

CINEMA FOR ALL
British Federation of Film Societies:
2005/06 Membership Survey

Report prepared by Jim Barratt
Advice and Support Consultant

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Executive summary

Survey

- The questionnaire was sent out to all BFFS members (246 in total) and 125 responded to the survey, a response rate of 51%. The response rate increases to 56% if those societies established in 2006 but not operating in 2005/06 are excluded (21 in total).
- The pattern of survey responses across the UK mirrored that of the membership as a whole. However, there were some differences: the Southern, North West, Yorkshire and East of England regions were all over-represented in the pattern of responses, whereas Scotland, London and Wales were under-represented.

Year of establishment

- Over two fifths of the responding societies were established in 2000 or later while a significant proportion (23.3%) were established in the 1960s or earlier.

Websites and email

- Most film societies have an online presence: just over half (52.8%) of responding societies gave a website address, while a larger proportion (84.8%) supplied an email address.

Membership

- Nearly all of the societies that responded (89.7%) operated a membership system in 2005/06 and the average membership size was 141.
- The membership of responding societies stood at 14,285. If extrapolated to all BFFS members this would yield a sum total membership of over 27,000.
- The average full annual membership fee was £24.00. By way of comparison, full annual membership of the British Film Institute is £35.00 (with reduced admission charges to the National Film Theatre in London).
- Over half of the responding societies also offered full year concessionary membership fees (for senior citizens, students, under 21s or under 25s, the unemployed etc.).
- Less than one third of societies that operated a membership system charged an additional admission fee (27.6%), which averaged £2.87 in 2005/06. This compares with an average cinema admission charge of £4.67 (UK Film Council Statistical Yearbook 2005/06).
- All societies that responded allowed guests to accompany members on payment of a guest entry fee. The average fee stood at around £4.00 (and ranged from £2.00 to £6.50).
- A minority of responding societies offered season tickets (22.6%). Season ticket charges ranged from £10.00 for one year (giving entry to 16 films) to £104.00, and the average number of season ticket holders stood at 84 in 2005/06.

Admissions and key demographics

- Exactly half of the responding societies had an average of 60 or fewer audience members per screening. While a small proportion (14.2%) had 30 or fewer admissions on average, an almost similar proportion (12.3%) had over 151 audience members on average.
- The smallest audience size during the year for two thirds of responding societies stood at 50 or fewer admissions (with 31.8% claiming it was fewer than 30). The

smallest audience recorded was just 2 admissions. Just over one third of societies claimed their largest audience was 141 or more, with the largest recorded audience of 621.

- Under half (45.5%) of societies had 750 or fewer total admissions in 2005/06, while nearly one in five (19.3%) had over 2,001 annual admissions. The smallest recorded annual admissions stood at 120, while the largest figure was 14,000.
- The sum total of all admissions from responding societies was 116,040 for 2005/06. If this is extrapolated to all BFFS members the total number of admissions would have been around 225,000. Putting this in perspective, theatrical ticket sales on this scale would have generated gross box office receipts of over one million pounds (225,000 multiplied by £4.67 [the average ticket price in 2005] = £1,050,750).
- On average just under half of members were aged over 55 (46.8%) and a further 24.4% were aged 46 to 55 years.
- Just over two thirds (67%) of societies had no members under 19 years of age in 2005/06.
- On average:
 - film societies had more female members than males (56.8% female members and 43.2% males).
 - 2.4% of film society membership was estimated to be from a minority ethnic background.
 - 0.7% of members are wheelchair users, and 4.2% of members have other disabilities.

Provision

- Just under half of societies use more than one format to screen films (47.8%). The most commonly used format was DVD (used by 85.5% of responding societies). But despite the dominance of digital technology, just over one third of societies still use VHS.
- A slightly smaller proportion (31.6%) project using 35mm, with 13.7% using 16mm.
- The vast majority of film societies use only one venue for screenings (89.7%). Although over a quarter of sites have seating for up to 100 people, the majority (63.8%) are able to accommodate audiences of between 101 and 300 people.
- On average film societies were located 9.43 miles from their nearest commercial cinema, in a range running from less than a mile to 80 miles.
- Just under half of societies operated in town locations (47.5%) with 42.4% in rural areas (14.4% in remote rural locations more than 10 miles from a large settlement). In contrast only 2.8% of commercial cinema screens are located in rural areas according to the UK Film Council.

