

# Top national honour for borough film buffs

Community cinema group's delight at winning prestigious Queen's Award for Voluntary Service and will receive accolade at Buckingham Palace garden party

**A** group of volunteer film enthusiasts are celebrating after being given one of the country's highest community honours.

Leigh Film Society CIC spoke of its honour and delight after scooping the prestigious Queen's Award for Voluntary Service.

The prize is the equivalent of the MBE for community groups and recognises excellent work done at grass-roots level across the UK.

The judging panel was impressed by the film society's roster of events, which includes running two dementia-friendly classic cinema clubs, teaming up with groups helping people with autism to deliver screenings, bringing non-mainstream films to Leigh and putting on events at the parish church, including ones raising money for charity and increasing awareness of campaigns and local good causes.

The group is no stranger to awards after being hailed the best community cinema club in the land last year at Cinema For All's national prize-giving.

However, the volunteers were still stunned to be told they were getting the latest accolade.

Chairman Paul Costello said: "On behalf of all Leigh Film Society volunteers we are honoured to receive this prestigious award."

"We had such an amazing 2017, winning three National Cinema for All Awards. We thought that nothing could ever top this, how wrong we were."

"Leigh Film Society believes in being accessible to everyone in our community, with many different film projects that offer something for everyone."

"We are proud to have formed relations across the borough and have film screenings that bring



Leigh Film Society, which has just been given the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, celebrating last year's Cinema For All prizes

the community together, fighting social isolation and championing good causes.

"We will not go quiet after winning these awards and we're already planning film screenings and events around heritage and film education.

"Our recent work with students from Edge Hill University has enabled

us to reach out and engage with young people and this will continue in our film programming and special events."

As part of the award two representatives from Leigh will be travelling to Buckingham Palace for a royal garden party.

The Lord-Lieutenant of Greater Manchester will present the official certificate to the group, which also receives a crystal and the right to use the Queen's Award logo.

Details of the not-for-

profit group will also be published, alongside the other Queen's Award recipients, in a special edition of the London Gazette.

The honour comes as the society celebrates its fifth birthday, with its work being recently honoured at an event at The Turnpike attended by patrons Jo Platt MP and well-known actor Ben Batt.

Other activities under the Leigh Film umbrella include a Wigan discussion group and regular screenwriting sessions in Leigh.

The letter informing the group they had won states: "The work your group does for the community was very much admired by the independent assessment committee."

"The award of the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service 2018 represents a tremendous achievement for your organisation."

"We hope that everyone involved, and particularly your volunteers, feel immensely proud of the recognition that this Award represents."

## Major prize

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service was created in 2002 by Her Majesty Elizabeth II to mark the golden anniversary of her coronation.

This year's independent committee which made the decisions was chaired by broadcaster and journalist Sir Martyn Lewis CBE.

The accolade recognises groups which meet local needs and provide services and are respected in the areas where they are working.

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National Cinema For All awards won by Leigh Film Society