

## Section 3: About Your Organisation

Name of Organisation: Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival

What type of organisation are you? (please tick)

Registered Charity

Unregistered community group/Club/Society

Other (please state)

Do you have a set of rules or a constitution? (please tick)

(please supply a copy if this is your first application to BTC)

Yes

No

Where does your organisation work? (please tick)

Just in the Berwick, Tweedmouth

Regionally in the North East

and/or Spittal area

and/or Southern Scotland

Throughout Northumberland

Nationally

For the most recent financial year please state:

Income: £306,270

Expenditure: £302,631

Year End Balance: £36,185

What does your organisation do:

Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival (BFMAF) was created by Berwick based artists in 2005 and is now in its 20th year. Our main activity is an annual film festival, creating meeting points and conversations between people in North Northumberland and international artists and filmmakers. In the last years BFMAF's main aim has been to become the UK's leading festival for New Cinema and Artists' Moving Image.

The 19th edition of the Festival in March 2024 had 6,463 admissions across 28 cinema screenings, 5 exhibitions and numerous events around the town in heritage and civic sites. Filmmakers from 34 countries including Argentina, Finland, Iran, Japan, Lebanon, Morocco, Mozambique, Nicaragua, Palestine, Philippines, Saudi Arabia, Singapore and Thailand were included in the programme and 27 of them travelled to present their work in person to audiences in Berwick. 18 of the 48 films shown were World Premieres.

Our aim to be the UK's leading film festival for New Cinema means forming ever stronger connections between our local and international communities, participants and audiences. In 2024-5 we successfully raised funds to employ a Public Programmer and take on a long term high street space to enable us to expand upon our year-round creative programme, *The Burr of Berwick*.

This additional activity complements the annual festival by providing opportunities for people in Berwick, Spittal and Tweedmouth to make and programme films themselves, dive deeper into local heritage and geographies through archival programmes, and gain new skills through educational and professional opportunities.

Alongside our shift from a once-a-year festival to an intensive year-round programme—including weekly after-school clubs at Tweedmouth West and St. Cuthbert's First Schools—we are also establishing a permanent, public-facing home in Berwick. Until 2023, we were based in a relatively hidden basement office at The Maltings, followed by a temporary stay at Berwick Workspace. Over the next few months, we will relocate to the former Coxon & Coxon premises on Bridge Street, which will be regularly open to the public for workshops, events, and other activities. This development will radically transform how both local residents and visitors engage with our work.

BFMAF's stated Business Plan objectives are:

1. To present an artistically ambitious, internationally significant programme of artists' moving image and new cinema across cinema, exhibition and performance.
2. To support artists via commissions, the production of new work, residencies, exhibitions and screening programmes.
3. That BFMAF actively embodies mutual learning and a 'work in progress' ethos across all its activities – learning from its audiences, peers and programme participants. Mutual exchange will shape the present and the future of our work.
4. To develop the Festival's regional, national and international audiences supported by continued enhancement of its digital presence, an informed data culture and strong leadership within its associational life.
5. To deliver a programme which is inspired by, creates deeper knowledge of and animates the specific social, cultural, historical, and environmental contexts of North Northumberland and its people.
6. To ensure its programme is engaging and stimulating for all audience members, with specific provision for children and young people.
7. To create a resilient, dynamic and creative organisation where a demonstrable commitment to diversity and environmental responsibility is central to all activity.

How many people take part in your activities each year?

Audiences for the 2024 Festival and Burr of Berwick events:

3,733 cinema tickets booked

1,555 visitors to our free exhibitions programme

400 people attended our Festival club music events

300 school students took part in creative film and animation workshops in schools in Berwick and Tweedmouth

211 school children attended a gala screening of their own animations at The Maltings

An estimated 400 people attended Burr of Berwick events hosted in partnership with fellow Berwick Festivals, Bridge

400 celebration and Heritage Open Days last summer.

