

Phoenix

ANNUAL REPORT 2017/18



WELCOME TO PHOENIX

Located in the heart of the city's Cultural Quarter, Phoenix is Leicester's centre for independent cinema, art and digital culture.

A registered charity, we aim to bring inspirational film and art to all and are supported by funding from our major stakeholders – Leicester City Council (LCC), Arts Council England (ACE) and De Montfort University (DMU) and the British Film Institute (BFI) – as well as from income generated through

ticket sales, our Café Bar, business events and hires, and donations from customers and members. We work hard to ensure Phoenix is a place where everyone can feel welcome and inspired.

Our diverse programme provides opportunities for all ages to explore, engage and create with film, art and digital technology, offering new ways of looking at the world around us and challenging us to think differently.

A YEAR IN NUMBERS



220,000 visitors



28 free workshops for children



2,730 film screenings



20 short courses



350 different films from 37 countries screened



57,273 cups tea & coffee served



15 major exhibitions and art events



386 business and community events attended by over 8,600 people

A FEW WORDS FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Next year is the 30th since Phoenix was founded as a charity, and the 10th since relocating to the Cultural Quarter. We will mark these anniversaries, of course, but our eyes are firmly on our long-term future. Our fifth annual report features our ambitious plan to expand Phoenix by 2020.

The development plan includes a larger and more prominent digital art gallery; two new cinemas; better spaces for education and creative learning; a bigger Café Bar and kitchen; and much better facilities for our visitors. You can see these plans and a video 'fly-through' on our website.

Phoenix 2020 means that our cultural programme will expand, becoming richer and more diverse. We will continue to provide the best independent films and digital art, curated by Phoenix's talented creative team. We will also be able to offer more education events and support for Leicester's burgeoning community of filmmakers and creative media talent.

We are another step closer to our ambition having completed work to produce the exciting design and detailed plan, along with research that confirms the transformational benefits of Phoenix 2020. The consultations with customers, residents, partners and peers were tremendously helpful in our planning and design thinking: we thank everyone for their input and look forward to sharing news about the project developments in the coming months.

John Rance

...AND OUR CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

Phoenix offers a window on the world through its films and digital arts, and we seek to reflect Leicester's rich cultural diversity in our programming. Through Phoenix 2020 we aim to transform the charity's finances and produce a step-change in cultural participation. Phoenix 2020 will also generate significant economic and social benefits for the area.

In March 2019 we hope that Arts Council England will confirm their provisional capital grant award for Phoenix 2020. Leicester City Council recently offered a £1 million contribution, and thanks to these generous conditional offers we've already identified over £5 million of the £7.1 million we need to make Phoenix 2020 a reality.

We're working hard to raise the rest with some very promising opportunities in the pipeline. Now we need further support from donors and business sponsors... please do help us if you can.

We are grateful for the continuing support of our stakeholders – notably Leicester City Council, De Montfort University (DMU), Arts Council England (ACE) and the British Film Institute (BFI).

My fellow trustees know just how much we are indebted to the dedication, creativity and passion of the staff, and of course we are also immensely appreciative for the enthusiasm and support of our customers. Thank you all.

Professor Sir Alan Tuckett OBE

PHOENIX 2020

“Excellent idea, it will enable expansion of current activities, offer more diverse, cutting-edge film and digital arts, as well as improved amenities”

Phoenix 2020 consultation feedback from local filmmaker

Phoenix is firmly established as a centre for creative digital arts and independent cinema in one of Europe’s most diverse cities. Phoenix has helped transform a de-industrialised part of the city into Leicester’s Cultural Quarter and with year-on-year growth in our visitor numbers expansion is necessary to help us meet rising demand, improve accessibility for a wider audience and offer a richer customer experience.



FINANCIAL RESILIENCE

Phoenix is a registered charity. We have successfully grown our earned income from cinema, Café Bar, conferencing and education activities to 81% of total annual income. But with pressures on the public purse, reduction in our grant funding means that we must generate even more income – a challenge that’s limited by our existing venue capacity. Phoenix 2020 will ensure that we’re able to grow our audience and generate more income, becoming less reliant on public funding and improving our financial resilience for the future.

