

**From:** BRIAN TAYLOR  
**Sent:** 28 August 2013 10:18  
**To:** CineworldCityScreen  
**Subject:** Cultural Vandalism

RE: Abbeygate Picturehouse Cinema, Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk

Attention: Alasdair Smith Group Chairman Competition Commission Enquiry

Dear Sir,

I must respond to the commission's preliminary findings in respect of the acquisition of the Abbeygate Cinema by Cineworld earlier this year. Since moving to Suffolk some 3 years ago my wife and I have been staunch supporters of this cinema and are utterly appalled at the merest suggestion that this wonderful venue may face a forced sale or closure in the interests of so called "Ultimate benefits to the consumer and the economy" as a result of the acquisition. I fully appreciate that as the merger has been referred to your commission by the OFT you are legally obliged to examine the effects of the acquisition in detail. However, I would like this e-mail communication to be put on record as evidence of my anger at some of the apparent early positions taken by the commission and would certainly challenge some of the assumptions highlighted in the video presentation by the group chairman.

We are asked not to get at all exercised at the possible sale solution on the basis that some likely cash rich buyer is just waiting in the wings to snap up this single cinema. This is the absolute height of naivety. Is the commission seriously expecting an individual person or corporate body to bid for a single cinema in Suffolk ? Even if they exist, which I very much doubt, surely they would only be interested in acquiring all 21 picturehouses to provide the necessary economies of scale as a basis for a decent return on capital.

Bury St Edmunds, often described correctly as a gem of a town, has been enhanced by the existence and location of the Abbeygate Cinema situated in the unique mediaeval area but crucially adjacent to the vibrant pedestrianized central walkway with its excellent restaurants and coffee houses...used regularly by the cinema patrons before and after performances. The Picturehouse in Hatter Street is an integral part of the cultural fabric of the town and is dearly loved by all its supporters. The recent refurbishment has further improved the venue and the drive and boundless enthusiasm of the well trained staff team makes every visit a joy.

Under the heading concerning possible remedies...specifically Relevant Customer Benefits "Such benefits might comprise lower prices, higher quality or greater choice of goods and services, or greater innovation in relation to goods and services "

Please NOTE: **At Abbeygate we already have ALL of these benefits by the bucketload !!** As Picturehouse club members we enjoy low ticket prices, some pre-general release FREE viewings, Brilliant administration in the form of regular programme updates by e-mail and excellent high quality printed free flyers in the foyer highlighting upcoming films( Probably only possible being part of the 21 picturehouses group), discounted meals in the newly attached cafe, screenings of National Theatre stage plays, Ballet from Covent Garden and Moscow, live feeds from the Metropolitan Opera house in New York..**all at a fraction of the cost of**

**attending live performances in London...not to mention the finest art house cinema films.**

Can you please explain to me in simple language **how** our benefits could be improved ???

I personally do not know of a single fellow member of either sex that would ever even consider going to the Cineworld multiplex venue(unless dragged along by a grandchild to some dreadful blockbuster) where the experience is completely different and where the ticket prices have **always been substantially higher than the Picturehouse**. In that context surely the Cineworld outlet would be much more marketable to a large group like the Odeon for example. I see that your final shortlist even embraces Cambridge. Unless buyers could be found for BOTH venues are you suggesting that this wonderful art house cinema concept should be reduced to one single cinema in Norwich in the whole of East Anglia...at least one hour away for Bury residents and completely impossible to even contemplate for most elderly Picturehouse users.

Even the suggestion of closure is utter madness. I just cannot believe that sensible people could contemplate such action. I urge you all to think **very** carefully and strongly recommend that you make site visits to both the Picturehouse and Cineworld in Bury before you come to any final conclusion.

Brian and Janet Taylor