

## Official Statements from James Hannaway & Cinema Project Updates

### Update on 12 Sep 10

The new name of the cinema is The Odyssey. Here's James's statement on his choice: "Unlike the Rex which had only one name since it opened in 1938, the Odeon has had five, starting with the Alpha in 1908 and ending with the Odeon in 1995. From instinct, the original name seemed the right herald upon which to mount a campaign to win back the building. Again, unlike the Rex, The Alpha was not a natural name for a cinema or theatre. Early music halls were known as Tivoli and Gaiety. Cinemas were the Nickelodeon in the USA, or Electric and Palace here in the UK. They described the new technology alongside the grandeur of seeing flickering images 30ft high in a vast auditorium. 'The Odyssey' is not only a reference to film by honouring one of the world's greatest filmmakers, but it describes the quest, adventure and journey into the knowingly hazardous labyrinth of restoration. The Alpha was the name used by Arthur Melbourne-Cooper for his cinematographic works on the site. For us, it became a useful 'working title' to inspire the local uprising to claw back the building from a useless development of fourteen luxury flats. Hence, we went back to the beginning to kick-start the campaign. The responsibility for choosing a name has not been taken lightly. On the contrary, after much listening, soul-searching and with the blessing of Stanley Kubrick's family, we have chosen the Odyssey. It is not only a reference to film by honouring one of the world's greatest film makers, who lived on its doorstep, but it describes the quest, adventure and journey into the knowingly hazardous labyrinth of restoration. Its classical roots are clear, and though more ancient Greek than Roman, it bows to St Albans. Furthermore, it is unique. From what we can gather, there is no other. So welcome to The Odyssey, you will grow to love it. Here's to the beginning of its last journey into the past - a beautiful picture palace once more."

### Update from James Hannaway on 9 July 10

It was a perfect summer's day. By 12 o'clock the queue stretched up London Road as far as the Farmers Boy. The excited estimate was over a thousand, but it was probably more like 800 or more. A fantastic turn-out by any measure. Good humoured and relaxed, the older ones wanted to see inside to remember. The kids (of which there were many) came to see what all the fuss was about. They were able to explore most nooks and crannies of the labyrinthine monolith, which held 1,700 in its single screen heyday. I guessed it might be busy, but much more than busy - it was like the grand opening of an old curiosity shop. Rex staff and St Albans volunteers did a fabulous job of looking after everyone and pointing them in all directions. Among them was Alexandra Heal, whom you may remember, re-ignited wholesale excitement in the project by publicising its plight two years ago when she was only fifteen. The Q&A session in the main auditorium enabled people to air their views and ask important questions. One young boy was particularly happy that we might screen Spiderman every night...! Many took photographs and the St Albans Movie Makers filmed the event. Please send any or all of your photos to [info@allaboutstalbens.com](mailto:info@allaboutstalbens.com).

We will open the doors again from time to time as work progresses. Though apprehensive all along, I'm very glad we did it. People can now see for themselves what they've bought-in to and how much there is to do. And I don't think we left anybody in there...? Thank you to all those who came and for the good wishes from those who couldn't make it. Over £1,500 was collected in the 'loose change' buckets, well done. All those who left us email addresses will be contacted by our chief (lone) administrator, Marie Jahn (pronounced 'Yarn') very soon. As for raising the next £2million, sponsoring seats at £1,000 a chair and/or getting your £285 ABL memberships in asap will be a great start. Once again thank you. It was a phenomenal turn-out on an extraordinary day. As always, James Hannaway

### Update from James Hannaway on 4 June 10

The Alpha St. Albans Funding Document: **Phase One of the project to restore and re-open The Odeon/Alpha** was literally completed on 9th April. Since then we have been doing three things:

1. Giving you in St Albans a well-earned rest after raising the first £1 million in just eight weeks, before coming back to you with fresh ideas for your help with the next £2 million.
2. Opening negotiations with banks and banking agents. Approaching (and being approached by) and listening to individual potential investors.

3. Using the core of our original Rex team, we have started early clearance work. Turning on the water and lighting the whole Odeon labyrinth. Making it safe (or safer) over the next few weeks.

