

# **TRANSFORMING THE BFI: A NEW ORGANISATION FOR FILM**

## **Introduction**

The Government's announcement at the end of 2010 to transfer the responsibilities of the UK Film Council to the BFI marked the start of a new era for film in Britain. It was a bold decision that represented a great vote of confidence in the BFI and its ability to take charge of film policy in Britain, to create a single body to champion film across the UK and to provide a clear focus internationally.

There will follow a period of transition to the BFI of a range of activities – including all Lottery funding for film, the Film Certification Unit and the MEDIA Desk, and funding of Creative England. The BFI is working closely with DCMS, the UK Film Council, Film London and other key partners to ensure the transition process is as smooth as possible.

These activities will grow the BFI's role and responsibilities; the BFI's Board of Trustees welcomed the decision and is committed to transform the organisation to ensure that the new functions are integrated effectively, that a coherent new body can be created and a clear, single strategy for film in the UK developed.

## **The BFI's current remit**

The BFI is central to film in the UK. It has an international reputation for championing a very broad diversity of film – from art-house to the most commercial. We have wide-ranging strengths and staff expertise in traditional distribution, digital distribution, exhibition, international film festivals, broadcast partnerships and education. Our track record includes:

- creating and caring for the world's busiest and most significant film archive, which continues to be a rich source of inspiration for filmmakers at every stage of their career, as well as a valued research and education tool. We make the collection available through our public programmes for the enjoyment of millions of people every year;
- BFI Southbank, BFI Imax and the BFI London Film Festival are all vibrant destinations which attract large audiences, often for films that would not otherwise be seen in the UK. Our Imax cinema is one of the most profitable commercial Imax operations anywhere in the world;
- we are the biggest and most diverse distributor of film right across the UK, bringing film to more than six hundred venues (from multiplexes to film societies, enabling remote screenings from the Highlands and Islands of Scotland to metropolitan cities);

- the BFI is internationally admired for its high quality releases of films that are commercially risky: our highly successful DVD label releases 40 titles a year and these include many titles from the BFI National Collection;
- the BFI has an exemplary record in delivering multi-million pound and complex partnership projects, including the £20m Screen Heritage UK project which involves dozens of partners across the UK and a capital build of c.£10m – all being delivered on time and to budget;
- the BFI has successfully fostered an entrepreneurial environment. Over the last five years our self-generated revenue has grown by more than 50% on top of inflation. This year, our turnover is expected to be £40m, of which we generate £24m ourselves;
- most of all, the BFI has a strong international brand which can be leveraged in its new role.

### **Founding Aspirations**

In its new role as lead agency for film in the UK the BFI is now preparing to develop a forward strategy for film in the UK.

We want to:

- effect a smooth and supportive transition of responsibilities from the UK Film Council to the BFI;
- achieve a vibrant film culture and successful film industry across the UK;
- achieve the best balance between economic benefit and cultural benefit;
- strengthen the sustainability of film businesses;
- maximise the use of Lottery and other public funds for front line activities, and reduce bureaucracy and costs so that more money can be concentrated on film activities;
- achieve greater coherence across the whole film sector; and
- develop partnerships with other bodies that substantially increase the impact and reach of British films (for example, working with broadcasters to increase exhibition opportunities for film, on broadcast TV and video on demand, as well as on the big screen)

### **What's next?**

The BFI is recruiting five new Governors including a Deputy Chair.

We will lead, with DCMS, a public consultation on a new, refreshed film policy across all areas from archive, through distribution, exhibition, skills and education, to production. This will be carried out during spring 2011 with a view to reporting in the autumn for introduction from 1 April 2012. The consultation is likely to explore proposals already developed by a

number of existing bodies, as well as more fundamental questions such as whether there is scope to structure funding in other ways.

The new Board will set up a Film Strategy Development Task Force to be chaired by the newly recruited Deputy Chair.

## **Governance**

The BFI's Board consists of up to 15 members including the Chair, but currently has 12 trustees in post.

The Board has reviewed the range of skills and experiences it has among its members and has also been planning an overhaul of governance. It has been considering a number of issues in line with current good practice, including the size of the Board and the processes by which trustees are appointed.

All permanent appointments to the BFI Board would be through a Nolan process managed by the BFI (other than where an *ex officio* appointment was made).

The BFI is currently a registered charity regulated by the Charity Commission and subject to its authority. This status can only be changed by legislation since it would involve the transfer of charitable assets out of a registered charity. The BFI's Board of Governors wishes to continue being a registered charity.

## **Who we are looking for**

The five new Governors we are seeking to recruit are likely to come from a very senior level in the film industry, including film-makers; people who are passionate about the commercial and cultural success of the film industry. And as the *British Film Institute*, we are committed to ensuring people working in different Nations and Regions of the UK continue to serve on our board.

## **The current BFI Board of Governors**

Greg Dyke – *Chair*

Eric Fellner CBE \* – *Deputy Chair* (producer and co-CEO, Working Title Films)

Shami Chakrabarti CBE (Director of Liberty, the human and civil rights organisation)

Peter Foy (former MD, McKinsey & Co UK, management consultants)

Sir Christopher Frayling (former Rector of the Royal College of Art; former Chair, Arts Council England; leading cinema scholar)

Matthew Freud (Freud Communications)

Ashley Highfield (Managing Director & VP, Consumer & Online UK at Microsoft)

Caroline Michel \* (CEO, PFD literary agency)

Sir Howard Newby (Vice-Chancellor, University of Liverpool)

Tessa Ross (Head of Film & Drama, Channel 4)

David Thompson (independent TV producer) – Member Governor

Peter Watson \* (producer, and Chief Executive, Recorded Picture Company)

Cy Young (former documentary researcher) – Member Governor

\* The terms of these Board members have expired but have been temporarily extended. They will be replaced by new members.