Total in person audience for all BFMAF events in 2024: 6,599.

## NOTES:

As most individuals attend more than one screening and more than one exhibition (on average, each visitor had 5.4 interactions across the programme), it is useful to look at the data for Festival passes and individual ticket sales:

436 Festival passes were issued and 322 individual cinema tickets were sold to non-passholders, which equates to 818 individual attendees for the cinema programme. Additionally of note, 17% of those surveyed only attended exhibitions.

A further 858 people attended online events and film programmes in 2024.

How many people are involved in your organisation? (Committee, volunteers, paid staff)

8 trustees; 4.2 FTE permanent team members; 5 FTE team members on fixed term contracts; 50 volunteers per annum; and 8 freelance team members on short term contracts over the Festival period.

Total in 2024/25: 75 people involved in our organisation as trustees, volunteers and paid staff

## Section 4: Your Project

Describe your project (Continue on a separate sheet as necessary; include any drawings or plans of your project that will help explain what it is about)

We are requesting a grant from Berwick Town Council towards marketing and promotion of the 20th Berwick Film & Media Arts Festival taking place over 4 days from 27-30 March 2025.

Specifically, supporting additional marketing activity that will drive visitors to Berwick-upon-Tweed from cities in the North East, Borders and south of Scotland, and resulting in increased overnight stays in the town. Our project shares the Town Council's aims to:

- Promote the economic growth of Berwick, Spittal and Tweedmouth
- Encourage people to visit Berwick, Spittal and Tweedmouth

### About this year's Festival

- The 20th BFMAF showcases 45 films across the Festival's programme and 5 exhibitions in key venues around town. The film programme includes 8 World Premieres, 1 International Premiere, 2 European Premieres, and 17 UK Premieres, with 25 countries represented including Algeria, Argentina, Bangladesh, Bolivia, Chile, Democratic Republic of Congo, Egypt, Japan as well as the UK, Europe and North America.
- A notable highlight is Japanese filmmaker Eri Makihara as Filmmaker in Focus, exhibiting Deaf-centered films outside Asia for the first time.
- This will be our final Festival in the current Maltings building before it closes for redevelopment and we are excited to be using the new Maltings Cinema at Berwick Barracks for the first time.
- 5 exhibitions will take place around the town at venues including our new permanent space on Bridge Street, the Town Hall Chamber, Gymnasium Gallery, the Magazine, and St Aidan's Peace Church.
- Social events including the Festival club nights will take place at venues including the Magdalene Fields Golf Club.

### Marketing activity driving visits to Berwick

#### Closer ties with local businesses:

- Team members have been engaging with the team at Visit Berwick and with local business forums to build our local network and improve our communication with local businesses, especially accommodation providers, cafes and restaurants.
- Our website's 'Plan your Visit' page includes up-to-date directories of local businesses including accommodation providers, food & drink, and taxi services, including a town map.

- We will use the Berwick in Business local map, giving all visitors access to information about other local facilities, cultural and heritage sites.
- Local business poster and postcard drop in February by our Communications Manager, ensuring that local businesses are aware of the Festival dates and can support promotion and 'put a face to a name'.

#### Targeted marketing:

- Promote our free exhibitions for day trips for local and south of Scotland audiences (socials, website, emails, posters and postcard distribution, on street signage, partner shares).
- Flag train prices and offers, available accommodation around town at regular intervals (socials, website, emails).
- Direct communication with ticket holders about available travel and accommodation (emails).
- Online marketing utilises cross-posting events on local interest and events groups, while building and nurturing local partnerships with Berwick Festivals and peer organisations.
- Publicise the Festival via Visit Berwick, NECA and Northumberland County Council's own marketing channels and marketing teams to increase local awareness.
- Use the free exhibitions as a driver for increasing individual ticket sales e.g. volunteers engage visitors and make recommendations depending on interests/age/time available. In-venue marketing (posters for exhibitions at the screenings venues; posters for the screening programme at the exhibition venues).