Either the last Sunday in June or the first in July, we will open the doors, so you can see it for yourself. Invitations will go first to those who have contributed. Then everyone is welcome on the door. Please watch out for a poster on the front of the building and keep an eye the allaboutstalbans website. Clearly without the first million none of this would be happening. So as always, thank you. As you know, we raised that first million through a combination of advanced membership (ABL), donations, seat sponsorships, shares and loans. Work has already begun on the gigantic task of repairing the building. We are confident that if everything goes smoothly with the fewest hitches, we should be rolling the first film before the end of 2012. What can possibly go wrong...?

The objectives of this first viewing weekend in June/July are threefold:

- a) To show you the state of the building. So you can see the task in hand.
- b) To talk you through the 'dream'. How it will look etc, listen to your comments and answer what questions we can.
- c) To ask you what you might like to do in the next funding push.

P.S. Bring loose change. You won't have to pay to get in but we'll charge you to get out...! Simply there will be buckets dotted around the place for your (voluntarily) loose change. There will be a chance to take up the remaining advanced booking memberships (ABL), make a donation or sponsor the remaining 300 seats. We also welcome your sponsorship of other things you might wish to consider - bricks, curtains, projection; even toilets or the whole building...! Clearly we will be very happy to discuss further personal loans and investments. We expect to have to seek commercial loans and/or investments. Already we are talking to banks and negotiating with serious individual investors, but would like to raise as many small amounts locally before we can determine how much we need from the commercial market. Loan and share certificates are being drafted now, ready to be issued very soon. The delay is simply that paperwork has tended to take a back seat. This is largely my fault, not paying enough attention to pleas from my advisors and official accountants, legal team etc. They have now put it all together, awaiting the last few things from me. Some of the delay has been my insistence on plain English. Though more plain and English than it started out, there is still some legalise in there. So please read carefully. The most important part is everybody's contributions are safe. That first £1million has paid for the freehold of the site. So it belongs to us and first clearance work has already begun. James Hannaway, 4th June 2010.

#### **Update from James Hannaway on 7 May 10**

We're on the site intermittently at present, clearing and lighting the place, so we don't get lost. It will be over week before the water is on. Then when it's safe (safer!) I will set a date for a public opening. It will probably be a Sunday in June. We'll let you know. We haven't stopped since completion in April, It is mainly dull background stuff; meeting banks, finance people and plotting next moves on the next £2 million. While there's nothing definite where banks are concerned, a bank loan is looking more favourable than it did. However, [chair sponsorship](#) and [ABL membership](#) are still open. While I'm acutely aware of fund raising fatigue, now that the building is finally ours, it is essential to keep the funding coming in so we can get on with the repairs and renewal this a very old building. To turn it from beast to beauty will take a full two years. While we have enough money to get on with this early clearance and essential safety work, it wont be long before we need those bigger injections of cash to do the big renewal work. As before I will keep you up to date through this website. Once more a big thank you to the Farmers Boy for such that fabulous music weekend in April and as always a million thanks for everything you've done so far. As you can see there's much more to come. James.

#### **Update from James Hannaway on 24 April 10**

We finally won the building on 1st April 2010. The perfect day to be nobody's fool. I can't think of the words to say all the things I feel about you raising a million in eight short, endless weeks, burt we did it. Thank you. Now we need the next £2 million to repair this, the ugliest and most neglected of buildings. We have two years before you start demanding. We are starting immediately to get the water on and begin thinking carefully how to strip the place of its neglect. It will be slow to start and getting it back to four square walls with a new roof. This will take the rest of this year and well into 2011. We knew this from the start and my [site visit last week](#) (21st April) did no more than remind me of its hideous state of neglect and terrible conversion to multi screens. So, the greater my wish to make it beautiful again. I have left you alone for a couple of weeks, while we all took time off from that phenomenal dash to raise the million from mid-January to March. The building is now ours. It will

