

Local Community group, Chichester Filmmakers, launches its first short film 'The Barn' to be shown at the Chichester International Film Festival

Chichester Filmmakers, a local Community Group, was set up in January 2024 with the aim of bringing together local talent from across Sussex and Hampshire, both skilled professionals and those aspiring to get into the film industry, to collaborate to learn about the film industry, and gain practical skills from supporting the creation of high end films. Chichester Filmmakers are premiering their first short film 'The Barn' in August 2024.

The film brings an original story told across four centuries to the screen using iconic locations in West Sussex to showcase local talent. The group gained valuable pre-production support regarding the script, story and production set up from Academy Award-winner Kate Winslet.

The Barn is set to premiere with a gala premiere at the Chichester Cinema at New Park on 4th August and will also be shown at this year's prestigious Chichester International Film Festival.

Written and directed by Jonathan Brooker, the ambitious short is the first production from Chichester Filmmakers. This ambitious project has attracted the interest and support of multiple film professionals and organisations from the local and surrounding areas.

The Barn is a mysterious tale which centres on a young woman, Ellen (Jasmine Thomas), who is discovered unconscious in a dark and abandoned barn in the 16th century wearing clothes 200 years out of date. Taken in by a caring family in a small village, suspicions grow as life and death events rack the community, but Ellen doesn't seem to age a day. Fear grows throughout the village culminating in a shocking climax at the barn of her discovery, bringing Ellen's journey into the 20th century and the links of her mysterious immortality to the times of the Vikings.

A full complement of experienced filmmakers and first-time crew members, including first and second film units and stunning drone photography, captured the action during the main five-day shoot in Sussex. Comprehensive wardrobe depicting the many periods. A cast, crew and production team of approximately 48.

The Weald and Downland Living Museum in Singleton at the foot of the South Downs, provided the perfect location for the majority of filming which took place over 6 days. Chichester Filmmakers were so grateful to the Museum for their wonderful support for this local project. The open-air museum, bringing life to the story's three time periods with its authentic interiors and exteriors. The iconic Saxon church St Andrew-by-the-Ford near Arundel provided the backdrop for a pivotal scene where the villagers' concerns about Ellen reach a shocking conclusion.

Along with the challenge of multiple time periods and locations, *The Barn* brought together an impressive cast of more than 20 actors. Jasmine Thomas (*The Contractor*) leads the cast with an appearance in almost every scene. Among the supporting cast are Meg Birley (*Ren*), Peter

McCrohon (Twenty Twenty-Four) Chris Beaumont (*The Penalty King*), Lena Richardson (*Escape*), and Mark Chapman (*Golden Eye*).

Director and co-founder of the Chichester Filmmakers Jonathan Brooker said, "Seeing phenomenal local talent come together in front of and behind the camera, after 4 months of development and pre-production, has exceeded our expectations. It's been a hugely rewarding experience, particularly hearing the positive feedback post filming from members of the cast and crew who are aspiring to get into the industry. Bringing this film to life in the authentic surroundings of the Weald and Downland Living Museum has been an adventure for everyone. This film has only been possible by the great collaboration, hard work and passion of this fantastic group and local supporters."

The film's producer, Petrina Rodwell, added, "*The Barn* is an incredible showcase of the film talent in Chichester and the surrounding area, and the gala premiere is a recognition of everyone's hard work. We're thrilled that the first official screening is taking place at the Chichester International Film Festival. It's the perfect place to mark this significant milestone for the Chichester Filmmakers and puts us firmly on the map for future productions."

The Barn gala premiere is set to take place on 4 August, with limited tickets available to the public at chichestercinema.org. Additional local screenings are planned to thank our many supporters and increase interest in Chichester Filmmakers.

Developing a short film on this scale on a zero budget production had its challenges. Chichester Filmmakers were very grateful to the supporters who kindly donated to the crowd-funding campaign on Go Fund Me to cover some of the expenses. As well as increasing the profile of the fast-growing filmmaking community in Chichester, the premiere will kickstart *The Barn*'s submission to film festivals across Sussex, the UK, and internationally. The Go Fund Me account will remain active to help fund film festival submissions. Thank you to all who have supported this group.

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About the Chichester Filmmakers

Chichester Filmmakers was established in January 2024 to support film enthusiasts and professionals alike. The community non-profit group aims to bring together like-minded individuals who are passionate about film, introduce them to the film industry, and help them develop hands-on skills. It plans to support projects in and around the city of Chichester, as well as East & West Sussex and Hampshire. For more information about joining the group, please visit www.chifilm.studio

About the Chichester International Film Festival

Launched in 1992, the festival intended to represent the art of film at the Chichester Festival has blossomed into the Chichester International Film Festival. Now showcasing 150 films in seven locations, including regular open-air screenings, the festival continues to support local filmmakers as well as attracting the attendance of leading film directors, actors, writers, composers and critics over the years. Guests have included Sir Alec Guinness, Steven Poliakoff, Kathleen Turner, Kerry Fox, David Hare, Virginia McKenna, Steve Coogan, Ralph Fiennes, Cate Blanchett and Mike Leigh. For more information, visit www.chichesterfilmfestival.co.uk.

About the Weald and Downland Living Museum

The award-winning Weald & Downland Living Museum is a leading museum of historic buildings in England, covering 40 acres in the South Downs National Park in West Sussex. Since it was founded in 1970, the museum has grown to include over 50 historic buildings dating from 950 AD to the 19th century, re-erected from their original sites in south-east England. The museum also includes period gardens, traditional farm animals and a mill pond. Committed to learning, the museum welcomes 20–25,000 schoolchildren every year. For more information, visit www.wealddown.co.uk.

Media Enquiries

For interviews, images and further information about the Barn and the Chichester Filmmakers, please contact:

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***The Barn*: Select Gallery (10 photographs)**

Poster, *The Barn* (2024) (credit: Jakub Bors)





Poster, *The Barn* (2024) (credit: Issie Collier)



First day of shooting, *The Barn* (2024) (credit: Matt Goddard)



photo by Jakub Bors

Peter McCrohon and Meg Birley, *The Barn* (2024) (credit: Jakub Bors)



photo by Issie Collier

Chris Beaumont on location, *The Barn* (2024) (credit: Issie Collier)



Jasmine Thomas and Lucy Mabbitt, *The Barn* (2024) (credit: Issie Collier)



Simon Willshire, Hazel Stock, and Angela-Elise Munnoch, *The Barn* (2024) (credit: Jakub Bors)



The crew on location for *The Barn* (2024) (credit: Matt Goddard)



Director and DOP on location for *The Barn* (2024)