ECONOMIC IMPACT

Phoenix attracts 220,000 visitors a year, whose spending creates jobs, supports our local supply chain and spreads out to other businesses. The Cultural Quarter is an increasingly attractive place to live, work and visit, and as a major venue and arts-led charity Phoenix has an important role in fostering the creative industries ecology of Leicester.

Phoenix 2020 is a high profile project of national importance that aims to secure significant investment into the local area. As a larger venue, we’ll be able to attract more people; visitor spending generated

by Phoenix will increase by 90% to £5.4 million a year – securing and creating new jobs at the venue and other local employers. The project will also help us to increase Leicester’s share of national funding for the film and creative media sector, boosting our contribution to the city’s creative industries economy and our value to stakeholders.

INCREASING ENGAGEMENT

We want to engage more people from Leicester’s diverse communities and to do this we need the ability to widen our offer. Phoenix 2020 will give us two additional cinema screens; a larger, more prominent art gallery; and a new space dedicated to making and learning, enabling a richer and more ambitious cultural programme.

We’ll also improve our capability to support artists and filmmakers – through the new spaces for creativity and learning, and by providing more opportunities to showcase new work and talent. Phoenix 2020 will generate a substantial increase in arts audiences, and cinema attendances will increase to over 150,000 a year. Overall, the number of visits to Phoenix including

the Café Bar and all parts of our cultural programme will increase by 80%.

SUPPORTING PHOENIX 2020

Our plans to expand are backed by our stakeholders. To make our plans a reality, we need to raise £7.1 million: we have a conditional offer of a capital grant of £4 million from Arts Council England, and Leicester City Council have committed £1 million towards the project. We’re working hard to secure the additional capital needed – through grants, sponsorship opportunities and ‘individual giving’ schemes to engage our customers and the general public in the process, such as ticket top-ups and online donations.

“Very exciting proposals which offer the prospect of an improved experience for film goers, art lovers and diners”

Customer feedback on Phoenix 2020 plan

FILM IN FOCUS

Independence is the cornerstone of Phoenix as a creative organisation, enabling us to deliver a programme that is relevant to the community we serve and reflects the diversity of our city. In 2017/18 we screened 350 films from 37 countries, reaching more than 101,000 people. Many of these films were not shown anywhere else in the region, and included heritage film and locally-made work. Our film programme also included 14 festivals and seasons – from India on Film and the French Film Festival UK, to Black History Month and the Pride season – opening a window on the world and bringing to our screens fresh perspectives on the breadth of human experience.



The Short Cinema Film Festival 2017
Photo: Pamela Raith Photography

“Phoenix 2020 provides a great opportunity to make a step-change in our cinema programme.

One of the frustrating aspects of programming in our current two screen set-up is knowing that there are great films we can't show because we simply don't have the screen space, but also great films that we can't keep around long enough for more people to see them!

I'm excited about the hugely increased flexibility that two additional screens will give me for the programme: the chance to provide more opportunities for audiences to discover brilliant films and open that window on the world that only cinema can provide. I'm really looking forward to growing the breadth of what we show, and curating a programme that is even more relevant and appealing to the people of Leicester.”

Jake Harvey
Cinema Programme Manager

UK ASIAN FILM FESTIVAL LEICESTER (Mar 2018)
A celebration of contemporary South Asian cinema – curated specifically for a Leicester audience – in collaboration with the London Asian Film Festival and Phizzical Productions. Pakistan's biggest celebrity actress Mahira Khan appeared live at this year's event.

BFI THRILLER SEASON (Nov 2017– Jan 2018)
A nationwide three-month season of films in partnership with the Independent Cinema Office and British Film Institute.

BRITISH SILENT FILM FESTIVAL (Sep 2017)
Attracting a national and international audience, this biennial festival featured a programme of rare, unseen and rediscovered silent and early sound films from the world's archives.

THE SHORT CINEMA (Aug 2017)
Now in its 11th year, this annual festival of short film showcases work by local and international filmmakers.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH (Oct 2017)
A series of insightful films and documentaries, programmed in partnership with local arts organisation Serendipity and De Montfort University.