#### Targeting local/regional press:

- Working with an experienced in-house Press Officer will mean more time can be dedicated to local and regional press than in recent years working with larger agencies.
- Utilising our town's wonderful location as a unique selling point for the Festival in announcements.
- Interview placements and reviews in visual arts and film media, trade and regional broadcast press including podcasts and local TV and radio.
- Listings mentions in regional UK national and Scottish arts sections.
- Online travel features highlighting the impressive location.
- Tailored pitching across a range of interest groups and target audiences including trade, travel, family, local media and specialty media.
- Invite key industry and consumer press to the Festival on press trips.
- Photo call opportunities utilising Berwick's landscape, cultural and heritage sites.

#### Design

- Following a well received rebrand last Festival, we will continue to work with designer Tom Joyes. Berwick's bear, liberated from his chains last year, will be taken on adventures around the town by new illustrator Brendan O'Rourke.

#### Print and distribution

- 10,000 x posters and postcards in distribution via professional distribution companies (4k in Northumberland & Newcastle; 4k in Glasgow & Edinburgh; 1k in Berwick) with a target of cinema and art gallery venues, bars and younger audience facing locations (distribution from early February 2025). If budget allows, we hope to expand to Dundee, Aberdeen and potentially cities in Yorkshire.
- 1,000 programme guides distributed at the event (schedule, venues info etc).
- 9 x large on street banners at key locations around Berwick-upon-Tweed signpost the Festival and encourage last minute sales
- Pull up roller banners inside foyers of all exhibition venues.
- A-boards outside all screening and exhibition venues.
- Refreshed directional signage for all venues and to facilitate flow to new venues e.g. Barracks Cinema.

#### Advertising:

- Placement and timing has been considered to drive sale of Festival passes and overnight stays (national press), day trips (local and regional press) and individual ticket sales (local press).
- ¼ page print advert in Art Monthly December and January double issue for national reach for sale of Festival Passes (December 2024)
- ½ page print advert in The Skinny February issue for Scotland reach for sale of Festival Passes and Day Passes (January 2025)
- Classified advert in Northumberland Gazette for Regional reach and sale of day passes (March 2024)

- Additional 'last minute' advert in regional title like The Skinny, Crack or Corridor 8, taking advantage of last minute deals for better value.
- Digital advertising: social media post boosting, google advertising and some specialist outlets such as Corridor8 and e-flux where budget allows.

#### Documentation:

- High quality photography of the event is essential for marketing of future events and showcases Berwick's unique landscape, heritage and culture. This year, Amelia Read will return to photograph all 4 days of the Festival.
- Documentation is often shared with partner organisations like Create Berwick, NECA and Northumberland County Council, meaning that it is a useful tool for promoting the town as a cultural centre.

#### Improving our customer service

We are striving to improve accessibility of the Festival for all audience members and in particular d/Deaf audiences this year:

- Access Consultant Laura Lulika will undertake an access audit for all Festival venues that will be available on our website and external platforms e.g. WelcoMe, Everybody Welcome. The audits will include photos and comprehensive descriptions of facilities like wheelchair access, toilets, lighting etc that help audiences with additional needs to plan ahead. We will share these with venues for their future use and to benefit other Berwick Festivals and public events that use these venues.
- Matchbox Cinesub are consulting on the accessibility of our Festival and communications for d/Deaf audiences. They will attend the Festival and create an evaluation report with recommendations for future editions.
- Ensure that comprehensive access information (BSL, descriptive subtitles, wheelchair access, toilets) is included in printed media and on the website and that a BSL video is available to promote the event.
- Staff training in customer service and event production for Disabled audiences.
- Deaf awareness training for staff members.