Programming

- The responding societies programmed a total of 526 different titles across 1,962 screenings during the 2005/06 season (compared with 467 films released theatrically in the UK during 2005).
- One in five films screened by film societies was British in 2005/06, while over two fifths (41.6%) were films in a foreign language.
- Eight of the twenty-seven films programmed by **ten or more societies** in 2005/06 were British and sixteen were in a foreign language.
- The three most programmed films were *The Motorcycle Diaries*, *Sideways* and *Vera Drake*.
- Nearly four fifths of all societies held 20 or fewer screenings in 2005/06 (78.9%), while 6.5% held 41 or more.

- Just under half of all responding societies held special events in addition to screenings in 2005/06.
- The majority of film societies (71.7%) provided programming notes to accompany screenings.
- Nearly half (49.6%) of all responding societies measure audience reactions to films using formal measures (e.g. ratings cards).

Administration

- Fifty-seven societies (48.3% of respondents) provided evidence of their financial viability in 2005/06 (in the form of accounts or a bank statement).
- Nearly all societies have a committee (97.4%), and a slightly smaller percentage hold an AGM (93.1%). The majority also have a written constitution (88.1%).
- Less than one third (30.2%) of societies applied for funding in 2005/06. Of those that did, over three quarters (77.1%) had at least one successful application.

Regional groups

- There were five regional groups operating in 2005/06 (BFFS Scotland, Yorkshire, North West, Wales and South West).
- Over a quarter of respondents (27.1%) said they did not know whether a regional group was active in their area, which suggests regional group activity should be better promoted among the membership.
- Two thirds of respondents (66.7%) in an area with no regional group said they would like to participate in a regional network to support/advise new societies.
- Just under half (48.8%) said they would like to participate in regional activities (like a block booking scheme), while around a quarter (24%) said they would like to help to establish a regional group in their area.

Demand for services, advice and training

- The highest level of interest was shown towards the idea of the BFFS helping societies to source hard to get films (87.7%), followed by the BFFS supplying shorts (80.2%). Least interest was shown in the proposal to use a local multiplex for film society screenings.
- The areas most in need of support all relate to the core activity of societies: attracting members, building audiences and programming desirable films. In contrast, there was only muted support for training and information on the legal and financial aspects of running a society.

1 Introduction

1.1 Background

The British Federation of Film Societies (BFFS) is the national organisation for the development, support and representation of film societies throughout the UK. The BFFS receives funding from the UK Film Council to undertake activities consistent with the Council's objective of ensuring audiences throughout the UK have access to the full range of British and international cinema.

In previous years the BFFS has conducted an annual survey of its membership to provide insights into their organisation and operation. Under the terms of the UK Film Council's Funding Agreement the BFFS is obliged to continue this practice and this report is the first opportunity under the Agreement to describe in detail the nature of member society activity for the benefit of the BFFS, its members and supporters.

1.2 Aims

The membership survey aims to provide the BFFS and its membership, the UK Film Council and other potential funders with detailed information about the current make up and operation of member societies.

As in previous years the survey includes questions about how societies are organised and what services they offer. This year the survey also seeks to gauge demand for a range of services that may be offered by the BFFS in future.

1.3 Timescale

The questionnaire was designed and administered in April 2006. The deadline for responses was 30 June 2006 and analysis and reporting took place in August and September 2006.

2 Methods

2.1 Introduction

The questionnaire was drawn up using questions from previous surveys (including the UK Film Council survey of 2004) to enable comparison with previous findings. New questions were also introduced to more fully explore film society organisation and operation, as well as to enable the survey to gauge demand for future BFFS services. A copy of the questionnaire is available in Appendix 1.

The survey was sent in hard copy to all BFFS members in April 2006 (a total of 246 societies, including 31 that were members in 2005 but had yet to pay their 2006 membership fee). They were asked to return the completed questionnaire by the end of June. Regional groups were asked to encourage member societies in their area to respond, and electronic versions of the survey were made available in a second round of follow up emails.

2.2 Responses

Over half of all member societies responded to the survey (125, a response rate of 51%). The response rate increases to 56% if those societies established in 2006 but not operating in 2005/06 are excluded (21 in total).

Table 2.1 gives the number of survey responses from each nation and region:

Table 2.1: Survey responses by nation and region

Nation/region	Number of responses	%	% of BFFS membership
South West	36	28.8	29.2
Southern	21	16.8	13.8
North West	15	12.0	9.6
Yorkshire	13	10.4	7.9
East of England	11	8.8	6.7
Scotland	8	6.4	10.8
London	6	4.8	6.7
Wales	6	4.8	5.8
East Midlands	4	3.2	3.3
West Midlands	4	3.2	3.8
North East	1	0.8	1.3
Northern Ireland	0	0.0	0.0
Total	125	100.0	100.0

The final column gives the proportion of all BFFS societies in each nation/region, and this demonstrates that (broadly speaking) the pattern of survey responses across the UK mirrored that of the membership as a whole. However, there were some differences: the Southern, North West, Yorkshire and East of England regions were all over-represented in the pattern of responses, whereas Scotland, London and Wales were under-represented. In the case of Scotland, which yielded 6.4% of all responses but is home to 10.8% of all BFFS member societies, this can be explained by the fact that the Scottish BFFS group administered its own survey a few months before the national survey. The response rate from student societies was also lower than average (only 3 out of 11 member societies replied) due to proximity to the UK Film Council HE film society survey that took place in May 2006.