COMMUNITY CINEMA (Throughout the year)
Screenings across 60 community venues throughout Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire, run by 180 volunteers and reaching over 14,000 people.

DMU PRIDE 2018 (Feb 2018)
A short season of films from around the world – programmed in partnership with De Montfort University – celebrating LGBT History Month.

ACCESS CINEMA (Throughout the year)
A regular part of our programme offering screenings with audio description, descriptive subtitles and an autism-friendly supportive environment. In December we ran a successful crowdfunding campaign to buy additional amplified headsets to help even more people with sight and hearing loss enjoy films at Phoenix.

INDIA ON FILM (Sep – Oct 2017)
A national touring programme led by the British Council, celebrating rarely seen classics of Indian cinema, to mark the 70th anniversary of India's independence.

A LEADER IN DIGITAL CULTURE

As an Arts Council England National Portfolio Organisation we are at the forefront of innovation in digital creative media, and our cultural programme explores the impact of technology on society. In 2017/18 we staged 15 major exhibitions and art events in our own Cube Gallery and offsite in venues around the city. We also delivered 28 free creative workshops for children and families, taking our programme beyond the confines of our building into community centres and libraries to widen engagement and reach new audiences.



No Copyright Infringement Intended
Photo: Pamela Raith Photography

“Phoenix 2020 is an incredible opportunity for us and it will be truly transformational for our digital art programme. We want to push the boundaries of creative technology and put Phoenix on the map as a digital arts venue – both nationally and internationally.

Our Phoenix 2020 plans will enable us to work with more artists and filmmakers and investigate new ways of experiencing culture that simply aren’t possible in the current venue.

The new gallery we’re building won’t just be larger; it’ll be much more prominent within the building, with state of the art capabilities, giving us an incredible opportunity to attract some of the most exciting artists working with digital media. I can’t wait.”

Chris Tyrer
Digital Art Manager

NO COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT INTENDED
(Apr – May 2017)
A group exhibition featuring work by eight artists, exploring the conflicting relationship between copyright and culture in the digital age.

PLAYBACK
(Jun 2017)
Phoenix was a host venue for this national exhibition bringing together over 150 short films made by young artist filmmakers. In association with Channel 4 Random Acts.

DISPLACED WITNESS
(Aug 2017)
Part of Journey’s Festival International, this pioneering virtual reality installation focused its attention on the refugee crisis, in particular the perilous route via the Greek island of Lesbos.

LEICESTER ART WEEK
(Nov 2017)
A collaboration between contemporary visual arts venues across Leicester, Phoenix hosted a programme of events including Little City Studio, a day-long festival of films, discussions and performances exploring artists’ moving image.

MANGALA FOR ALL
(Aug – Sep 2017)
An ethnographic performance created by Superflux Lab, inspired by India’s first interplanetary space mission. Hundreds of recorded interviews reveal surprising stories of scientific innovation, alongside hidden narratives of nationhood and geopolitics.

CREATIVE WORKSHOPS
(Throughout the year)
28 free workshops at Phoenix and community venues across the city giving children the chance to get creative with the latest digital technology.

CHANGING PLACES
(Jan – Mar 2018)
A touring exhibition of artists’ video exploring the impact of industrialisation – one of the biggest catalysts for change in modern times – linking South Asian locations with sites of historic significance in Britain.

NEW COMMISSIONS AND PRODUCED WORK
107 new films and creative digital media work were produced in 2017/18 as a direct result of Phoenix’s support.

DEVELOPING TALENT

Phoenix inspires, supports and stimulates creativity through learning and provides rewarding opportunities for people of all ages – from short courses for adults and young people’s workshops, to school events, professional development for teachers, apprenticeships and volunteering. We also provide practical support for artists and filmmakers, helping them to access facilities and expertise, develop their skills and engage audiences.



Photo: Pamela Raith Photography

“I really enjoy working with Film School students; we face the challenges of filmmaking and find the answers to those challenges together. Many of the students have gone on to produce their own films, which is something they have since revealed that they thought they wouldn’t be capable of achieving.”

