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16th September 1991

Dear Ian,

Thank you for your letter of 29th August 1991.

We reply in an attempt to explain several of the misconceptions revealed in your letter and to put on record some of our concerns.

We recognise that you may have been disappointed by the meeting of 27th August at the BFI. We in our turn, would also like to express our dismay at the outcome of the meeting and at the absence of any further material information.

We would like to refute your statement that we have 'de facto' rejected the Dunn & Co site. What we have expressed is our reservation concerning the viability of the project in terms of location, design of cinema space, time-scale, accessibility, lease information, conversion costs, rent etc., stressing our preference for another building. Our priority at all times has been to protect the interests of the LFMC. The building committee recommended and our executive committee agreed that the membership make a final decision on such a major issue. At no stage have we rescinded our 'reserved' vote of 18th July '91.

We would like to comment on the problems which you detect:-

1. Stability and continuity of executive membership has been exceptional since the current body was elected in March this year., (13 meetings to date only one of which not quorate).
2. We have a 'notional' chair for all communication and preparation of agendas to ensure continuity of information flow. However, the LFMC, following its egalitarian principles, strives to train all its members in all aspects of its organisation and the actual chairperson of any executive meeting is allocated on a 3 month rolling basis.
3. There is a clear relationship between the Executive and its sub-committees. This information has been forwarded to the BFI in recent correspondence (6/8/91) and also in previous minutes submitted to you. Sub-committees research/report information and make recommendations to the Executive Committee to act upon.
4. The Administrator and all staff have a clear remit within their job descriptions. They are the paid organisers (not necessarily members), who carry out duties for the membership and are responsible to the executive committee. They have no mandate to make any decisions which affect the whole membership, although they have a basic autonomy within their posts.

Further we would like to clarify the relationship of different categories of membership to the executive committee. There are in fact two ways of becoming a member, either by placing a film in Distribution or by payment of workshop subscription, both of which confer voting rights at General Meetings. Cinema membership confers no voting rights. The executive committee (also members) are directly elected by this group of film-makers, who embody the broad coalition of interests which the Co-op represents.

We would agree with your comment that there are too many meetings and that they last too long. Generally all meetings have been with adequate notice and with advance agenda (preferable but not a legal requirement) and are arranged on a consultative basis if in emergency to ensure that they are quorate. Mark Sheehan is the 'notional' chair of the executive committee to co-ordinate all correspondence and agendas. We currently have no secretary to take minutes and feel that the commitment necessary is too great for one person to give on a voluntary basis.

Finally we would agree that we could be better organised. The current executive have been trying to create a more efficient, united and effective organisation within the broad parameters of our original constitution to make, screen and distribute independent, experimental, avant garde film. We would welcome and appreciate any further suggestions and support that you feel you can give in helping us with this. We assure you that the issues that you raise in your letter will be discussed at our next meeting.

We hope that our response allays some of the fears and worries expressed in your letter.

Yours sincerely

Martin Lugg

Martin Lugg
On behalf of the Executive Committee

PS. We will send a full set of minutes of meetings since March '91 as soon as they are available.

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