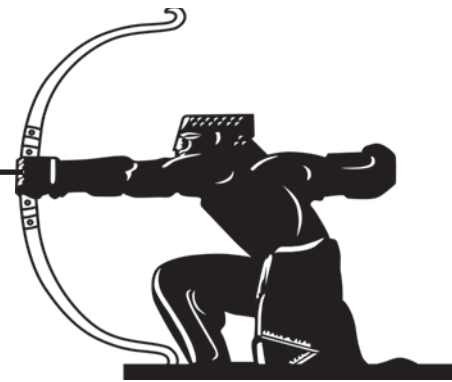




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Cash shortfall at Phoenix Cinema is getting bigger

By John Lawrence

The Phoenix Cinema is urging film lovers to visit more often after reporting its biggest ever loss and admitting that its financial crisis is getting worse rather than better.

Trustees at the High Road cinema had hoped they could start to close the cash gap that in 2018 led them to seek a partnership with the Curzon Cinemas chain. That deal was called off at the last minute following strong opposition from Phoenix supporters who wanted the venue to retain its independent charitable status.

However, the latest annual report from the Phoenix reveals that the money it took from ticket sales and charitable trading activities in the year to March 2019 fell significantly compared to the previous year, resulting in a record loss of £78,000.

Some ups, some downs

There have been some positives, such as the £1,000 raised by a raffle in December, and

“If we could have the equivalent of *Little Women* every week, life would be easy but that’s not how cinema is, it’s full of ups and downs,” she said. “Our staff do an excellent job programming high-quality films and we just ask people to come to the Phoenix as often as they can to enjoy the films we have on show.”

Films coming up in February include the Oscar-tipped comedy thriller *Parasite* and a new adaptation of Jane Austen’s *Emma*, starring Anya Taylor-Joy and Miranda Hart.

Opera and theatre please the punters

Other strong performers last year were Quentin Tarantino’s *Once Upon a Time in Hollywood* and repeated showings



Float on: The Fixation Theatre youngsters alongside their carnival vehicle in central London.

Happy moment on carnival parade

Youngsters from Fixation Theatre Company dressed in a riotous rainbow of colours to represent Barnet in the Lord Mayor of London’s New Year’s Day Parade.

The theme of their float was ‘Live Your Best Life’, focusing on the importance of good mental health, and they danced to Pharrell Williams’s hit *Happy* as they paraded past thousands of spectators along the central London route. Barnet’s float won fifth place overall, earning £6,000 for charity. Fixation offers a range of performing arts classes in East Finchley for young people aged three to 18. Find out more at www.fixationtheatre.com



Financial worries: The Phoenix Cinema

packed houses for the recent run of *Little Women*, but not enough to counteract the negatives. The Phoenix applied for financial support from Barnet Council last year but was turned down, and hotly anticipated blockbuster *Star Wars: The Rise of Skywalker* performed badly over the crucial Christmas period.

Alison Gold, chair of the trustees, admitted the cinema was struggling but said it was still possible to get back to break-even with some good luck and regular support from local film-goers.

of Phoebe Waller-Bridge’s one-woman show *Fleabag*. By contrast, the *Downton Abbey* movie failed to draw the crowds. Streamed operas and National Theatre shows remained popular as did the Saturday morning Kids’ Club.

Alison Gold said staff and trustees continued to explore all avenues to keep the Phoenix running independently and had not discussed reopening the Curzon deal. However, Curzon Cinemas said at the time that they would be open to talking to the Phoenix again if they were approached.

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In this issue

Flats on tube car park.... p2
Festival funder last chance... p3
Spate of burglaries..... p4
Crash landing in wood.... p5
TV comedy in Budgens.... p7
Community cookery..... p9
Ricky Savage..... p9
Red carpet premiere.... p10
What’s On..... p10
Your letters..... p11