

SUNRISE
FILM
FESTIVAL

2024

FESTIVAL

REPORT



ABOUT US

Sunrise Film Festival, based in Lowestoft Suffolk, is a nationally recognised film festival founded in 2021 by two passionate creatives, Joshua Freemantle and Patrick Johnson of Sunrise Studios, part of Access Community Trust.

Despite the challenges facing the film industry, the festival continues to create a dedicated vibrant platform for emerging filmmakers and making independent cinema accessible to new audiences in across audiences that typically wouldn't engage with or be able to afford to watch independent film.

Since our inception, we've now proudly screened over 420 independently produced films and presented 44 awards, and in 2024 most recently becoming a BIFA-qualifying accredited festival.

We continue to be backed by the BFI Film Audience Network and have been named by Film Hub South East as the exemplary festival for engagement with low socioeconomic audiences.



OVERVIEW

A snapshot of 2024 in numbers...

BENEFITS	2023 STATS	2024 STATS
Audience Numbers	1,521*	2,085
Volunteers	12	150
Community Partnerships	5	8
Speakers/Workshops	9	21
Screenings/Events	20	26
Programmed Films	131	140
Tickets Pre-booked	1,825	1,003

*Audience numbers were down due to storm Babet

Average Rating 4.8



Average Age 24



MARKETING & DIGITAL

Print

5,000 programmes printed & distributed across the region

Touch points this year included Lowestoft, Ipswich, Norwich, Halesworth, Beccles & Cambridge

Large Scale Signage & Posters

3 road signs, 2 large posters in Lowestoft Town Centre, 3 banners, 300 A3 posters & 500 A4 posters

Website

Total clicks through to booking 3,580

And had 66,700 website visits

Social Media

Facebook reach grew 6.4%

And we reached 20,928

Instagram click throughs grew 23.9%

And we reached 58,000

5 Press releases across the BBC & EDP



REFLECTIONS

Our outdoor cinemas as part of this year's festival were a huge success this year, both screenings sold out, and because of demand we had to hire more headsets, increasing our capacity from 100 people per screening to 130.

It worked incredibly well to bring back screenings of feature films that would engage with a wider audience across our local area, and allow them to discover something new at the same time by screening independent short films before each film. We want to continue this legacy next year by screening more feature films, and include the re-introduction of some carefully selected screenings of at least 2 independent feature films.

We also noticed an increase in local audience numbers from across Lowestoft and the local Waveney district, across the 4 days it was identified through the box office system that audience members who had pre-booked for screenings before the festival, resulted in 298 new people attending screenings that hadn't engaged with our previous activities across the past 3 years.

Our 2024 festival attendance figures clearly demonstrate that going down from 7 days to 4 days has a positive effect on higher attendance at this year's festival, and we'd arguably say that it was the most well attended festival edition we've had to date.

AUDIENCE FEEDBACK

"Thank you my first of four visits to the selection of short films at this years Sunrise Short Film festival in Lowestoft"

"Lovely atmosphere and films. Focused on my favourite animals in one which was a lucky coincidence - birds. All the films were enjoyable. Burnt Country made me tear up but in a good way - powerful documentary, lovely experience for our town"

"What a fabulous experience! We loved watching some of the short films, the Q&A and then outdoors cinema. We'll be back next year."

"Absolutely loved their cute theatre, such a good venue choice this year. Looking forward to next year's fest!"

"A wonderful festival that is growing in quality, scale, scope, range and reach. Brilliantly curated and wonderfully organised"

"Absolutely loved Sunrise Film Festival - beautifully curated and had a really nice community feel. It's so special to bring cultural events to rural areas"



FILMMAKER REVIEWS

“Brilliant festival in a beautiful location!” – **Sam Topley**

“Thank you to Sunrise Film Festival Lowestoft for selecting our short film “The Balloon” for its 2024 festival! As a BFI Film Audience Network-backed and BIFA-qualifying event, Sunrise provides an invaluable platform for emerging filmmakers and diverse voices.” – **James Fink-Jensen**

“Great little festival with a distinct character and vibe, really enjoyed being part of this one” – **Lisanne van Ingen**

“Wonderful film festival, great atmosphere and great opportunities for those who don’t get as many in the film world!” – **Rachel Simm**

“Such a brilliant festival! Can highly recommend entering your film to Sunrise. Communication with the Sunrise team was excellent and I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the festival. I particularly loved the attention to detail. You can really feel their passion for independent film and for putting Lowestoft on the cultural map. Bravo!!! Many thanks to Josh, Patrick and the rest of the Sunrise team, it was a joy to watch Exchange Rate on the big screen” – **Emma Stansfield**

“Delighted that Bully was a part of the festival and screened in the amazing theatre. Good turn out despite the early screening time and all the volunteers were lovely as was the atmosphere. Thanks for having us.” – **James Wren**



FILMMAKER REVIEWS

"We were delighted to attend Sunrise FF. Communication from selection right up to the event was first class. We found a warm welcome from festival team members at the Cafe Hub that was close by to the station and were escorted through the town to the cinema.

The films were exhibited on a lovely large screen with excellent sound quality in the beautiful Marina Theatre - only quibble being that a foreign language film in our block did not have subtitles!

Sunrise was terrific value for money and I expect this BIFA qualifying festival to go from strength to strength in the coming years." - **Shanty Productions**

"Thank you for including our film "diary of a ghost"! We had such a lovely time at sunrise film festival - communication ahead of the festival was great, they were always quick to respond to any queries. Our film screened twice, once in the beautiful Marina theatre followed by a Q&A - the team puts a lot of effort into making the festival a great experience for both filmmakers and audiences. We hope to come back in the future!" - **Hayley Reeve**

"I love Sunrise!!! So passionate, supportive and friendly - a real filmmakers' festival. We were thrilled to have POPPET win BEST COMEDY this year - we'll absolutely be submitting again!" - **Katherine Press**

"Sunrise Film Festival was a fantastic experience! I had a wonderful day and so much hard work goes into making it so great - excited to see where things are going for Sunrise! Thank you for having me." - **Holly Donoghue**

ABOUT SUNRISE STUDIOS

Sunrise Studios is a social enterprise operated by and for young people based in Lowestoft. Established within regional charity Access Community Trust in 2021 by Joshua Freemantle when he was just 18.

All profits made through Sunrise' services are reinvested to provide accessible opportunities within media, music and the arts for under-25s.

All entry fees & any profits made from the ticket sales from the festival go directly to support the ongoing work Sunrise Studios undertakes to support local young people within the regional charity across rural & socially isolated communities across Suffolk & Norfolk.





SUNRISEFILMFESTIVAL.CO.UK  **#SUNRISEFILMFESTIVAL**

Founded by **SUNRISE**
STUDIOS