3 Results

3.1 Year of establishment

Over two fifths of the responding societies were established in 2000 or later while a significant proportion (23.3%) were established in the 1960s or earlier (Table 3.1):

Table 3.1: Year of establishment

Decade	N	%
1930s	2	1.7
1940s	10	8.3
1950s	5	4.2
1960s	11	9.2
1970s	10	8.3
1980s	10	8.3
1990s	20	16.7
2000s	52	43.3
Total	120	100.0

N= number of respondents

3.2 Websites and email

Most film societies have an online presence: just over half (52.8%) of responding societies gave a website address, while a larger proportion (84.8%) gave an email address.

3.3 Membership

Section one of the questionnaire asked respondents whether they operate a membership system, charge for admissions, and/or offer season tickets. It also asked societies to supply the number of members or season ticket holders they had as of December 2005, alongside details of their fees.

3.3.1 Membership

Nearly all of the societies that responded (89.7%) operated a membership system of some description in 2005/06.

The average membership size was 141, and the spread of sizes is illustrated in Table 3.2. There was considerable variation in membership numbers: Five societies claimed to have no members in 2005/06 (they were either dormant or newly established), while one had just two members. In contrast, the largest society had 1,709 members.

Table 3.2: Membership numbers

Number of members	N	%
30 or less	14	13.9
31 to 60	15	14.9
61 to 90	16	15.8
91 to 120	14	13.9
121 to 150	9	8.9
151 to 180	3	3.0
181 to 210	7	6.9
211 to 240	9	8.9
241 to 270	6	5.9
271 to 300	5	5.0
301+	3	3.0
Total	101	100.0

The total membership of all responding societies stood at 14,285. If extrapolated to all BFFS members this would yield a sum total membership of 27,471.

3.3.2 Membership fees

The average full annual membership fee was £24.00. The smallest stood at just £1.50 while the largest was £55.00. As shown in Table 3.3, well over half of responding societies had a membership fee of £25.00 or less (57.4%). By way of comparison, full annual membership of the British Film Institute is £35.00 (with reduced admission charges to the National Film Theatre in London).

Table 3.3: Full membership fees

Full membership fee	N	%
£5 or less	8	8.5
£6 to £10	11	11.7
£11 to £15	5	5.3
£16 to £20	13	13.8
£21 to £25	17	18.1
£26 to £30	17	18.1
£31 to £35	9	9.6
£36 to £40	9	9.6
£41 to £45	4	4.3
£46 to £50	0	0.0
£51+	1	1.1
Total	94	100.0

Over half of the responding societies also offered full year concessionary membership fees (for senior citizens, students, under 21s or under 25s, the unemployed etc.). Fourteen societies also offered reduced rate for couples, and nine offered pro rata rates for half-year membership or for a fixed number of screenings.

3.3.3 Entry prices

Less than one third of societies that operated a membership system charged an additional admission fee (27.6%), which averaged £2.87 in 2005/06. This compares with an average cinema admission charge of £4.67 (UK Film Council Statistical Yearbook 2005/06).

All societies that responded allowed guests to accompany members on payment of a guest entry fee. The average fee stood at around £4.00 (and ranged from £2.00 to £6.50).

3.3.4 Season tickets

A minority of responding societies offered season tickets (22.6%). Season ticket charges ranged from £10.00 for one year (giving entry to 16 films) to £104.00, and the average number of season ticket holders stood at 84 in 2005/06.

3.4 Admissions and key demographics

This section looks at the size of audiences for film society screenings and the membership profile in terms of age, gender, ethnicity and disability.

Data for the latter analysis have been estimated by respondents on the basis of their understanding of the composition of their membership (e.g. respondents were asked to estimate the percentage of their membership that is male/female etc.). This is not an ideal way to collect demographic information for two main reasons. First, this approach is based on subjective judgement rather than objective evidence of members' age, gender, ethnicity and disability. Second, the estimated percentages may lack precision. But in the absence of more rigorous and detailed data (collected first hand by film societies) these estimates do at least provide an indication of the broad contours of membership composition.