be a fabulous cinema. Now we have to start again. We will do it ourselves with my trusted team who repaired and restored The Rex. It will take longer than if we gave it over to a main contractor. This might not seem like the best way to do things at first sight, but you've trusted me this far. You will need to trust me with the rest. Therefore we need your money again. There are still 300 chairs to sponsor at £1,000 a seat. In fact, you can now sponsor everything from bricks to screen. Think of something/anything you'd like to put your name to (or your children's or a loved one). If you know your way around Govt/European grant aid funding, or were waiting until the building was ours before calling; now is the time. Donations are very, very welcome and Advanced Booking List memberships are still available. Banks are talking to us now, but they will always want blood, as will venture capital. We may need them but will hold out. We need investors who see the cinema as the investment not their money. Personal gain or professional investment will not be good for those who want more from it than to see a beautiful cinema back in St Albans. This might seem simple. It is. If you have some money you can't trust to the City, but want to use it for something which needs money, with its future outside money, then please talk to me. If you want a big return or control, please don't. We will look into a regular stall on the market on Wednesdays and/or Saturdays, not only to raise money but to keep you informed. In the meantime, it is time to ask for your money again. But only if you have it. This is a bad time to ask anything of anybody. Though profit is not, nor ever will be, our prime motive we are a Limited company, NOT a charity. So please don't give anything you haven't got. Thanks to all those schools who have done silly things to sponsor seats and that Facebook gang. I'd like to say I'm not asking only the rich, but I am. Stay very close from now on... James PS. Good luck to the Farmers Boy fundraising gig this weekend. A big thank you to the pub for having the faith to organise it as early as January...! And to all the bands who have practised their best three chords for the event. It looks like sunshine, so hope you have a great time.

#### **Update from James Hannaway on 12 April 10**

We completed on the old Odeon/Alpha building on Friday 9th April 2010. I think there are no superlatives left to describe the extraordinary will, generosity (of spirit on top of money) and determination shown by you, the people of St Albans and surrounding towns and villages, to see that this cinema was not lost. It is now my job to rebuild that cinema. To keep excitement to raising glasses at home and in bars, we will now take time to consider the first stages of the timetable leading to the reopening in 2012. I am aware people are desperate to see inside, but there is some of work to be done before it is fit to be opened to the thousands who want to see it. Don't worry, you will see it rough and ugly but not until we've made it safe. We will announce dates for viewing within the next eight weeks. The main thing now is to relax in the knowledge that is saved and will be a beautiful cinema once again. The new fund raising push will be announced ON THIS WEBSITE soon, and in The Rex Programme for MAY on release: Saturday 24th May. It will ask for the seat sponsorship to be hotted up - £1,000 a seat (details on request). It will ask those individual (non-corporate) donors/investors/lenders who have waited until it is certain before stepping forward. My advisors will go to banks and financiers who too, have waited for this moment to offer terms. In the meantime, rest easy in the knowledge that the Odeon/Alpha site is ours as a cinema once and for all. A million thanks again, and well done St Albans. James Hannaway. I leave you with this heartening and stirring thought from one of my closest friends and advisors, made all the more poignant because he is as hard as nails with me as he has been with them, during the 21 months of very tough negotiations.

"In Touching the Void - they climb a very difficult ice face to get on to a ridge just before the summit. As they finally conquer the ice face and reach the safety of the ridge 100meters below the summit - the climber says words to the effect 'I could hardly be bothered to go to the top - seemed an anti climax compared to what we had just done.' Exchange was the ice face - completion was the short stroll to the summit." He has got the climb right, including cutting the ropes on each other from time to time. Exchange marked the end of all the muscular negotiations. It was the moment the SOLD sign went up. Completion was 'just' handing over the money. (There will be a thin book in the next few years, chronicling this and everything to come. Please keep your own notes to fold into the jigsaw). JH While we're waiting for our cinema to reopen, here's a taste of things to come in this short film about The Rex.

#### **Update from James Hannaway on 5 April 10**

On 1st April at 3:20pm we exchanged contracts (Wattsdown with The Alpha). Two (huge) pieces of paper 'swapped' places on my solicitors desk, £100,000 deposit left our account, and in that second the picture changed. The building might still look derelict but is no longer defeated. With no more deadlines and little to go wrong (?) completion on 9th April means the old Odeon will be ours once and for all. It has been a long 21 months and a few years before, but now thanks to you in St Albans and surrounding towns and villages for raising the million to buy it, there will be a new and gorgeous

