



# How to ...

## Run a church film club

### Introduction

St Mary's is a historic Church of England Parish Church in Bristol West Deanery. They are very much concerned with both the present and the future, and supported by a strong and committed congregation they are trying to move forwards while discerning God's will for them. Their Mission Statement is to provide stimulating and challenging worship, to assist each other to grow in faith in Christ, and to show his love in the parish and beyond.

One thing that the church does is host a film club for the village as a great way of meeting the community and having fun together in a social setting.

Here, Trevor Anderson shares some information about how the Film Club in Olveston runs. If you wanted to start your own Church Film Club we would advise you to speak with CCLI first (see below) as there are regulations that must be followed and licences that need to be obtained before you begin.

### Movies at St Mary's Olveston

**Movies at St Mary's** is a free-of-charge film club for our local community. We invite people to make a donation at the end, but we do not charge for admission. Because of this fact we can purchase an annual 'blanket' licence which allows us to show films from most of the main distributors without any further cost. The main purposes of the whole venture are to provide an enjoyable community activity and to encourage people to see and feel the church building as a central part of that community. Typically we get around 40 to 50 people to each showing (sometimes more) and we usually net around £150 - £200 each time. This includes gift aid and a small profit from the sale of refreshments.

### How did it all come about?

As part of our reordering in 2010 we installed a back projector and an electrically powered screen that slides up discreetly behind the arch above the altar. At that stage there was no thought of a movie club – that came a few months later. We called it Monday Movies because it's a memorable title and Monday seemed a good evening when nothing much else was happening in the parish. Since then, we've spent quite a lot of time, money and energy getting the sound right - our aim has always been to present the films as 'professionally' as we can, or people won't come.

### How often do you show films and who comes along?

We show films on the first and third Monday evenings of each month throughout the year. We also show films for children every Monday morning during school holidays. There is no need for people to book and everyone is welcome to all the films. To satisfy DBS requirements, we request that all children be signed in by an adult who will stay with them throughout the show. People come from all over the village and beyond. Many of these people are not regular members of the congregation – especially in the case of the children's films.

### How do I set up a movie club?

My best advice is to go to the CCLI website ([uk.ccli.com](http://uk.ccli.com)) and select 'CCLI for churches'. This will tell you all you need to know about the licences you need and how to set up, publicise and run a Movie Club in your church. You can also contact them by phone on 01323 436103 – I have always found them to be very helpful.

**Monday Movies**  
Recent releases and ever-popular classics on the **FIRST** Monday evening of the month at 7.30pm

**Monday Movies Extra**  
Quality 'non-mainstream' films and historic classics on the **THIRD** Monday evening of the month at 7.30pm

**CHILDREN'S MOVIE CLUB**  
On Monday mornings at 10.00am in the school holidays.  
All children have to be signed in for DBS purposes.

Licensed bar and tea/coffee at evening shows  
Popcorn and soft drinks at morning shows  
Before the film and at the interval

**ADMISSION FREE CUSHIONS ADVISABLE**  
**DONATIONS APPRECIATED!**

## **Questions we're often asked:**

### **Do you buy or hire the DVDs?**

We used to hire DVDs from Lovefilm, but on several occasions they were faulty. Now we buy brand new ones, usually from Amazon. The cost is often not much more than the hire.

### **What licences do you have?**

We have three licences. We have a PRS for music licence from CCLI and we have two public video screening (PVS) licences, one from CCLI and one from Filmbank. These latter two are annual 'blanket' licences which together cover most of the main film distributors.

### **Are there any restrictions on publicising the films?**

We cannot advertise the film titles outside the licensed premises, although we can have a pile of leaflets on display inside the premises which people can take away. We can, however, advertise the fact that we are showing films on certain dates and we are allowed to give brief cryptic descriptions of the films – but not the titles! For example: *A penniless couple. A dying heiress. A temptation no one could resist. An exquisitely mounted romantic gem of a film set in Venice and starring Helena Bonham Carter.*

### **Do you charge?**

We do not charge for admission (licence conditions) but we do invite donations. Our original aim was simply to put on films for the community, with no thought of making any profit. In fact we make £3-4,000 pa.

### **Do you provide refreshments?**

Tea/coffee at all the films, plus popcorn in the mornings and licensed bar in the evenings. We became a licensed premises in order to be able to serve wine and beer at our Movie nights and other events that we host. People do appreciate a glass of wine in convivial surroundings, and many are happy with a cuppa and a biscuit too.

### **Are there any issues about seat comfort during a long showing?**

No. We always have a half-time interval for people to stretch their legs and chat. Also some people bring a cushion!

### **Do you have a film selection group and what sorts of films are the most popular?**

For the children's films, we work closely with the local primary school and are guided by what the children tell us. (They also told us they wanted membership cards, attendance certificates, members' discount on popcorn and a free raffle. So far, we've managed to comply!)

For the 'grown-ups' films, a couple of us make the selection and increasingly we also get requests from members of our audience. Our audience likes all sorts – recent releases, popular classics and quality 'non-mainstream' films

### **Where's the best place to go for further help?**

Without doubt, the CCLI website – see above.

Please also feel free to email me, Trevor Anderson, as I would be happy to share further from our experiences if they would be helpful to you: [trevoranderson@btinternet.com](mailto:trevoranderson@btinternet.com)

Written by Trevor Anderson; St Mary's Olveston