3.4.1 Audience sizes in 2005/06

Respondents were asked to provide an average number of admissions per screening during the 2005/06 season. Table 3.4 shows that exactly half of the responding societies had an average of 60 or fewer audience members per screening. While a small proportion (14.2%) had 30 or fewer admissions on average, an almost similar proportion (12.3%) had over 151 audience members.

Table 3.4: Average audience sizes

Average audience size	N	%
30 or less	15	14.2
31 to 60	38	35.8
61 to 90	19	17.9
91 to 120	17	16.0
121 to 150	4	3.8
151+	13	12.3
Total	106	100.0

The survey also asked for the smallest and largest audiences at screenings during 2005/06. The smallest audience size during the year for two thirds of responding societies stood at 50 or fewer admissions (with 31.8% claiming it was fewer than 30). The smallest audience recorded was just 2 admissions. Just over one third of societies claimed their largest audience was 141 or more, with the largest recorded audience of

621.

3.4.2 Total admissions in 2005/06

The pattern of total annual admissions is shown in Table 3.5. Under half (45.5%) of societies had 750 or fewer admissions in 2005/06, while nearly one in five (19.3%) had over 2,001 annual admissions. The smallest recorded annual admissions stood at 120, while the largest figure was 14,000.

Table 3.5: Total annual admissions, 2005/06

Total admissions	N	%
Less than 250	6	6.8
251 to 500	25	28.4
501 to 750	9	10.2
751 to 1,000	9	10.2
1001 to 1,500	12	13.6
1,501 to 2,000	10	11.4
2,001 to 3,000	10	11.4
3,001 to 5,000	5	5.7
5,000+	2	2.3
Total	88	100.0

The sum total of all admissions from responding societies was 116,040 for 2005/06. If this is extrapolated to all BFFS members the total number of admissions would have been around 225,000. Putting this in perspective, theatrical ticket sales on this scale would have generated gross box office receipts of over one million pounds (225,000 multiplied by £4.67 [the average ticket price in 2005] = £1,050,750).

3.4.3 Membership age

Table 3.6 presents an average age profile for society membership. On average just under half of members were aged over 55 (46.8%) and a further 24.4% were aged 46 to 55 years.

Table 3.6: Average membership age profile

Age group	%
Under 19	1.7
19 to 25	4.3
26 to 35	8.3
36 to 45	14.5
46 to 55	24.4
Over 55	46.8
Total	100.0

But this is only an average; there is some variation as shown in Table 3.7, which gives a fuller picture of the membership age profile. It shows that 61 responding societies (equivalent to 67% of those that answered the question) had no members under 19 years of age in 2005/06, while 26 (28.6% of respondents) stated that between 61% and 100% of their membership was aged 55 and over. But despite this general skew towards older members, 14 societies had 20% or fewer members aged 55+, and one society had 61 to 80% of its membership aged 19 to 25.

Table 3.7: Membership age profile

% of membership	Under 19	19 to 25	26 to 35	36 to 45	46 to 55	55+
None	61	40	13	7	1	1
1 to 20%	29	49	77	68	45	13
21% to 40%	1	1	1	15	37	30
41% to 60%	0	0	0	1	7	21
61% to 80%	0	1	0	0	1	23
81% to 100%	0	0	0	0	0	3
Total (N)	91	91	91	91	91	91

Note: each age column shows the number of societies that had members aged as indicated in the percentage bands listed in the left hand column.

3.4.4 Membership gender

On average, film societies had more female members than males (56.8% female members and 43.2% males). This is the general pattern, but as Tables 3.8 and 3.9 show there was again some variation. Females made up between 21% to 40% of the membership of only one society, compared with 43 that had the same proportion of male members. Eighteen societies had considerably more female than male members (between 61% and 80%), compared with only one with that same proportion of male members.

Table 3.8: Membership gender profile

% of membership that are female	Number of societies
None	0
1 to 20%	0
21% to 40%	1
41% to 60%	79
61% to 80%	18
81% to 100%	0
Total (N)	98

Table 3.9: Membership gender profile

% of membership that are male	Number of societies
None	0
1 to 20%	1
21% to 40%	43
41% to 60%	53
61% to 80%	1
81% to 100%	0
Total (N)	98

3.4.5 Membership ethnicity

On average, 2.4% of film society membership was estimated to be from a minority ethnic background. Table 3.10 gives the full results and shows that 29 societies (34.1% of those that responded to the question) had no members from a minority ethnic background, with the remainder having between 1% and 20%.

