

LONDON FILM-MAKERS CO-OP.

Annual General Meeting 12.1.91.

CHAIR: Richard Philpott.  
MINUTES (Morning) Philip Sanderson.

PRESENT: Christian Anstice, Philip Baker, Ann Barefoot, James Bendall, Michael Bentham, John Cant, Louise Cendreasa, Nick Collins, Scott Cronk, Gina Czarnecki-G, Philip Gardner, Graham Gordon, Rose Guillo, Tom Heslop, Julian Jackson, Gina Jacypke, Emma Kurtagic, D Leister, Martin Lugg, Nicholas Morgan, D,B,M McCairley, Orlagh Mulcachy, Annabel Nicolson, James Norton, Richard Philpott, Janet Platun, Duncan Reekie, Russel Ryman, Philip Sanderson, Mark Sheehan, Vicki Smith, John Tappenden, Paul Tarago, Anna Thew, Sandy Weiland, Pier Wilkie.

APOLOGIES: Claire Barwell, Kathleen Maitland-Carter, Jayne Parker, Karen Smith.

MEETING COMMENCED AT 11 am.

Agreement of minutes from EGM 23.6.90.  
No matters arising.

11.10 DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS.

Workshop Report: Presented by John Tappenden.

Membership: The new monthly open days for prospective members has been introduced, and as a result there was an initial slight decrease in the number of members but this has now stabilized. The introduction of the open days has however not led to any noticeable change in attitude on the part of new members. It was noted that  $\frac{1}{3}$  of people attending open days take up membership, and that only one in ten of these go on to become permanent long term members.

Open Screenings: Open screenings have been well attended and lively. The workshop meetings that proceed them have had a somewhat sparser attendance.

Workshop Staff Vacancy: Gina Czarnecki-G has now completed her three years and left the CO-OP. The position has been advertised and 60 applications received, from which a shortlist of 13 was drawn up. Owing to the uncertainty of funding for the post recruitment has been put on hold. All shortlisted candidates being advised. If funding is not forthcoming from the LBGS the remaining two workshop staff would be put under great pressure and a reduced service and a drop in revenue should be expected.

Revenue: Revenue from bookings was particularly low in October but has picked up considerably in December and early January.

Repair Closure: The closure for one week in September to repair and update equipment was a success and could be repeated this year.

John expressed his thanks on behalf of the workshop and the CO-OP to Gina for her commitment and enthusiasm.

Vicky Smith added the following notes on equipment.

Equipment: The processing machine has broken down owing to misuse. All the Steenbecks have now been serviced and overhauled. The Nizo 6080 and 4080 are still broken but a cash injection has been made to the workshop budget to allow them to be repaired.

Questions: None.

Distribution Report: Presented by Tom Heslop.

General: As a result of the new "active" distribution policy there had been an increase in both rentals and income. Much work by the new generation of American filmmakers is now included in distribution.

Summer Festival: The summer festival was a great success with many programmers previewing and subsequently booking work. It is hoped that the festival can be repeated this year or next year, but this is dependent on it being self-financing as the festival receives no outside funding support.

European expansion: There has been a marked increase in European bookings, both from festivals and colleges. A touring programme of film in Holland and Belgium in collaboration with Melkweg in Amsterdam was highly successful.

Collaborations: Collaborations with the Scala Cinema, Erotic Nights and with the LVA and ICA, Subversive Cults were both profitable and successful.

25th Anniversary : This is the CO-OP's 25th anniversary year and a number of special events at a wide range of venues are planned to capitalise on this.

USA Charity Status: A non-profit making charity status has been applied for in the USA to enable the CO-OP to apply for sponsorship from American foundations.

Tony Marcus added the following.

Catalogue: The catalogue is now ready for printing and Allison Hilder and Karen Smith are thanked for their efforts. However it is estimated that it will cost £10,000 to produce the catalogue. The ACGB and the BFI have been approached for funding with former refusing and the latter whilst more sympathetic doubting the catalogues effectiveness in marketing terms, though there is a possibility of some funding in the next financial year. Members were asked to submit any ideas for raising the necessary money.