Keith Allott, award-winning filmmaker and Phoenix Film School tutor

PROGRAMME HIGHLIGHTS

EMERGING TALENT

Support for local artists and filmmakers is provided through commissions, access to facilities and expertise, and opportunities to exhibit work. 107 new films and creative digital media works were produced as a result of Phoenix’s support.

STUDENT FILM FESTIVAL

(Mar 2018)
Our annual student film festival in partnership with De Montfort University, giving film studies students valuable experience in curating and producing a film festival for a public audience. The 2018 festival comprised eight screenings and events on the theme of ‘wilderness’.

SUMMER FILM CAMPS

(Jul – Aug 2017)
Filmmaking courses for young filmmakers age 7 – 15, held during the summer holidays. Participants work in groups to make a short film in just five days, with a premiere screening of their completed films attended by friends and family.

INTO FILM

(Nov 2017)
Phoenix held six events as part of this free, annual celebration of film and education for schools and young people across the UK. 615 people attended.

SHORT COURSES

20 short courses for adults covering a range of subjects – including film acting, screenwriting, queer cinema and the works of Quentin Tarantino. Around 2,600 people took part in our adult education programme in 2017/18.

WORKSHOPS FOR CHILDREN

28 free workshops for children, giving them the chance to get creative with the latest digital technology. Held at Phoenix and community venues across the city, to widen participation and reach new family audiences.

ACTIVITIES FOR SCHOOLS, COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

Almost 15,500 people engaged in activities for schools, colleges and universities at Phoenix in 2017/18.

BUSINESS & COMMUNITY

Visitors to Phoenix generate vital revenue for local businesses, and our active involvement in creative partnerships with other organisations – such as DMU and Leicester City Council – is helping to regenerate the Cultural Quarter and stimulate the city's creative industries.

Phoenix is also a community hub, providing employment and networking opportunities and bringing creative businesses, volunteers, staff, students and professionals together to support and undertake collaborative projects, contributing directly to Leicester's cultural, social and economic prosperity.



The Spark Festival
Photo: Pamela Raith Photography

“Phoenix is a much-loved Leicester institution with an enviably loyal audience. MyPhoenix – our membership and loyalty scheme – aims to get people more involved with our cultural and charitable programme, and almost 4,500 customers are now part of the MyPhoenix community.”

As Phoenix's membership manager I've been responsible for developing MyPhoenix over the past couple of years. One of the most enjoyable parts of the role is building a relationship with our members: this has given me an insight into how excited they are about our Phoenix 2020 plans and the prospect of an even wider cultural programme of film, art and learning opportunities.

Support from our MyPhoenix community is hugely important to us as we take the next steps in the Phoenix 2020 journey and we look forward to working with them to further develop our membership offer and ensure a sustainable future for Phoenix.”

Sarah Vallance
Membership and
Communications Manager

CONFERENCING AND HIRES

79 different organisations hired Phoenix in 2017/18 for conferencing, workshops and training, including Unison; BBC; the Alzheimer's Society; and Leicestershire NHS Partnership Trust. We are also a popular choice for private hires, with high demand for our micro-cinema for parties and special events.

ACCESS CINEMA

We aim to make film and art accessible to everyone, so we show films in a range of specialised environments to suit people who may usually find it difficult to enjoy cinema, with subtitled, audio-described and autism-friendly screenings. In 2017/18 we ran 48 Access Cinema screenings, attended by almost 1,000 people.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Our friendly atmosphere makes Phoenix a great place to meet and socialise. Several local groups and societies use our Café Bar or meeting rooms for their regular get togethers, including filmmakers collective 7-5 Productions; creative writing group Phoenix Writers; and sci-fi group Starbase.

COMMUNITY CINEMA

Our Community Cinema network held regular films events across 60 community venues throughout Leicestershire, Rutland and Northamptonshire, engaging over 14,000 people who would otherwise have limited access to cultural services.