Table 3.10: Membership ethnicity profile

% of membership from minority ethnic background	Number of societies
None	29
0.1% to 1.0%	16
1.1% to 5%	31
6% to 20%	9
21%+	0
Total (N)	85

3.4.6 Membership disability

On average, 0.7% of members are wheelchair users, and 4.2% of members have other disabilities. Tables 3.11 and 3.12 give the full results and show that over half of those that responded (46 societies, 53%) had no wheelchair users, although a far smaller proportion (12%) had no members with other disabilities.

Table 3.11: Membership wheelchair user profile

% of membership using a wheelchair	Number of societies
None	46
0.1% to 1.0%	29
1.1% to 5%	11
6% to 20%	1
21%+	0
Total (N)	87

Table 3.12: Membership disability profile

% of membership with other disabilities	Number of societies
None	9
0.1% to 1.0%	19
1.1% to 5%	32
6% to 20%	13
21%+	0
Total (N)	73

3.5 Provision

This section looks at the way film societies deliver screenings: the format(s) they project/screen in, the venues used and their location.

3.5.1 Screening format

Societies were asked to indicate which formats they use to screen films. Just under half of societies use more than one format (47.8%).

As shown in Table 3.13, the most commonly used format was DVD (used by 85.5% of responding societies). But despite the dominance of digital technology, just over one third of societies still use VHS.

A slightly smaller proportion (31.6%) project using 35mm, with 13.7% using 16mm. A minority of societies have other capabilities, notably 70mm projection and Hi-Band Video.

Table 3.13: Projection format

Format	N	%
DVD	100	85.5
VHS	40	34.2
35mm	37	31.6
16mm	16	13.7
Other (70mm and Hi-Band Video)	2	1.7

3.5.2 Venues

The vast majority of film societies use only one venue for screenings (89.7%). A further 6% regularly use two venues, and the remainder use between three and ten sites.

Table 3.14 gives details of venues' seating capacity, and shows that although over a quarter of sites have seating for up to 100 people, the majority (63.8%) are able to accommodate audiences of between 101 and 300 people.

Table 3.14: Seating capacity

Maximum seating	N	%
Less than 100	32	27.6
101 to 200	48	41.4
201 to 300	26	22.4
301 to 400	5	4.3
401 to 500	3	2.6
500+	2	1.7
Total	116	100.0

3.5.3 Location

Film societies often operate in areas not served by commercial cinemas. To demonstrate this, societies were asked to indicate how far their nearest commercial cinema was located from their primary venue. The average distance was 9.43 miles within a range running from less than a mile to 80 miles. Just under one third of societies (31.4%) were over ten miles away from the nearest commercial cinema while just under a quarter (23.8%) were located a mile or less from their nearest.

The survey also asked respondents to classify the area they operate in as urban (town or city), rural or remote rural. Table 3.15 reveals that just under half of societies operated in town locations (47.5%) with 42.4% in rural areas (14.4% in remote rural locations more than 10 miles from a large settlement). In comparison, only 2.8% of commercial cinema screens were found in rural areas in 2005 (UK Film Council Statistical Yearbook 2005/06).

Table 3.15: Urban/rural location

Location type	N	%
Urban - town	56	47.5
Rural	33	28.0
Rural remote	17	14.4
Urban - city	12	10.2
Total	118	100.0

3.6 Programming

The responding societies programmed a total of 526 different titles across 1,962 screenings during the 2005/06 season (compared with 467 films released theatrically in the UK during 2005). This section looks at what types of films were screened, the most frequently programmed titles and at other types of events hosted by societies.

3.6.1 Types of film

The survey asked societies to indicate how many films of a particular type were screened during their 2005/06 season, and the results appear in Table 3.16.

Table 3.16: Programming

Type of film	Number of screenings	% of all screenings
British	392	20.0
European	591	30.1
Foreign Language	816	41.6
Documentary	75	3.8
Shorts	207	10.6
Archive films	57	2.9
Films made before 2000	325	16.6

Note: Percentages do not sum to 100% because films can appear in more than one category (e.g. European and foreign language)

One in five films screened by film societies were British in 2005/06, while over two fifths (41.6%) were films in a foreign language.