Volunteers: A call was made for volunteers to check films, join selection panels etc.

Questions: None.

Cinema Report: The cinema organiser Kathleen Maitland-Carter was unable to attend owing to sickness and so a written report was read out on her behalf by Christian Anstice.

The Programme: The printers have had to be changed three times in order to find the right combination of price and reliability. The newly redesigned programme will be easier to read and should now appear on time. Angella Kelly is thanked for her contribution to the redesign.

Screenings/London Film Festival: There was a successful autumn series of screenings including the Soviet retrospective, the Halloween screenings and the continuation of the Artists film season. This year the cinema applied for and received the largest grant ever from the ACGB for the London Film Festival. This meant that the number of events could be expanded to twelve. Work from over 14 countries was shown and the largest ever space obtained in the official LFF catalogue. The CO-OP was also able for the first time in four years to print its own glossy catalogue. Three installations were mounted, one with the help of sponsorship from Commodore (UK). An official opening was held with sponsorship from Canada House. All the screenings were well attended with many having full houses and reaching a broad range of the public.

Future Priorities:

- 1.....Update the cinema finances; assistance has been offered by a member to help with this.
- 2.... To apply to the ACGB for a training post for the cinema.
- 3.... To organise a committee to help with the organising and celebration of the CO-OP's 25th anniversary. Volunteers are asked to help with this important series of events.
- 4.... To programme more work from the CO-OP distribution.
- 5.... To collaborate with the course organiser to enhance the educational aspects of cinema events; screenings with lectures, filmmakers presenting their own work and so on.
- 6.... To liaise with other organisations such as the LVA and Piccadilly Film Festival so as to cut costs and increase audiences.

Cafe Area: As reported at the EGM there have been a number of improvements to this area and a consequent increase in revenue.

Cinema Space: The cinema space continues to be profitably hired out, though there is still room for expanding this area.

Symposium: A one day symposium was held as part of the LFF which attracted a wide selection of British and international speakers and much busy debate ensued.

Sponsorship: Sponsorship has been received throughout the year from: The Goethe Institute, ACGB, The Womens' Media Resource Project, Canada House, Jettisoundz, Byam Shaw School of Art, Illuminations and Channel 4, Commodore.

Questions: Questions were asked about the rumours surrounding the position of the cinema organisers post. The chair clarified the situation by stating that at an executive meeting a vote of no confidence had been passed in the cinema organiser and that she had been sent a letter asking her to consider her position.

An urgent executive meeting is to be called at which Kathleen will be present to defend herself against any accusations, it was emphasised that any member could attend this meeting. No further debate was felt appropriate until the meeting has taken place.

Course Report: Presented by Orlagh Mulcahy.

General: The one-day a week course organiser post was started in February. A wide variety of courses have been run since: the one-day technical workshops, the Summer School, and the Avant-Garde Now theoretical introduction run in conjunction with Birbeck College.

The proposed autumn courses include: a history of the Avant-Garde cinema, scripting for animation and a course that will be part of the BFI's input.

Cost of Courses: Prices have increased to insure that the courses continue to make a profit, they are now £40/20 ( concessionary rate) for non-members and £20/12.50 for members.

Accounts: The courses made a profit of £11,627 and will become part of the general accounts system in the next financial year. After £1,706 for workshop hire, £3,280 for admin fees, £3,250 for tutor fees and £891 for materials and advertising this left £2,500 in the bank. This money will be used to re-issue the manual and float some of the new courses. It is felt that there is enough work and income to extend the course organisers post to a two-day a week position.

Questions: None.

Administration Report: Presented by Sandy Weiland.

Accounts: The audited accounts are basically the same as the "End of Year" figures given at the last EGM. There is some discrepancy with the initial figures owing to debtors and creditors being taken into account. The accounts show a £3,514 deficit including resources brought forward from the preceeding year. The fact that the CO-OP ended 89/90 in deficit bodes badly for this financial year 90/91.

