

NEWS

Town now has country's best community cinema club



Leigh Film Society members collecting their gongs at the Cinema For All awards ceremony

Triple awards joy for borough film society

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Leigh officially has the best community cinema organisation in the country following a spectacular night of success for a group of volunteers.

Leigh Film Society scooped three prizes at the annual bash organised by Cinema for All including the prestigious overall award.

As well as receiving the Film Society of the Year prize the group based at The Turnpike took home the Film Discovery Award and the Community Award from the ceremony at the Showroom Cinema in Sheffield.

The society was also noticed in two other categories with a distinction for best single event for the screening of The Life of Brian in Leigh Parish Church and a commendation for development director

Elizabeth Costello in the section for outstanding individual contributions.

The judges were impressed by the huge amount of community engagement done by the film society, which includes running two dementia-friendly Classic Cinema Clubs in Leigh and Tyldesley.

The society has also put on films across the area with unusual events such as showing Disney movie Moana on a screen in the swimming pool at the Pelican Centre.

The volunteers admitted to being astonished at the sheer scale of their success.

Chairman Paul Costello said: "We were actually stunned. Everything we do is very professional but I don't think we had quite realised how good we were."

"This is only possible because so many groups and organisations have supported us and because of the backing of the people of Leigh. This is an award for the town because

This is only possible with the support of the people of Leigh

Leigh Film Society chair Paul Costello

everybody has engaged with us.

"We all have an equal say in the society because we are all passionate about film. We are building everything we are doing and there is a demand for this which we never thought there would be when we first

started."

Development director Elizabeth added: "We wanted to put Leigh on the map for film when we started out four years ago and we now seem to have achieved that."

Leigh Film Society has support from the likes of Film Hub North West, Adactus and Age UK as well as the town's MP Jo Platt and works with community organisations such as Grow For Giving, which has screened a film in its Tyldesley allotment, and autism group True Colours as well as with Edge Hill University.

The Film Discovery prize also celebrated the organisation's partnerships expanding interest in cinema through projects like a monthly film discussion group in a Wigan town centre pub and sessions for screenwriters in Leigh.

The group also screens monthly non-mainstream films at The Turnpike. For more information visit www.leighfilmsociety.com/

Retail

'Free after three' parking deal is back on for town centre

Christmas starts here for shoppers in Leigh with the start of a free parking offer for town centre sites.

Several council-run locations across the two towns will see parking fees suspended after 3pm.

Council chiefs regularly run the concession in a bid to entice festive shoppers and New Year bargain hunters into Leigh.

Emma Barton, council assistant director for economy and regeneration, said: "Our town centres are the perfect places for Christmas shopping, with a wide variety of big high street names and independent outlets as well as our popular and friendly markets."

"Our markets are ideal for Christmas through their high-quality produce, friendly service and value for money."

"We know shoppers appreciate parking for free while they shop, so we have once again introduced the free after 3pm car parking sessions."

"We hope people take advantage of them and have an enjoyable time getting those special gifts for the festive period in the town centre."

The free offer, which runs until January 8, applies Spinning Gate, Leigh Town Hall, Doctors Nook, Lord Street, the Railway Arches and Church Street in Leigh.

Motorists are being advised vehicles arriving at car parks before 3pm will still have to pay or risk being issued penalty charge notices.

The move is designed to encourage more shoppers to visit the town centre as retailers face growing competition from online shops.

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