National Lottery, this creative energy fueled Clwb Clinc's reopening in August 2020, where the team worked together to reshuffle its priorities, namely asking the question, *how to keep a cinema open in a socially-distanced world?* It soon became clear that space was extremely important, with many of the locals having expressed concern about revisiting the cinema due to being in close proximity with others. It was decided that the upstairs courtroom, previously used for social events, would become the second screen, with its large space providing room for flexibility both in terms of functions and audience seating. This includes six 'creative pods' where the young people can also work on their projects outside of screen time.

The aim of the cinema is to use any profits to subsidise the costs of these youth workshops, thus creating a sustainable community system that benefits the general public as well as young

people. Training opportunities in box office and projection skills will also be provided, with the long-term goal of securing future work in the industry. Rhys Roberts says:

“Past projects have proven that arts workshops often lead to the development of an exciting and successful career in the arts, whether in theatre, music, literature. I am confident that we can repeat this goal again and again.”

In this time of restricted movement and social isolation people are yearning for ways to escape, and what better way to do so than to watch a good film in the (safely distanced) company of others? A diverse program is currently being put together, featuring films from around the world as well as much loved classics. Films to be screened include *Spirited Away*, *Pain and Glory* and *Capernaum*.

The ‘Rhys Ifans Sgrin 2’ was opened with a live-stream event. **Rhys Ifans said:**

“It is a great honor to be part of such an exciting initiative, the Cell B team & Gwallgofiaid is a great example of a community pulling together to create a safe and creative space for the young people of the area.

Having a Welsh-born actor opening a cinema screen in collaboration with the local youth project perfectly encapsulated the ethos behind CellB’s new venture. It’s a special mix of community-focused concern and forward-thinking innovation, whilst also following guidelines to keep everyone safe.”

Hana Lewis, Manager of Film Hub Wales adds:

“The role of cinemas in our communities has become even more crucial during the pandemic. CellB continues to put their young creatives first, keeping them connected at a time when they are most at risk of isolation. The opening of screen two, with the invaluable support of Rhys Ifans, is a testament to their hard work and creativity.”

Keep an eye out for Cellb’s ‘Sinema’r Byd’ film package takeaway box coming soon. At a time where we can’t travel let Cellb take you on a world voyage through film, food and drink. Boxes will vary each week with a diverse range of specialised, independent and world cinema films on DVD accompanied by street food snacks and drinks from the visited country.

www.cellb.org

Ends

For more information, please contact: rhys@cellb.org

Notes to Editors:

About CellB/Gwallgofiaid

Gwallgofiaid is a not for profit social enterprise that has been providing creative training for the young people of Blaenau Ffestiniog since 2003.

Gwallgofiaid use 2 spaces in Cellb (the old police station of Blaenau) where workshops in creative arts and media are facilitated.

The Cinema, owned and run by Gwallgofiaid, is a not for profit initiative & the company's goal is for the surplus from the cinema to subsidise the cost of the arts workshops.

[Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)

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.

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About the BFI Film Audience Network

Supported by National Lottery funding, the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN), is central to the BFI's aim to ensure the greatest choice of film is available for everyone. Established in 2012 to build wider and more diverse UK cinema audiences for British and international film, FAN is a unique, UK-wide collaboration made up of eight Hubs managed by leading film organisations and venues strategically placed around the country. FAN also supports talent development with BFI NETWORK Talent Executives in each of the English Hubs, with a mission to discover and support talented writers, directors and producers at the start of their careers.

BFI FAN Film Hubs are:

- Film Hub Midlands is led by Broadway, Nottingham working in partnership with the Birmingham-based Flatpack
- Film Hub North is led collectively by Showroom Workstation, Sheffield and HOME Manchester
- Film Hub South East is led by the Independent Cinema Office
- Film Hub South West is led by Watershed in Bristol
- Film Hub Scotland is led by Glasgow Film Theatre

- Film Hub Northern Ireland is led by Queen's University Belfast
- Film Hub Wales is led by Chapter in Cardiff
- Film Hub London is led by Film London

[Website](#)

About the BFI

The BFI is the UK's lead organisation for film, television and the moving image. It is a cultural charity that:

- Curates and presents the greatest international public programme of world cinema for audiences; in cinemas, at festivals and online,
- Cares for the BFI National Archive – the most significant film and television archive in the world,
- Actively seeks out and supports the next generation of filmmakers,
- Works with Government and industry to make the UK the most creatively exciting and prosperous place to make film internationally.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter.

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About the National Lottery

Thanks to National Lottery players, up to £600 million of funding has been made available to support communities across the UK during the Coronavirus crisis.

The National Lottery is playing a critical role in supporting people, projects and communities during these challenging times.

By playing The National Lottery, you are making an amazing contribution to the nationwide-response to combating the impact of COVID-19 on local communities across the UK.

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