Last year the CO-OP secured approx £6,000 for the post of the third workshop worker, however no funding was received this year and the post was maintained. Coupled with the BFI revenue grant having not risen with inflation and thereby being cut in real terms extreme financial difficulties are being experienced. The last quarter of the revenue grant has just been received and once invoices have been paid and royalties transferred there will be very little left. Income has increased, particularly distribution, but 90/91 will certainly end in deficit. If income continues to improve and there is an increase in the revenue grant one can be guardedly optimistic about the prospects for next year. In the meantime members are asked not to use the office phone, waste chemicals, take care of equipment etc.

LBGS Funding: An application was made in October to the LBGS for funding for the third Workshop worker, and a reply is expected in January, however the outlook is not optimistic as LBGS have been cutting back on all thier clients.

Revenue Grant: The application for the Revenue Grant has been made to the BFI. An increase from £55,000 to £80,480 has been requested, partly to cover a proposed staff wage rise from £40 to £50 a day. It is unlikely that the increase will be granted in full even though the BFI has had a 9.8% increase in its own grant. This year's Revenue Grant application had to be accompanied by a three year business plan, which all members are invited to see in the office. The ACGB have expressed an interest in seeing the plan and a meeting is to be set up with David Curtis to discuss the CO-OP's capital needs. The plan includes items such as a fax machine (badly needed by distribution) and printing and marketing requirements.

Staff Training: The application to ICOM was successful and £2,180 is available. Staff will be attending courses in sound, Desk Top Publishing and computers. All training must be completed by April 91.

Insurance: The old insurance contract expires at the end of January and a new contract is currently being negotiated. It is hoped that lower premiums can be achieved than at present.

Courses: As there is now a firm commitment to a two-day a week courses organiser post, the finances for this area will go into the main bookkeeping in the next financial year.

Catalogue: The £10 membership fee for members with films in distribution is to go towards the cost of the catalogue.

Sandy expressed her thanks on behalf of Administration to Gina.

Questions: The increases in lighting and heating and repair and maintenance charges/costs were raised and Sandy agreed to look into the matter and report back to the executive.

A vote was taken to confirm that money raised from courses should go into the main accounts system.

For: 35  
Against: 0  
Abstentions: 1

#### Building Crisis Report: Presented by Tom Heslop.

Practical Arts Management Consultants carried out a feasibility study on the possibility of the CO-OP and the LVA sharing premises; they recommended joint occupancy and the CO-OP and the LVA agreed to proceed to stage two, finding a shared building on the understanding that either side could pull out if they found something independently. GLA made an application on LVA's behalf to the Arts Council Enhancement fund for £150,000 but this was rejected. The possibilities looked into are.

L... The Half Moon Theatre: The executive agreed that RPM (Relocation Project Management) should look into the possible purchase of the Half Moon. This was paid for from the £20,000 promised by the BFI for Stage Two. RPM's business plan noted that in the past the BBC had hired space at the Half Moon and that this might be a way of helping to pay the mortgage, however the amount required to cover the costs of refurbishing and extending the building would require a considerable input from the funders and from potential commercial partners.

A meeting to discuss the Half Moon as well as other plans for Stage Two was held. This was attended by the CO-OP, LVA, BFI, and GLA as well as Channel 4 and the Arts Council. At this meeting it became clear that the only money definitely available was the £150,000 development money promised over three years by the BFI. Other funders said they would look into ways of releasing money though they were pessimistic. The outcome of the meeting was that the BFI would commission RPM to look for commercial partners for the Half Moon as well as doing an independent survey of the Diorama, investigating the AIR gallery, looking into possible developments at Hoxton Square, finding another building or securing a new lease on the present one. Due to the SKY/BSB merger and continued television deregulation a commercial partner could not be found for the Half Moon and it has since been sold to a video production company for £500,000; more than the CO-OP could have raised.

2... The Diorama: A meeting was held with the Diorama, however not enough space has been allocated and the proposed rent, £15 a square foot is too high. A lot of finance is still needed and there is a strong possibility that the project will never happen.