Why is it needed? (include details of any research you have carried out to identify the need and describe any specific benefits for the people of Berwick, Tweedmouth and Spittal)

We know that moving the Festival from September to March has already significantly increased the number of audience members buying Festival passes and making multi-night trips to Berwick:

- Box office income has risen year on year since making the switch to March (£8,463 in 2023; and £11,404 in 2024, which equates to a +124% increase on box office income since the last in person Festival pre-Covid).
- An estimated 908 overnight stays were booked by our audience members in 2024. (Calculation methodology: 189 survey respondents stayed an average of 2.58 nights in paid accommodation in Berwick during the Festival. We applied that average to the total number of paid passes sold (352 x 2.58 nights = 908 nights). We excluded individual ticket holders, as they are unlikely to have needed overnight accommodation.)
- Additionally, in 2024 accommodation arrangements were made by us for 53 guests and 21 volunteers including bookings at 10 different accommodation providers located in Berwick-upon-Tweed. This equated to a further 318 overnight stays in the town.
- Total overnight stays: 1,226

We put these successes down to increased marketing and investment in audience development, which has led to increased sales of multi-day passes resulting in a higher number of overnight stays.

#### Economic benefit

Average spend (gathered through our visitor survey 2024):

On average, visitors stayed for 2.8 nights.

Average spend on accommodation was £168.61

Additionally, we learnt that:

Average spend on food and drink per person was £37.37  
Average spend on parking and travel was £28.17  
Average spend on visitor attractions was £10.16  
Average spend on other recreation/leisure activities was £7.15  
Average spend on shopping was £23.51

#### Room for growth

13% of audience were from Northumberland, all of which were from the Tweedbank area  
42% of audiences were from North East England  
8% of audiences were from Greater London  
24% of audiences were from Scotland

- Through audience surveys and box office data, we know that local audiences show a tendency towards free exhibitions and one-off film screenings compared to UK-wide audiences.
- Marketing will focus on engaging local and regional audiences in the broader festival, encouraging them to attend both the free exhibitions and film screenings.
- With the festival now in March, as opposed to coinciding with the tourist season in September, marketing efforts will be supported by increased accommodation availability in Berwick.

#### Business survey responses

Market research agency Spirul conducted a survey of local businesses on behalf of one of our funders North East Combined Authority. The feedback received from local business owners has informed the activity included in this application:

“A real positive bringing the event date forward to the date it was this year. Gives businesses a cash injection before peak season coming out of winter”

“We were busy and there was a really good atmosphere”

“Hotel was fully booked with people visiting the event”

“There are usually over 100 people at each of the after parties and they contribute to an increase in takings. Helps to advertise the space as a function room.”

And we have taken suggestions for improvements on board:

“Bit more signage round town to say what's going on and where, in which venue.”

“Bit more advertising promoting the event. Make the event bigger.”

“The volunteer coordinator is lovely and very helpful. No other interaction with the festival organisers. Might be helpful to try and get businesses more involved”

#### How will you measure the success of your project?

We will use box office data and our visitor survey to measure the success of the project. In particular, we will be looking for:

- Increased audiences from Northumberland, outside the Tweedbank area (currently only 13% of audiences are from Northumberland and all of them from the Tweedbank area). Target +5%
- Increase in overnight stays in Berwick for Festival attendees. Target +5%
- Increase in individual ticket sales by people living in commutable distance in Northumberland and Borders (only 322 in 2024). Target +10%
- Increase in visits to free exhibitions – footfall driven by on street signage and advertising. Target +5%
- Increase attendance from d/Deaf and Disabled audiences to 18% (11.9% of our surveyed audiences identified as d/Deaf or Disabled in 2023).
- Increased visibility of posters and postcards throughout our distribution areas (monitored through the survey question ‘how did you hear about the Festival’)
- Monitor effectiveness of advertising in local and regional titles (monitored through the survey question ‘how did you hear about the Festival’)
- Increased coverage of the Festival in local press and broadcast media (monitored by our Press Officer and compared

to previous years).

- Monitor reach of social media content through partner shares with local accounts, organisations and groups.
- Positive feedback and impact data from local businesses gathered post-event via questionnaire.