FESTIVALS AND EVENTS

We participate in many local and national festivals and events, attracting people from across the city's diverse communities. Highlights included the Spark Festival; Black History Month; City Festival; UK Asian Film Festival; DMU Pride; and Diwali.

HERITAGE OPEN DAYS

As part of this national scheme, in September 2017 we gave the local community a rare chance to see behind the scenes, with guided tours of our projection room and a specially curated programme of archive film about Leicester's manufacturing heritage

FINANCIAL SUMMARY 2017/18

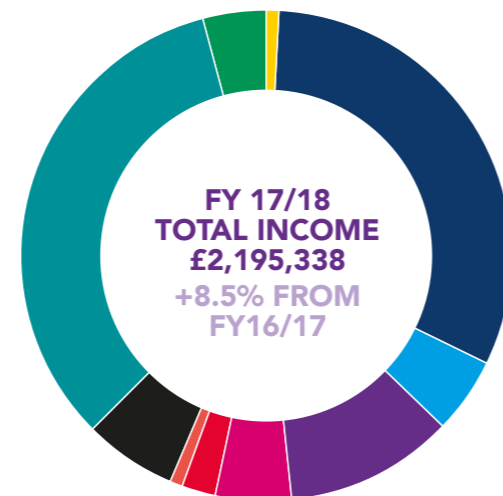
Phoenix is a registered charity. We invest 100% of our resources and earnings in our mission to enrich lives and celebrate diversity through film and art. Investment and support from our stakeholders – Leicester City Council, De Montfort University, Arts Council England (ACE) and the British Film Institute (BFI) – has enabled us to become an established part of Leicester’s cultural life, helping us to deliver an exciting cultural programme, commission and create new work, and reach out to more people. Many other organisations and individuals also support us by sponsoring our programme, joining MyPhoenix, collaborating on events, or working with us to engage an ever wider audience.

Total income to the charity and its trading subsidiary during the year increased by 8.5% to £2,195,338, with expenditure of £2,132,372. Earned income from cinema, Café Bar, conferencing and education activities grew for the eighth consecutive year, generating an annual operating surplus of £62,966, whilst there was a 10% reduction in local authority grant.

Our ambitious plans to expand Phoenix were boosted with news in July 2017 of our successful first stage application to ACE’s capital programme. The project, known as Phoenix 2020 will result in a

larger, more prominent digital art gallery; better spaces for education, filmmaking and creative learning; a bigger Café Bar and kitchen; and two new cinema screens.

Phoenix 2020 has the support of our stakeholders. Significant grants awarded by ACE and the Leicester and Leicestershire Enterprise Partnership in 2017/18 funded the next stage of design and development so that we can submit the second stage capital grant application to ACE in October 2018.



- Cinema, education and festivals
- Community Cinema income
- Local Authority grant
- Arts Council England grant
- BFI grants
- Other grants
- De Montfort University
- Café Bar income
- Other operating income
- Membership and donations

SUPPORTED BY



Phoenix is the trading name of the charity, which is called and registered as Leicester Arts Centre Ltd

Phoenix is run by a dedicated and passionate team who take immense pride in their work. Our board of Trustees, all of whom are volunteers, are leaders drawn from local business, education, arts, finance and legal practice organisations. Our talented creative and management teams work behind the scenes to develop our programme and steer us towards our goal of becoming a world class centre for digital creative media, while our exceptional front-of-house staff provide the excellent friendly and informed service that so many customers appreciate.

RICHARD DAVIS
Chief Finance Officer

SIR ALAN TUCKETT OBE
Chair of Trustees

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Cinema Programme Manager

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Membership & Communications Manager

AZAM MAMUJEE

DANNY MYERS

PATRICK WELSH
Marketing Manager

SUZANNE OVERTON-EDWARDS

COLIN SHARPE

Phoenix

Phoenix Square, 4 Midland Street, Leicester LE1 1TG

Box office **0116 242 2800** Enquiries **0116 242 2821**

www.phoenix.org.uk

Leicester Arts Centre Ltd

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Charity Registration No. 701078

Vat No. 485739687

Registered Office – 4 Midland Street, Leicester, LE1 1TG