3.... The AIR Gallery: This is simply too small.

4.... The Present Building: BR will not grant a new lease and they are going to re-develop within two years. English Heritage are interested in the tunnels under the building and the building may be knocked down as a result. At the moment BR do not want to evict the CO-OP and so we probably have time to find somewhere else.

5.... Hoxton Square: A meeting was held with the architects, however this is another project that may well never get off the ground and is too expensive.

6.... Dagmar Terrace: An old factory in Islington with two large floors. It is proposed that the CO-OP and LVA share the ground floor. A 15 year lease would probably be arranged at about £6 a sq foot depending on how much the BFI or other funders would put in to redevelop the building. RPM are currently doing an assessment and sometime next week a meeting will be held to discuss this. This will probably be followed by a meeting with the funders to discuss financing the project. The BFI have now accepted that a building can't be obtained for nothing and may raise the Revenue Grant to cope with the increased rent. The Dagmar Terrace site is very promising but will be dependant in the end on cost. BR are not pressing for a move by March but we should have secured something by the end of 1991.

A vote of thanks were offered to Sandy and Philip for thier work on the building crisis project.

Questions: Why was a feasibility study needed to assess whether the CO-OP and the LVA could share a building?

This was a pre-condition of the BFI who paid the £8,000 required.

Why was more space required?

To allow for greater office space, distribution storage, a preview room, teaching space etc.

A vote of confidence was taken in the CO-OP's accountants.

For; 34

Against: 0

Abstentions: 2

Lunch was called at 12.40.

AFTERNOON  
MINUTES OF THE LONDON FILMMAKERS CO-OP ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
SATURDAY 12th JANUARY 1991

*The chair's opening statement said that the purpose of this A.G.M. was to deal with the mechanism of the proposed changes rather than the principles involved.*

PROPOSAL 1

It was pointed out that to replace the name executive with management committee would require us to change the articles of association which would be expensive and complicated.

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Worry was expressed that the democratic base of the organisation is being eroded, that the right of membership to make decisions over who works here is being relinquished. It needed to be clear when staff could make decisions, when the executive could make decisions, and that decisions of large consequence should go to "full" membership.

\*

It was stated that the proposals were not "complex" enough, that they needed to be legally worded.

\*

It was asked whether there would be the same mechanism in staff meetings as there is in executive meetings. Would they for example be minuted; would there be observers?

\*

Point of information: that minutes from the executive are open to all members, and that the executive can come to any staff meeting.

\*

It was pointed out that the executive had all but become a staff executive, so core decisions are being made by staff anyway.

\*

It was stated that Co-op staff have no voting rights at management level, and that "Full" and "Access" membership made the Co-op more democratic because the 50 or so members who are active should have more responsibility.

\*

A ceiling of 60 voting members it was argued was unworkable. Someone observed that most members do not fulfil their duties as described in the articles of association.

\*

It was stated that the system as it stands does not work because there is not the interest from membership to make a full and active executive. That the proposal is unfortunate but necessary.

\*

It was stated that in a month's time, there would be a meeting of core members who would vote on the next executive (it would not have to go to the next A.G.M.). To clarify the structure of the interview panel, it was reiterated that 3 members are voted onto the panel by the membership.

\*

It was argued that the monthly executive was poorly attended. If quarterly, staff can work to a structure. It is essential that day to day decisions can be made by staff.

\*

There was an objection made to the limited amount of time that people were being allowed to speak. That this was undemocratic.

\*

It was suggested that 2 general meetings a year was a good thing, because it gives greater opportunity for attendance. You need to keep as many opportunities for a forum of discussion. A lack of openness turns people away. Staff should not be making decisions that relate to staffing. It needs to be made clear what staff can vote on.

\*

It was stated that it was obvious what decisions staff would be making. How to get rid of statutory delays was the problem. Another comment was made about democracy - that it works through a clearly defined structure.