3.6.2 Most frequently programmed films

Eight of the twenty-seven films programmed by ten or more societies in 2005/06 were British (using the UK Film Council's country of origin definitions), and sixteen were in a foreign language. As Table 3.17 shows (overleaf), the three most programmed films were *The Motorcycle Diaries*, *Sideways* and *Vera Drake*:

Table 3.17: Films programmed by ten or more societies in 2005/06

Title	Country	Year	Distributor	No. of societies programming title
The Motorcycle Diaries	USA/Ger/UK/Arg/Chil/Peru	2004	Pathé	49
Sideways	USA/Hun	2005	20th Century Fox	43
Vera Drake	UK/Fra/NZ	2005	Momentum	38
Story of the Weeping Camel	Ger/Mong	2004	UGC Films	34
The Chorus	Fra/Swi/Ger	2005	Pathé	33
Only Human	UK/Spa/Arg/Port	2005	Verve	32
Downfall	Ger/Ita/Aut	2005	Momentum	30
Machuca	Chi/Spa/UK/Fra	2005	Artificial Eye	27
A Very Long Engagement	Fra/USA	2005	Warner Bros	24
Look at Me	Fra	2004	Pathé	24
Ladies in Lavendar	UK	2004	Entertainment	22
Hotel Rwanda	UK/Can/Ita/RSA	2005	Entertainment	21
The Return	Rus	2004	UGC Films	21
The Edukators	Ger/Aut	2005	UGC Films	20
My Summer of Love	UK	2004	ContentFilm	17
Maria Full of Grace	USA/Col	2005	Icon	15
Ray	USA	2005	UIP	15
A Good Woman	UK/Spa/Ita/Lux/USA	2005	Vertigo	12
House of Flying Daggers	Chi/HK	2004	Pathé	11
Japanese Story	Aust	2004	Tartan	11
The Merchant of Venice	UK/USA/Ita/lux	2004	Optimum Rel.	11
The Consequences of Love	Ita	2005	Artificial Eye	11
The Station Agent	USA	2004	BVI	11
Twin Sisters	Neth/Lux	2005	Optimum Rel.	11
Bombon El Perro	Arg/Spa	2005	Pathé	10
Finding Neverland	UK/USA	2004	BVI	10
The Sea Inside	Spa/Fra/Ita	2005	Entertainment	10

3.6.3 Number of screenings in 2005/06

Nearly four fifths of all societies held 20 or fewer screenings in 2005/06 (78.9%), while 6.5% held 41 or more (Table 3.18).

Table 3.18: Number of screenings

Number of screenings	N	%
5 or less	1	0.9
6 to 10	30	27.5
11 to 20	55	50.5
21 to 30	15	13.8
31 to 40	1	0.9
41 to 50	4	3.7
51+	3	2.8
TOTAL	109	100.0

3.6.4 Special events

Just under half of all responding societies held special events in addition to screenings in 2005/06. These included guest appearances by filmmakers to introduce films, quiz

nights, film themed social events, special programmes to coincide with other organised events, talks, education events and so on.

3.6.5 Screening notes

The majority of film societies (71.7%) provided programming notes to accompany screenings.

3.6.6 Audience reactions

Nearly half (49.6%) of all responding societies measure audience reactions to films using formal measures (e.g. ratings cards).

3.7 Administration

3.7.1 Financial viability

Fifty-seven societies (48.3% of respondents) provided evidence of their financial viability in 2005/06 (in the form of accounts or a bank statement).

3.7.2 Formal structures

Societies were asked whether they had a written constitution, an organising committee and if they held AGMs. The responses are given in Table 3.19:

Table 3.19: Administration

Do you...	Yes %
Have a committee?	97.4
Hold an AGM?	93.1
Have a written constitution?	88.1

3.7.3 Funding applications

Less than one third (30.2%) of societies applied for funding in 2005/06. Of those that did, over three quarters (77.1%) had at least one successful application.

3.8 Regional groups

The survey asked respondents whether there was a regional group active in their area. Over half (56.8%) of respondents said there was, while over a quarter (27.1%) said they did not know, which suggests regional group activity should be better promoted among the membership.

The survey also asked whether respondents would be interested in helping to establish a regional group in their area, participate in regional activities (e.g. block booking schemes) and/or participate in a network to support/advise new societies in their area. Table 3.20 shows the level of support for each of these options:

Table 3.20: Regional networking activity

Activity	Yes %	No %	D/know %	N
Participate in a network to support/advise new societies	66.7	20.6	12.7	63
Participate in regional activities	48.3	38.3	13.3	60
Help to establish a regional group	24.0	54.0	22.0	50

N= number of respondents

There was strongest support (from two thirds of respondents) for participation in a network to support/advise new societies, followed by participation in regional activities

like block booking (favoured by just under half of respondents).

3.9 Demand for services, advice and training

Societies were asked to indicate their interest in a range of services that may in future be offered by the BFFS or other third parties. The results, ranked in order of preference, are given in Table 3.21. The highest level of interest was shown towards the idea of the BFFS helping societies to source hard to get films (87.7%), followed by support for the BFFS supplying shorts (80.2%). Least interest was shown in the proposal to use a local multiplex for film society screenings.