cinema - for everybody - restored inside the solid walls of the old. It will take a full two years and perhaps a bit more. We estimate with the wind in all the right directions the new 'Alpha' (or whatever you/we decide the name should be) will be showing films again on a huge curved screen sometime in 2012. The next fund raising push will be announced during the week beginning 10th April. There's another £2million to find, but clearance work will begin in the summer. Initially we can raise funds as we go. Later to secure any necessary bank loans, more formal funding arrangements will need to be considered. There will be as many downs as are ups, perhaps more, but we've lived through those before. In the meantime, to those who raised the first million in eight weeks and to those who would have liked to, my heartfelt thanks and sense of wonder at your achievement. A million thanks and well done. James Hannaway. Ps I will keep you posted regularly on this [allaboutstalbens.com](http://allaboutstalbens.com) website. Don't listen to rumour, rely on this website and the Rex Programme/magazine for all you need to know.

### Update from James Hannaway on 21 March 10

Total	Memberships	Seats	Donations	Investors	Loans
£1,031,850	£175,637	£104,062*	£29,387	£510,180	£212,583

**St Albans... Now what?** "Start at the beginning and when you get to the end - stop" (Q of H - Alice) I'll start at the end and find the way back to the beginning as the story unfolds in the weeks/months/years to come.

*\*includes contributions towards group seat sponsorships from Facebook supporters*

It is an odd feeling collecting over £1 million in just over seven weeks for a project based upon something that would "never work". The Rex was accompanied by doom-sayers from the outset alongside a woe of what-iffers. A single screen will never work. Tables and chairs; ridiculous. No popcorn/hotdogs/coke-vats? You must be mad. Now, you have put a million where your heart is, into this once ridiculous idea. Well done!

**The End** On Tuesday 9th March 2010, just eight weeks since the Alpha account opened 21st January, the St Albans fund tipped casually over the million to £1,022,437. (At Sunday 14th March it stands at £1,031,850 with much more to come). If all goes well in the next few weeks, we'll own the building. Then we have to find the other two million to restore it. We've had quantity surveyors reports ranging from £2.5m to a prohibitive £3.5m. While we thank them, we will do it by ourselves, as we did the Rex. Bearing in mind we didn't know what we were doing then. Now we do. There will be no luxury fees to designers and project management. We will be in charge of our own destiny with work completed by those trusted friends who re-built the Rex. So be assured not a penny of yours will be wasted on expensive professional fees, mark-ups or extras - with all respect. It is an extraordinary achievement for the people of any small region to raise over a £million in eight weeks for something other than the usual 'charitable good cause'. St Albans, Hemel, Harpenden and surrounding villages have raised the money for a long lost derelict cinema. Cinema Paradiso? Fifteen years waiting is the 'best of all possible' causes. This million has proven how much it means to you in the last eight short (endless) weeks.

**The Beginning** The next stages are to exchange and complete (going to press 17th March, we are very close). In the meantime, well done to all those who have contributed, and to those who can't but wish us well. A million thanks for your faith and trust. Be prepared for many ups and downs, not to mention some despair, over the two years it will take to restore. I will repeat this throughout. Should anything go wrong at this stage everybody will get every penny back.

**Opposition** Here is an extract from a BBC [schools news project](http://schoolsnewsproject.com) submitted by Mark Pearce, aged 14, from St Albans: 'The St. Albans Labour group argues "...the current proposals for a single screen 'art house' cinema do not meet the needs of the city. They may delight the Civic Society, but will provide nothing for our young people or families...". They would argue that the cinema will be more of an exclusive film club for people who can afford higher prices than a cinema which could be beneficial to the whole community of St. Albans. None of the political parties are supporting the cinema in St. Albans, a confusing statistic since [stalbensodeon.blogspot.com](http://stalbensodeon.blogspot.com) say that 99% of public opinion is in favour of a renovation of the derelict site; the Facebook group has around 3000 members.' You know the answer. Political parties are clubs exclusive to those who think the same. Should they venture to the Rex they would see how exclusive it is. There is a small Advanced Booking List (ABL) which costs a fortune and is restricted to 500. They can't buy more than half the house or more than six tickets for any one film, and they only have a week ahead of general release to do so. The rest is open to everybody. There are over thirty films a month on one screen. We hold seats back every screening for those who come on the door. The programme runs the full gamut from arthouse to big blockbusters,

with much in between. It is not elitist. It is not exclusive. It will never be a club. It is open to everybody willing to queue or take a chance on the door. St Albans will be run the same way. We on the way to securing the cinema at last. To stem rumour and gossip, please use this [allaboutstalbens.com](http://allaboutstalbens.com) website. There will be no angles or spin, just the straight truth about what is happening week by week. Plus comments on individual's/parties'/organisations' comments. James Hannaway

