

Ed Vaizey Parish News August 2015

Like myself many of you may have enjoyed a trip to the cinema on a rainy day during the school summer holidays, so I was very interested to be told by the British Film Institute that they have opened a new round of funding for the BFI Neighbourhood Cinema Equipment Fund. Any community cinemas that have been running for 6 months or more and have set up a profile on the BFI Neighbourhood Cinema website are eligible to apply for National Lottery funding to pay for projectors, screens, DVD players, also chairs and black out blinds. Communities that already have film clubs or village hall cinemas have until 28 September to apply. All you need to do is check your eligibility. If you need to start from scratch, then you will have to apply for the next round of funding in a few months. In the meantime you should watch the BFI Neighbourhood Cinema film and take a look at their organisations that support you so that you are ready for your application.

The British Film Institute set up this scheme to bring big screen experiences and a wider choice of specialised and independent British films to people in communities across the UK. To date they have awarded £362,000 to 96 community schemes across the UK and their aim is to allow everybody in the UK to see and enjoy a wide range of films in a shared cinema experience, no matter where they live and help bring local communities closer together.

On the other side of the screen the BBC have launched their Make it Digital Traineeship which will be available in around 60 towns and cities in England. The BBC Academy and partners the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP) and Skills Funding Agency (SFA) are calling on 16-24 year olds who are unemployed, have fewer than two A Levels and an interest in developing their digital skills, to register their interest via their local Jobcentre Plus. The Jobcentre Plus network will then play a crucial role in identifying suitable candidates, who will be invited to take part by their Jobcentre Work Coaches. Training will be delivered by high-quality local training providers across the country followed by structured work placements with local employers. Full details can be found at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/mediacentre/latestnews/2015/make-it-digital-traineeships-open>

This month's postbag has been dominated by letters and emails on the upcoming parliamentary bill on assisted suicide. I have no moral objection to a law that would assist someone to die – provided they were of course making a decision entirely of their own free will, and based on their circumstances. However, my very real concern has been and always will be what one might call “the thin end of the wedge”. For every person that we might consider to have a clear and settled wish to end their lives, there are countless others who are vulnerable, despairing and often lacking in support who may feel under pressure to go through with this decision. Would we, in effect be encouraging those who might not otherwise have done so to decide to take their own life? This Bill legitimises the idea that suicide is a solution for disability and severe sickness. But, as years of debate on this issue in the House of Lords has shown, there is no safeguard that would be sufficient to stop a person who feels a burden on their caregivers from ending their life; nor can doctors accurately assess this, or worse, pressure or abuse which does regrettably exist in certain cases. This is why none of the Royal Medical Colleges support a change in the law. In fact, the British Medical Association, the Royal College of GPs and the Royal College of Physicians,

actively oppose such a change for that very reason. As evidence from other countries has shown, a right to die would for many be a duty to die. This is a matter of conscience, and as such, will be decided by a free vote. For the reasons set out above, we must fiercely resist this bill.

As ever please feel free to contact me on any matter at the House of Commons, SW1A 0AA, 020 7219 6350 or vaizeye@parliament.uk. Email is the quickest and most reliable way to get in touch, as I keep a very close eye on my emails and can reply very quickly. I also send out occasional general interest emails about developments in the Wantage and Didcot Constituency. If you would like to be added to the distribution list, please do email me at vaizeye@parliament.uk or sign up at www.vaizey.com.

Ed Vaizey MP