

# **Future of Filmhouse and the Film Festival uncertain as administrators move in**

**The trustees of Centre for the Moving Image (CMI), the parent charity which runs Filmhouse Cinema and Café Bar in Edinburgh, Edinburgh International Film Festival and Belmont Filmhouse in Aberdeen, have called in the administrators.**

Tom MacLennan and Chad Griffin of FRP Advisory have been appointed as Joint Administrators.

The charity says it is facing “the perfect storm of sharply rising costs, in particular energy costs, alongside reduced trade due to the ongoing impacts of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis. The combination and scale of these challenges is unprecedented and means that there was no option but to take immediate action”.

Filmhouse Cinema and Café Bar in Edinburgh, Edinburgh International Film Festival and Belmont Filmhouse will all stop trading with immediate effect.

FRP Advisory have been appointed Administrators to all of the various bodies which comprise the Group. The Administrators say they will work with Creative Scotland, The City of

Edinburgh Council and Aberdeen City Council in assessing what options there are for the future of the individual elements of the charity's work and supporting staff through the process.

## **The board of the CMI has issued the following statement:**

"We have been proud to have led the CMI through incredibly challenging times, and in particular during the worst days of the pandemic. Unfortunately, the combination of sharply increasing energy and other costs, together with both the lasting impacts of the pandemic and the rapidly emerging cost of living crisis affecting cinema attendances, means that we have had no other option but to appoint administrators at this time.

"We would like to put on record our immense gratitude to the entire staff team whose passion for film as an artform and for the audiences and communities we work with and serve has remained undented by the challenges of recent years. We're fully aware that this will be an exceptionally stressful time for them."

The board was headed by [Chair](#) Alastair Morrison, a lawyer with Pinsent Masons, who was appointed in 2021 and the CEO, Ken Hay, who has been in post for a number of years.

Kristy Matheson was newly appointed as Creative Director of the Edinburgh International Film Festival (EIFF) and took up her position in person in June. The EIFF was widely supported by industry and critics with Opening and Closing Galas of 'Aftersun' and 'After Yang' both widely acclaimed.

EIFF has been supported by Screen Scotland, the PLACE Programme (a partnership between the Scottish Government, City of Edinburgh Council and the Edinburgh Festivals), The Scottish Government through the Festivals Expo Fund and the PLACE Resilience Fund, The City of Edinburgh Council,

EventScotland part of VisitScotland's Events Directorate, and the BFI Audience Fund, awarding National Lottery funding.



EIFF 2022 Programme Announcement, St. James Quarter 20 July 2022 Holly Daniel (Festival Producer) and Kristy Matheson (EIFF Creative Director) © 2022 J.L. Preece

Plans were announced just before lockdown of a new [plan](#) to build a bespoke home for EIFF in Festival Square outside the Sheraton. Had the plans proceeded the new building was to open in 2025. Instead with the pandemic, the festival and the two cinemas resorted to placing content online in an effort to keep their audiences.

Council leader, Cllr Cammy Day, said: "Like many people across the city and beyond, I'm absolutely devastated to hear the Filmhouse has gone into administration. A much loved and iconic cultural institution since it opened in the 1970s, we're at risk of losing not only an independent cinema but the spiritual home of the Edinburgh International Film Festival.

“This is, of course, desperately sad news for film-goers – regular or occasional – and, more importantly, for the staff who’ve just found out they’re losing their jobs. My thoughts are with them all today and I’ve asked colleagues in our Employability and Skills team to reach out and offer whatever support they can.

“I’ve written to Creative Scotland and the Scottish Government asking them to reserve any remaining funding as we investigate potential solutions, while stressing the importance of working together with partners to preserve the future of the Film Festival and cultural cinema here in our Capital city.”

SNP Group Culture spokesperson, Cllr Amy McNeese-Mechan said: “Coming swiftly upon the news that the capital’s Christmas is under threat, it was devastating to read today about the collapse of the city’s much loved International Film Festival, which had just celebrated its 75th anniversary.

“And worse yet to learn of the closure of the iconic Filmhouse, so loved by the city’s film fans for generations.

“We’re asking the council administration to act and do everything it can to rescue what has been the longest continuously running film festival in the world.

“Vitaly, action needs to be taken now both to support the staff of the Centre For the Moving Image and those of the Filmhouse. A package of financial and practical support could be part of this, along with looking at salvaging the long term future of a festival that remains for many the most popular and most accessible art form.”

Sarah Boyack, Scottish Labour MSP for Lothian, commented: “Today marks a sad day for our arts and culture community.

“Culture organisations have warned, again and again, about the catastrophic impact of that the “perfect storm” of the pandemic, rising bills and the cost of living crisis will have on the sector.

“Now we see the very real, very sad consequences of lack of action and clarity, resulting in a nerve-wracking uncertainty and insecurity for the sector.

“We must now focus now on supporting the staff who will be extremely worried about losing their jobs so I am calling on the Scottish Government and Creative Scotland to work with the City of Edinburgh Council to explore all potential solutions to keep the Edinburgh Filmhouse open.”

Miles Briggs MSP for Lothian said: “Scottish Ministers must urgently look at what help they can provide to prevent the Edinburgh International Film Festival and the Edinburgh Film House going into administration.

“The Edinburgh Film House is a favourite for people in the capital and surrounding areas, showing a wide variety of films that you are not able to see in other cinemas.

“Edinburgh’s International Film Festival is an important event on the international calendar and popular with visitors globally. We must ensure that steps are taken to ensure that the festival can keep running.”



Artistic Director Chris Fujiwara with Ken Hay CEO of EIFF at the programme launch in 2012