#### **Update from James Hannaway on 16 March 10**

It is without doubt an extraordinary achievement for the people of any small region to raise over a £1 million in seven weeks for something other than a 'charitable good cause'. St Albans, Harpenden and surrounding villages have raised the money for a long lost, derelict cinema. It is Cinema Paradiso 'come true'. Fifteen years waiting is the 'best of all possible' causes. And you have proven how much it means to you in seven short (if seemingly endless) weeks. It is one of the best local causes for generations to come. Moreover, you will see in London Rd where every penny goes, and every penny saved, during its reconstruction. As a small limited company not a charity, there is no hierarchy, executives fees, committees, needless admin, or any other unexpected hidden costs. We haven't yet, nor will, waste a farthing on unnecessary 'professional fees/expenses'. Raising a million in such a few weeks is all those words - from fantastic to heartwarming etc. We haven't had to go to banks etc, to secure the price of the building. This is unheard of. So be very proud. However it is not ours yet. Then there's the other £2 million to restore it back to glorious life. However, the first massive million hurdle is over. The next stages are to exchange and complete. We will keep you informed. In the meantime, well done to all those who have contributed. And a million thanks for your faith and trust. My small, trusted, professional team (unpaid, inc legal costs) is committed to see it through and I won't let you (or them) down. Be prepared for many ups and downs, not to mention a little despair, over the two years it will take to restore. I will repeat this throughout. James. PS If anything goes wrong at this stage, before exchange (which is unlikely) everybody will get every penny back.

#### **Update from James Hannaway on 10 Mar 10**

Total	Memberships	Seats*	Donations	Investors	Loans
<b>£1,022,437</b>	£173,072	£99,214	£28,817	£507,750	£213,583

Well done St Albans. You've done it... and all in seven weeks and three days since 21st January (when the Alpha bank account first opened). There are still some hurdles - VAT and stamp-duty etc. Will keep you informed on dates of Exchange and Completion. Sorry to be so dry, but the time for euphoria and excitement comes after the 'small print' is written and agreed. Full report to follow by Friday 19th March. In the meantime, crack open the brown ale at the million, save the champagne until the Odeon/Alpha site is finally ours. James

#### **Update from James Hannaway on 8 Mar 10**

At midnight on Sunday 7th March the total stands above £971,000 and growing. This is a crucial week. It looks like we will make it to the £1 million before long. However, it is not the time to celebrate just yet. There is still much to do. I'll keep you posted day by day with a full breakdown when it's available. We will prepare the necessary papers and legal paraphernalia for exchange. In the meantime you/we must keep going with this final push to raise the last amount. It has been an extraordinary few weeks, raising such a phenomenal sum in such a short time. And exclusively from those who have sent their money solely to see the cinema restored from the ashes of the old - and for no other reason. There have been times when it looked hopeless. Now we're nearly there, you should stay closer than ever. James

#### **Update from James Hannaway on 7 Mar 10**

We are very close and this week is crucial. So anybody considering sponsoring a seat for £1,000 please do it. We only need 43 of you. It would be a real joy to finish it with you. Our next update will be Tuesday 9th, then daily only on this and the Rex website. [AllaboutStalbens.com](http://AllaboutStalbens.com) is quicker and remains the best source. Stay close. James

#### **Update from James Hannaway on 4 Mar 10**

It is 3rd March 2010. In only seven weeks the people of St Albans, Harpenden and surrounding towns and villages have raised £944,452 towards the mere chance of a cinema returning to the London Rd Odeon site. An unprecedented achievement. The main deadlines for Exchange and Completion have passed (just like buying a house, you have to have the money to Complete before you can Exchange). Hence the owner (vendor) has every right to put the 'property' back on the market, which he has. However, being a man of his word, he has not entered in to a new contract for sale to any other buyer. Someone could still turn up tomorrow with the cash and build 14 luxury flats...? We have only days to find the final few thousand to make the million needed to buy the site once and for all. It is so close, we must do it now. 60 more seat sponsorships will do it...!  
 Latest figures at early hours 4th Mar. More in today.