Table 3.21: Demand for services

Would you be interested in any of these opportunities?	Yes %	No %	N/A %	N
Accessing otherwise unavailable films via BFFS	87.7	9.6	2.6	114
Short films via BFFS	80.2	16.2	3.6	111
Tickets for national preview screenings	70.0	26.4	3.6	110
Pre-release preview screenings at film society	65.5	29.1	5.5	110
Film booking service	60.9	32.7	6.4	110
Group insurance deals for public liability	43.0	46.7	10.3	107
Group insurance deals for equipment	39.0	46.7	14.3	105
Advertising revenue from commercial advertisers	32.4	55.9	11.8	102
Use of a local art-house cinema for film society screenings	20.0	61.9	18.1	105
Use of a local multiplex for film society screenings	17.5	68.9	13.6	103

N= number of societies responding to the question

In addition to services, societies were asked what areas they would value training in or further information. The areas most in need of support all relate to the core activity of societies: attracting members, building audiences and programming desirable films (see Table 3.22). There was only muted support for training and information on the legal and financial aspects of running a society.

Table 3.22: Demand for advice and training

In which areas would you value training or information?	Yes %	No %	d/k %	N
Audience building	49.0	48.1	2.9	104
Marketing	49.0	48.1	2.9	104
Programming advice	48.5	49.5	2.1	97
Publicity	46.7	51.4	1.9	105
Technical advice about equipment options	46.0	49.0	5.0	100
Community outreach activities	35.8	63.2	1.1	95
Running film groups (cf book groups)	34.3	60.6	5.1	99
Equipment use and maintenance	33.3	64.6	2.1	96
Education activities	32.6	60.0	7.4	95
Building local partnerships	30.9	67.0	2.1	94
Licensing	29.2	64.6	6.3	96
Local fundraising	28.1	66.7	5.2	96
National fundraising	25.3	69.5	5.3	95
Charity law	21.7	69.6	8.7	92
Health and Safety law	21.3	71.3	7.4	94
Disability law	16.3	75.0	8.7	92
Financial management	11.1	85.6	3.3	90

N= number of societies responding to the question

[end]

Appendix 1 - questionnaire

BRITISH FEDERATION OF FILM SOCIETIES MEMBERSHIP SURVEY 2006

It is vital for our continued success that the BFFS has accurate information about our membership and their activities, so please take the time to complete this survey.

Here are 3 good reasons why you should fill this in -

- 1) We use the information to improve the services we offer.
- 2) It helps us to build a bigger picture of the film society movement so we can effectively champion cinema for all.
- 3) We provide information to other agencies on your behalf, including our primary funder the UK Film Council, to ensure their ongoing support and so film societies continue to be a respected voice in UK film culture.

Please supply the following details

Name of Society:

Year established:

*Name of designated contact:

*Address of designated contact:

*(inc. postcode)

*Telephone number:

*Email:

Society website address: <http://www.....>

*The Data Protection Act covers your name and contact details. We wish to hold this information in order to maintain our membership contacts database. In addition we are **obliged** to supply these details to the UK Film Council as a condition of our funding agreement with them. We may also wish to pass them to carefully vetted third parties offering information or services of interest to film societies (e.g. film distributors).

Please indicate your consent by ticking the relevant boxes:

I give consent for the BFFS to pass my name and contact details to the UK Film Council:

I give consent for the BFFS to pass my name and contact details to other third parties:

Notes on completing the survey:

- This survey assumes you operated a screening season running from spring 2005 to spring 2006. If this is not the case please answer the questions using the most recent 12 month period appropriate to your screening year (e.g. calendar year 2005)
- Please be sure to answer all questions. Any questions left blank will have to be disregarded during analysis.

1. Membership

a) Do you operate a membership system?

Yes **Go to question 1b**

No **Go to question 1f**

b) How many members did you have on 31 December 2005?

.....
.....

c) What were your membership fees as at 31 December 2005?

Full annual	Concessions
£.....	£.....

Other - please state	
£.....

d) What additional entry price do you charge members (if any)?

Full	Concessions
£.....	£.....

e) What guest entry price do you charge (if any)?

Full	Concessions
£.....	£.....

f) Do you operate a pay-at-the door system with season tickets (i.e. you screen to the public but you also provide season tickets)?

Yes **Go to question 1g**

No **Go to question 1k**

g) How many season ticket holders did you have on 31 December 2005?

.....

h) What were your season ticket fees as at 31 December 2005?

Full	Concessions
£.....	£.....

i) What time period does your season ticket cover?

