

First Light Movies

Press Release
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South Wales' youngsters scoop Lottery cash to make films.

Thanks to First Light Movies young filmmakers from Betws, Pontypool and Cardiff will benefit from thousands of pounds of funding to produce short digital films alongside professional filmmakers with two Welsh production companies.

First Light Movies is a nationwide organisation that helps young people, aged between five and 18, make their own films. To fund projects, First Light Movies distributes £1.1 million of National Lottery money, through UK Film Council funding, each year.

As a result of their creative and insightful ideas four groups of 31 young people in total, aged seven to 18 years, have been awarded almost £20,000 to work with Bridgend-based Valley and Vale Community Arts and professional filmmakers to make four short digital films to be screened later this year.

The groups of young filmmakers comprising Betws Boys and Girls Club, St Mary and the Virgin School Butetown, Coleg Gwent in Pontypool and a Cardiff refugee group will experience hands on filmmaking across a wide range of genres including martial arts, dance, documentary and comedy with subject matter ranging from the Viva Porthcawl Elvis festival to growing up.

Abergavenny-based Flycatcher Films have also been awarded £4,000 to work with eight pupils, aged 14 and 15, from St Albans High School in Pontypool to make the creative documentary, *Running Free*. The film will explore Parkour, or free-running, a sport, art form and philosophy using obstacles to perform jumps and acrobatics. Flycatcher Films were nominated for this year's prestigious First Light Movies Awards.

First Light Movies places the young people at the heart of the creative process and as a result all the ideas must come directly from the young people. They will be involved with every aspect of the production process from drawing storyboards and writing the scripts to directing and lighting the films.

First Light Movies CEO, Pip Eldridge was impressed by the quality of the latest film ideas and says, *"From the islands of Scotland to the Devon coast, First Light Movies is funding some amazing stories that tackle important and relevant issues to young people today. First Light Movies enables young filmmakers from all backgrounds to make fantastic films grown from imaginative and innovative ideas. This funding round is no exception and I can't wait to see these inspirational ideas realised on film."*

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John Woodward, UK Film Council's Chief Executive Officer added, *"The UK Film Council is proud to support such fresh and original ideas from young people throughout the UK. First Light Movies does a great job giving young people the opportunity to project their ideas on to the silver screen and providing opportunities to learn essential new life skills and broaden their future horizons."*

The films, all made using low-cost digital equipment, will also have a chance to be nominated at next year's First Light Movies Awards, an annual star-studded celebration of the best in young people's filmmaking held in London.

First Light Movies' latest funding round saw the Birmingham-based organisation make National Lottery awards worth over £160,000 to 17 groups across the UK. Over 550 young people aged between five and 18-years-old will be involved in writing, shooting and editing their film projects.

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Notes to editors

1. First Light Movies was launched in May 2001 to fund and inspire the making of short digital films, reflecting the diversity of young people's lives. First Light Movies is an initiative supported by the UK Film Council with Lottery funding.
2. To date First Light Movies has given more than 10,000 young people the chance to write, act, shoot and produce over 750 films under the guidance of professional filmmakers. First Light Movies works in association with youth agencies, schools, colleges, production companies and film clubs throughout the UK. Some young filmmakers have used First Light Movies as a stepping stone to gain work experience in the film industry.
3. For more information about First Light Movies and other projects log on to www.firstlightmovies.com
4. First Light Movies was established by Hi8us Projects in 2001 and has a long history with Hi8us Projects Limited. Under the guidance and expertise of Hi8us, First Light Movies has changed the lives of many young people. Hi8us nurtured the young company and enabled it to develop into the thriving organisation that it is today. Hi8us' history and foresight helped First Light Movies to work with funding bodies enabling it to forge relationships with many schools, filmmakers, film groups, youth groups and cinemas to produce films that articulate the concerns and interests of many young people.

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5. The UK Film Council is the lead agency for film in the UK ensuring that the economic, cultural and educational aspects of film are effectively represented at home and abroad. We invest Government grant-in-aid and Lottery money in film development and production; training; international development and export promotion; distribution and exhibition; and education. Our aim is to deliver lasting benefits to the industry and the public alike through:
 - creativity – encouraging the development of new talent, skills, and creative and technological innovation in UK film and assisting new and established film-makers to produce successful and distinctive British films;
 - enterprise – supporting the creation and growth of sustainable businesses in the film sector, providing access to finance and helping the UK film industry compete successfully in the domestic and global marketplace;
 - imagination – promoting education and an appreciation and enjoyment of cinema by giving UK audiences access to the widest range of UK and international cinema, and by supporting film culture and heritage.