\*

It was pointed out that (for example) the £10 distribution "fee" could be overturned as policy if there is concerted objection.

\*

Staff needed to be on any interview panel as they know what is needed.

\*



It was suggested that wide spread advertising for posts (such as in the Guardian) was expensive and created a large number of applicants that had to be shortlisted. Before, locally advertised posts ensured that applicants were committed and negated the need for shortlisting as only 4 or 5 committed members would apply.

\*

It was pointed out that local advertising was totally against our Equal Opportunities Policy.

\*

If a core member does not renew membership, but renews later do they have to go through the "Access" procedure again?

\*

It was pointed out that when the "pool" of core members were supposed to meet to be selected onto the interview panel only 3 people turned up - ultimate apathy.

\*

It was identified that some members who were at the AGM had not been invited to formulate proposals, and had not been mailed about the AGM.

It was proposed that we consider the proposals as a working paper, and research among members for modification to reflect membership as a whole.

\*

It was pointed out that if the proposals do go through it is not the final word anyway.

\*

It was suggested that it might be in the core membership's interests for the core membership to be as small as possible, with the potential problems of core members deciding who will become core members.

The proposal needs amendment. The conditions under which a member can become a core member need to be stated. There needs to be a process.

\*

It was suggested that it was obvious what made a core member - at the moment sweeping the floor would qualify you - that's how bad it is.

\*

It was thought that members with films in distribution were automatically "full" (core) members, with full voting rights. It was not fair to blame "film makers" for organizational apathy, because of the time and commitment it takes to make a film.

\*

Through a process of more and more staff being voted on to the executive we were now short of the constitutionally required number of members.

\*

AGMs should be called 2 months in advance so that members have time to put together resolutions.

\*

It was suggested that the proposals highlighted the problem rather than offer a solution. People should be encouraged to make the existing system work.

\*

It was identified that the Gulf demonstration today was a major consideration for today's attendance.

\*

It was stated that membership involvement had always passed through a "natural cycle"; those who help and those who don't. When the Co-op started it consisted of 8 or 9 filmmakers that constituted a natural core group - all volunteers. Funding changed this as pressure increased for the Co-op to adopt the same structure as the funding bodies.

Payed staff are accountable to and are responsible for helping members. Increased pressure on staff has now renewed call for core group.

However, even if cumbersome, major proposals have to be referred back to staff. Meetings generate a feeling of involvement. A regenerating and renewing Co-op requires the right structure.

It should not be left to people to call meetings, it must be laid down in the book to call meetings.

It was also suggested that people staying away from meetings did not necessarily mean lack of interest, but that some people feel that they do not want to determine the way the Co-op should be run.

\*

People who release films for distribution should automatically have core membership.

It was asked whether someone who makes films and puts them in distribution - should their input be worth anymore than someone who comes and edits film but perhaps cannot afford a show print.

\*

Geographical location of members would determine what input was expected.

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VOTING

Additional Proposal

That we should establish a working party to contain a 50:50 ratio of those who were on retreat and other members to alter the proposals appropriately to be voted on at a later date.

For: 6  
 Against: 21  
 Abstentions: 7

Amendments to Proposal 1

- 1) If people do want a management committee, that the idea of it be probationary for a year and be re-evaluated at the next AGM and be voted on by all members rather than core members.

For: 30  
 Against: 4  
 Abstentions: 3

- 2) (Points 1 - 7) That we substitute the words "Executive Committee" for "Management Committee."

For: 27  
 Against: 0  
 Abstentions: 9

- 3) (Point 5) Staff would take on daily decisions, subject to the formulation and guidelines laid out by the Executive and would be accountable to the Executive and Core membership.

For: 19  
 Against: 2  
 Abstentions: 12

- 4) (Point 6) The election of the executive committee takes place at the AGM and or the EGM.

For: 25  
 Against: 0  
 Abstentions: 10

- 5) (Point 1) Any "Associate" member is entitled to attend the EGM or AGM and express an opinion although they have no voting rights.