.....

j) How many films does it cover?

k) What entry price do you charge? Full Concessions
£..... £.....

2. Please tell us

a) Your average audience size in 2005/06 season?

b) Your smallest audience size in 2005/06 season?

c) Your largest audience size in 2005/06 season?

d) Your total number of admissions in 2005/06 season?

e) The estimated age breakdown of your membership
Under 19.....% 36-45.....%
19-25.....% 46-55.....%
26-35.....% 55+.....%

f) The estimated gender balance of your membership
Male:.....% Female:.....%

g) The estimated minority ethnic % of your membership

h) The estimated wheelchair-bound % of your membership

i) The estimated % of your membership with other disabilities

j) Approximately how far away is your nearest commercial cinema?miles

k) What best describes the area in which you operate as a film society?
(please tick only one)

Urban – city	Urban – town
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Rural (less than 10 miles from large settlement)	Rural - remote (more than 10 miles from large settlement)

3. How you show films

a) In what format(s) do you project?
(please tick all that apply)

- DVD
- Videotape
- 35mm
- 16mm
- Other Please state:.....

b) How many venues do you use?

c) What is the maximum seating capacity of each venue?
.....

4. Your 2005/06 programme and events

a) How many British films were in your 2005/06 programme?

b) How many other European films were in your 2005/06 programme?

c) How many foreign language films were in your 2005/06 programme?

d) How many documentaries were in your 2005/06 programme?

e) How many short films were in your 2005/06 programme?

f) How many films made in or before 2000 were in your 2005/06 programme?

g) How many local or national archive films were in your 2005/06 programme?

h) How many screenings were held in total?

i) Please list your programme of main features in 2005/06, with screening dates
 You may instead submit a printed programme if you have one covering 2005/06

Film	Date	Film	Date

j) Please list any shorts in your 2005/06 programme, with screening dates
 You may instead submit a printed programme if you have one covering 2005/06

Film	Date	Film	Date

k) Did you host any special events in addition to screenings in 2005/06? (e.g. guest speakers, educational activities, outreach activities)

- Yes
 No

If yes, please give details:

	Date

l) Did you provide screening notes for your programmed titles in 2005/06?

- Yes
 No

5. Audience reactions

Do you formally measure audience reactions to your screenings? (e.g. with a questionnaire)

- Yes
 No

If yes, please supply data for 2005/06 (i.e. a list of titles with audience reactions and an indication of your reaction measurement scheme).

6. Your organisation and finances

a) Please attach evidence of your bank's name and address (e.g. photocopy of a recent statement) or a set of your latest accounts, to show us that you are in good financial standing.

b) Do you have any of the following:

- | | | |
|--------------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| a written constitution? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| a committee? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Annual General Meetings? | Yes <input type="checkbox"/> | No <input type="checkbox"/> |

c) Did you make any applications for public funding in 2005/06 (e.g. from your regional screen agency, local authority or national agency like Arts Council England)?

Yes
No

If yes, was your application successful?

Yes
No
Don't know yet

d) What type of society are you?
(please tick only one)

General
School
University

7. Services

a) Would you be interested in any of the following opportunities?

	Yes	No	N/A
Group insurance deals for equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Group insurance deals for public liability	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Advertising revenue from commercial advertisers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of a local multiplex for film society screenings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of a local art-house cinema for film society screenings?	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Short films via BFFS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pre-release preview screenings at your film society	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Accessing otherwise unavailable feature films via BFFS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Tickets for national preview screenings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Film booking service	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

b) What other services would you find useful?

8. Advice and Training

a) In which of the following would you value training or further information?

	Yes	No	Don't know
Local fundraising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
National fundraising	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Charity law	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Yes	No	Don't know
Health & safety law	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Disability law	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Audience building	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Education activities	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Running film groups (cf book groups)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Publicity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

- Marketing
- Licensing
- Financial management
- Equipment use and maintenance
- Technical advice about equipment options
- Community outreach activities
- Building local partnerships
- Programming advice

b) In what other areas would you find training and information useful?

9. BFFS Membership

a) Is there a Regional Group in your area?

- | | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Yes | No | Don't know |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

b) If not, would you be interested in

- | | | | |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| | Yes | No | Don't know |
| Helping to establish one? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Participating in regional activities (e.g. block booking schemes)? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Participating in a network to support/ advise new societies in your area? | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

Thank you for taking the trouble to complete this questionnaire.

Please return it to the address below (or use the SAE provided) by Friday 30 June at the latest.

If you have any questions or concerns about the survey please contact:

**Chris Hill
Office Manager
BFFS
The Ritz Building
Mount Pleasant Campus
Swansea SA1 6ED**