Total	Memberships	Seats*	Donations	Investors	Loans
<b>£944,452</b>	£166,517	£94,870	£27,232	£495,250	£150,583

#### Update from James Hannaway on 2 Mar 10

Total	Memberships	Seats*	Donations	Investors	Loans
<b>£913,132</b>	£162,237	£87,180	£23,372	£490,760	£149,583

#### Update from James Hannaway on 1 Mar 10

Total	Memberships	Seats*	Donations	Investors	Loans
<b>£880,302</b>	£160,527	£82,110	£22,547	£468,535	£146,583

*\*includes small contributions towards group seat sponsorship from Facebook supporters*

#### Statement from James Hannaway on 27 Feb 10

We're at £870,000ish at midnight (26th Feb). By degrees, it is becoming harder to hear myself saying "we are closer by the day - keep sending your money". We are closer day by day, and you keep sending your money without a second word. Thank you and well done, so far. We are now so close. At this rate; your real unconditional money will secure the site within the next few weeks. BUT please don't keep asking. I promise I will tell you the minute we have the £1 million to exchange and complete on the site once and for all. I am more and more overwhelmed by your faith and determination to see this cinema come true. Come to this site for the best day to day-ish latest. We do still have a way to go, and while the the current owners are within their rights to seek new buyers, we have to move at this pace and faster. When we get to within sight of the last few pennies, The Rex will put in its rainy day £30,000 cash to see it done (on top of the £31,000ish already spent) .

There is no more to say right now, other than... We only have days and are so close, it will not only be unbearable to lose it now, but careless. So far and with more to come, St Albans owes a million thanks to Marion Hamant and St Albans Civic Society, The Herts Ad, The Review and this fabulous easy-going allaboutstalban.com website - who prints verbatim everything I ask (so you know it is straight and true, without angles or story). Stay very close from now on...James Hannaway (3:16am Sat 27.2.10)

#### Statement from James Hannaway on 25 Feb 10

The purchase of Odeon site has now entered its final phase. In just over seven weeks You - St Albans - have raised 840k (latest Wed 24th Feb). Cheques and online donations, loans and investments continue to pour in daily. Even as I write the figure is growing towards its £1 million goal. While thanks seems ridiculous, it is all we have right now. In return I owe a cinema. Which, given your overwhelming commitment in real money-where-your-heart-is, we are in clear sight of owning The Alpha cinema outright, on its original site in its original name. As you now know the deadline to commit to the purchase passed on 15th February, but I am pleased to tell you the present owner has not given up on our proposal and continues to extend to us the chance to make the dream come true. However, it is still a commercial venture for his company with every right to put it back on the market, complete with planning permission for fourteen luxury flats serviced by underground car parking. So, if you have pledged support but we lost you somewhere in the labyrinth of such a complex database, and are still thinking, now is the time. Please, my apologies if we have lost you. So too if you haven't, but think you might now want to support us in this last stage of saving the site for a cinema for ever. The Forever covenant is being written, but can only be signed if we own the building NOW. This means you, your children and your children's children's children... (apart from depression, wars and famine etc. Whereupon they'll need it more than ever) will have this same cinema where it stands. James Hannaway

### Update from James Hannaway on 24 Feb 10

We are very close. In just seven and half weeks since 10th Jan when the Alpha bank a/c became fully operational - you have raised £814,060. This is phenomenal by any standard. Our story is simple. It is a great story on its own. It needs no angles.

Total	Memberships	Seats*	Donations	Investors	Loans
£814,060	£155,685	£78,110	£21,507	£440,285	£118,473