What is the total Cost of your project? **£32,840**  
PLEASE PROVIDE A PROJECT BUDGET

Have you asked any other organisation for help to fund the project? Yes No If yes, please give details below

| Organisation  | Amount requested | Outcome                   |
|---|------------------|---------------------------|
| Arts Council England contribution to marketing and audience development   | 11,650           | Successful (core funding) |
| British Film Institute Audience Projects Fund contribution to marketing, press and access materials and consultancy | 5,840            | Successful (core funding) |
| North East Combined Authority contribution to press and marketing team and marketing materials                      | 12,850           | Successful (core funding) |
|   | 30,340           | Total                     |

## Section 4: Your Project (Contied)

What will the Town Council grant be used for?

Here you should list either individual items you want the Town Council to help pay for e.g. Toilets or insurance or areas of expenditure you want help with e.g. printing or publicity. Do not provide a list of unrelated items and a single cost for them all.

| Item   | Cost | Purchase or hire? | Town Council contribution |
|--|------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Advertisement in the Northumberland Gazette in March 2024  | 300  | Purchase          | 360                       |
| 'Last minute' advertisement in regional title e.g. The Skinny, Crack or Corridor 8 (TBC dependent of offers)                   | 300  | Purchase          | 300                       |
| Contribution to print distribution (enabling wider distribution throughout Northumberland and Borders)                         | 1250 | Purchase          | 500                       |
| Contribution to cost of print materials (outdoor banner and directional signage, roll ups, A-boards)                           | 1000 | Purchase          | 500                       |
| Contribution to salary costs for Press Officer, to enable segmented campaigns for local and regional press and broadcast media | 3000 | Purchase          | 540                       |
| BSL video with event and ticketing info  | 300  | Purchase          | 300                       |
|  |      |                   |                           |
| <b>Total requested from the Town Council</b>   |      |                   | <b>2,500</b>              |

This amount must not exceed £2500

How will you publicise the Town Council's assistance (for example at the event and/or in publicity or other material)

Berwick Town Council logo will be included on the:

- In the Programme Guide (1,000 copies);
- In the Festival Catalogue (500 copies);
- On the Northumberland Gazette and other advertisement in March;
- On the supporters page on our website [bfmaf.org](http://bfmaf.org) for 12 months;
- In 'thanks to our funders' posts on social media channels and email newsletters in March & April;
- On a 'thanks to our funders' splash screen displayed on cinema screens before all 30+ Festival screenings at the Maltings and Barracks Cinema;
- All funders will be thanked during speeches at the Festival Opening and Closing films.



What will happen if you are not given funding at this time?

#### Reduced Marketing Scope Means Fewer Visitors

- Without this funding, we cannot run the expanded regional marketing campaigns described (such as additional ads in print/digital outlets or extended poster distribution in Yorkshire and the Scottish Borders, segmented press campaigns).
- As a result, fewer first-time or out-of-town visitors are likely to attend, diminishing the festival's economic benefit for local hospitality and retail businesses.
- Any reduction of marketing materials in situ directly impacts awareness among local residents, businesses, and potential visitors passing through the town, hampering last-minute or impulse attendance.

#### Enabling Inclusive and Accessible Events

- The funding directly supports resources such as a BSL video, access audits, and improved signage, ensuring that everyone—including d/Deaf and disabled audiences—can access the Festival.
- By showcasing Berwick as an inclusive tourist destination, we enhance its reputation regionally and nationally, driving both cultural and economic growth. Without this funding, some of these specialised accessibility measures would be scaled back, limiting our progress in making Berwick an inclusive destination for all.

Town Council support amplifies the Festival's impact. A small grant from the Council yields significant returns in visitor numbers, spending, and community engagement—returns that would be otherwise unattainable. The Council's contribution enables the larger marketing and accessibility strategy that directly benefits Berwick, Tweedmouth, and Spittal.