For: 28  
 Against: 0  
 Abstentions: 4

- 6) (Point 1) Any member can put forward a proposal at an executive committee meeting, have access to the minutes, and be present at meetings.

For: 29  
 Against: 0  
 Abstentions: 2

- 7) (Point 1) Executive meetings should continue to be monthly.

For: 15  
 Against: 8  
 Abstentions: 9

- 8) (Point 2) That major policy decisions affecting the membership as a whole, whether in philosophy, political direction, or function of the Co-op should be formulated as concretely worded proposals at executive level and brought to the AGM or EGM for ratification by the membership.

For: 29  
 Against: 0  
 Abstentions: 5

- 9) (Point 1) There should be no numerical limits on core membership.

For: 36  
 Against: 0  
 Abstentions: 0

- 10) (Point 1) That firm written guidelines of the type of involvement and the extent of that involvement which are necessary for Access Members to become Full Members are established, the guidelines to further indicate that a positive contribution of a type not specified can be sufficient to confer core membership status, and that the executive committee are bound to apply these guidelines at arriving at relevant decisions, and that all members have access to these guidelines.

For: 33  
 Against: 1  
 Abstentions: 3

11) All members will receive mailings regarding AGMs and EGMs.

For:	30
Against:	0
Abstentions:	0

PROPOSAL 1 (as amended)

Point 1:	For:	26
	Against:	6
	Abstentions:	2

Points 2-6:	For:	27
	Against:	1
	Abstentions:	5

Point 7:	For:	10
	Against:	18
	Abstentions:	5

PROPOSAL 2

It was stated that if the proposal was to go through it should be confined to the period of the building crisis.

\*

It was pointed out that the reason for limited tenure was so that people did not get "entrenched" in a job.

\*

It was argued that there were not that many jobs around, and as many people as possible should be given the chance to work at the Co-op, to enable them to gain experience, and then to apply for jobs elsewhere.

\*

A compromise was suggested - that a person was free to re-apply for their job.

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VOTING

<u>PROPOSAL 2:</u>	For:	7
	Against:	13
	Abstentions:	6

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PROPOSAL 3

It was argued that we should prioritise work on equipment and the cinema rather than on courses.

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The reason given for the emphasis on courses was that courses did make a profit.

\*

Because money does come in from "known" members being allowed to use equipment on Mondays it was suggested we incorporate the following amendment:

"The closing of workshop on Mondays should be fully within the power of executive if they consider it necessary."

\*

It needed to be established whether to expand towards technical assistance or towards courses.

The course administrator, because her post had not "existed" had not been elected, and felt her position was tenuous. It was argued that the post should be recognised as an important one. That we should be committed to education as well as everything else.

\*

It was argued that greater emphasis was being placed on education than on the cinema.

\*

It was reiterated that courses were making a substantial amount of money, and that if we scrapped the post and employed 3 workshop workers we simply could not afford that third member.

### VOTING

#### Amendments to Proposal 3

- 1) That the proposal is subject to increased revenue from the BFI, in which case the executive are able to reconsider the position with a possibility of increasing workshop days.

For: 15  
 Against: 1  
 Abstentions: 8

- 2) That the proposal should be subject to review at the next AGM.

For: 24  
 Against: 0  
 Abstentions: 1

PROPOSAL 3 (as amended): For: 19  
 Against: 0  
 Abstentions: 5

At this stage of the day a Quorum could not be maintained so Proposal 4 could not be voted on.

#### Further Discussion

It was stated that no-one was coordinating the Equal Opportunities Policy in the Co-op. The existing policy has been apparent in as much as a 50:50 Man/Woman ratio has been implemented on the open day with a maximum of 20 men. Women had also been phoned who had put their names down which had noticeably improved attendance.

\*

A discussion followed about the problem of cinema closure. The "on/off" situation gave a very bad public image.

\*

The need for a support mechanism for the cinema organiser was identified. A "cinema committee" could be established to pool ideas and coordinate a programme.

\*

Anna volunteered to coordinate an initial 1 month programme.

CLOSE OF MEETING