



ABINGDON

From the Director of Drama and Film Unit: Jeremy Taylor

19 June 2014

To Pupils who will be in Third Year and above in September, and their parents

The Abingdon Film Unit

I am writing to tell you about one of Abingdon's extra-curricular activities that may be of interest to you. Since 2003, we have offered boys with an interest in film and filmmaking the chance to join the Abingdon Film Unit (AFU), a group of pupils that meets from September to July on Wednesday afternoons, and on some non-school days (eg occasional Saturdays or days during the holidays), to make their own short films under the guidance of a team of London-based film professionals. To the best of our knowledge, this is an opportunity that is unique in UK secondary schools. You can get an idea of the award-winning work the Film Unit students produce by visiting <http://vimeo.com/abingdonfilmunit>

As part of the planning for next year's activities, which is likely to include trips to studios, film schools and a variety of shooting locations, as well as school-based workshops with leading filmmakers, **I am now inviting expressions of interest from boys who will be in 3rd year and above in September 2014. Please see the form that accompanies this letter for full details. This form should be completed and returned to me by Friday 4 July, 2014, please** (if that's not possible, please at least send me a message by then to say you are interested in the AFU and get the form to me by the end of July). Parents also need to sign the form because there are charges of £150 per term that go towards the costs of tuition and materials.

At this stage, all I need is the completed and signed form and an initial film idea. The form asks for a contact address and email, so that **I can write again to those who express interest, giving details of what happens next.** Meanwhile, aspiring filmmakers might like to start thinking about an idea for a film they'd like to make. The summer holidays provide an excellent opportunity to try out ideas by making a "taster tape" – a short collection of footage that gives a sense of how an idea might work in practice. Taster tapes can be shot on any camera that is at hand, such as a mobile phone or a compact camera with a video facility.

Yours sincerely

Jeremy Taylor

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Abingdon Film Unit

Preliminary Application Form for Membership, 2014/15

If you are interested in joining the AFU next year, please complete and return this form to me by **Friday 4 July 2014**.

By post / hand to: Jeremy Taylor, Abingdon School, Park Road, Abingdon, OX14 1DE.

By email to: jeremy.taylor@abingdon.org.uk.

Please write clearly or word process your answers. If writing by hand, please complete the section "About you" IN BLOCK CAPITALS. Please take particular care over phone numbers and email addresses. **You and your parents need to sign this form.**

1. Personal information & contact details (to be completed by the student):

Your name _____ Your age _____

Home address _____

Home phone no. _____ Your mobile no. _____

Your email address _____

2. Parental Declaration (to be completed by parent / guardian of pupil)

There is an annual charge for membership of the Film Unit of £150 per term, which goes towards costs of tuition. Please confirm that if your son is accepted into the Unit, you will agree to meet this charge

Signed (Parent/Guardian) _____ Date _____

3. Your interests (to be completed by the student):

Please tell us what you might be most interested in next year...circle all those that apply

- making your own film
- working on video news stories for Abingdon TV
- both making your own film AND working on video news stories

4. Your film idea (to be completed by the student):

The Film Unit combines study and appreciation of films with tuition and support for those who want to make their own short films. Clearly, to make films, ideas are required. **We never tell you what to make films about** – though we will happily talk through your ideas with you and make suggestions. To help us understand what things you are interested in, **please outline on the reverse of this form, at least ONE idea for a film you might like to make in 2014/15**. Use extra paper, as required. You will not be held to your idea if you subsequently change your mind and come up with something you like better.

ADVICE:

- The first question to ask yourself is always: "What's the STORY?" Whether you are making a documentary, an animation, or a live action fiction, a strong story is key. Whether it's drawn from real life or one you've made up, the **STORY** is what hooks an audience, maintains their attention and makes them want to watch your film.
- Films use two elements to deliver the story - **SOUND and IMAGE**. Used in combination, they create moods, atmospheres and feelings. Think about whether your idea will translate into strong images, and how the use of sound can enhance your idea.
- Beware relying on voice-overs / narrators. Another golden rule is "SHOW, DON'T TELL". In other words, let the audience work some things out for themselves. As one film guru put it, "Give the audience all of the dots, but don't join all of them up."

PTO

YOUR NAME _____