*\*includes small contributions from Facebook supporters*

### Statement from James Hannaway on 23 Feb 10

You will be getting bored with this constant craving for money to buy the Odeon site. I don't blame you. But it has only been five or six weeks since the fund started with pennies to now stand at just over £800,000. This is a phenomenal achievement by any standards of fund-raising. St Albans, together with surrounding towns and villages, has shown unprecedented faith, trust and hope in the Alpha cinema restoration, by putting money where its/their heart is. We are so close. We have missed the two deadlines to exchange and complete. The "For Sale" sign is now showing again. But that is all it is doing. Until another buyer comes on in the days we have left, we still have the once in a lifetime chance to get the site for a cinema once and for all. However there is no new contractual deadline. It is simply a matter of a very short time to find that extra magical extra £200,000 to reach the million from local (non-professional or bank) money. The best way is through the £1000 seat sponsorship. Seventy five have been 'bought' 500 are up for sponsorship. 200 now, THIS WEEK would do it. The Restoration £2m doesn't have to be raised all at once. It is needed as we go. It is this securing the land that counts and it is urgent now. We can't get to £800,000 in real caring money in a few weeks without being able to manage the last £200,000 before the end of February. We've come this far. We have only one chance. The Rex will put in another £30,000 on top of its £30,000 plus, already spent. (Paying half a million debts in five years with not a single invoice outstanding, means we don't have liquid cash right now) OR we would have taken on St Albans without asking so much. So now these next few days are up to you. However, as a footnote to rumour, gossip and the inevitable despair and mistrust - THE REX WAS BUILT ON SUCH STUFF...!!! I have given no deadlines. I have only talked in very general terms. There is no new deadline. Because we have missed our agreed deadlines to exchange and complete, the owner has the right to offer it for sale. This only means we have to find the last £200,000 to beat whoever might have a million in their arse-pocket. SO DAYS..!!! I am not despairing. I'm more buoyant than I was three weeks ago. Let's get on with it and have done with it. Once it's ours we can rest overnight before ripping into the next stage - RESTORATION and RE-OPENING (covenanted NEVER to be anything but a beautiful, single screen, original, cinema). You know where to find me...*James Hannaway*

### Statement from James Hannaway on 20 Feb 10

St Albans... It looks like we might do it...! As this goes to press we will have raised over £800,000 in just over five weeks. For the third time (on Friday 12th Feb) I saw we could do this, purely with St Albans 'real money'. The first was a remarkable public meeting on a wet November Sunday. The second; early in January when a cheque for £25,000 came in with just two lines - "please find enclosed... Thank you" and "Please acknowledge receipt". Nothing more. No demands, business plans, facts or figures. Just "thank you" and a receipt! Then the FSA nonsense slowed things down as deadlines were looming. However, cheques kept coming in, but now I was worried. My small, handpicked group of legal, professional and trusted advisors were calmly working non-stop and unpaid, to smooth the way for small local investments, and time was running out. By a trick of the light or however these things happen, the deadlines have been unexpectedly stretched and the FSA business resolved. So please, go ahead - invest as small as you like. But soon. Time is still tight. It is still a very short deadline - and must be before the end of February - next Sunday...! Momentarily, I failed that trusted 'team' and was ready to fail you by withdrawing. Instead I took a deep breath and refused any hint of outside venture capital which might demand too much in return, attached to long strings of influence. As with The Rex, this new St Albans' Alpha cinema is not about personal gain and must be run without interference. So, more than ever, it is up to you. It will be embarrassing to go into March. At £800,000 in five/six weeks. With only days left, we must do it. The best news is: we can buy the site with £1million of real St Albans money, small and huge, and ALL extraordinary. This is a whole city putting its money where its heart is. So perhaps, in return, I owe you the will and energy to make it work. Thank you for your individual leaps of unprecedented trust and faith, so far. Now to acquire the Odeon site to rebuild The Alpha we need only a few more big leaps. Banks, pro-investment, strings and outside influences might be needed for the small matter of the £2.5m to rebuild it? We'll see.

**THE BEST/FASTEST WAY is through SPONSORED SEATS.** There are 500 seats for 'sale' at £1000 a chair. Only 57 have gone. Sponsoring the lot will bring us £500,000. Your name, or that of a loved one, will be printed in the foyer - AND now (thinking what a great deal of money for virtually nothing!) your chosen name embroidered (knitted!) on to the seat. With great thanks and respect to those first 57 who have leapt already. Next week you will hear that a new 'Rex' (The Alpha) will be re-born into St Albans, or the site is no longer ours, and your money returned. For me, the hope in everything I've ever done (especially with the finishing line in sight) always carries disappointment in its back pocket. That way a little sanity is preserved to start again. This is not a losing note. £800,000 in less than six weeks for a small local cause must be a fund-raising first. It is wonderful, extraordinary and phenomenal in the true sense of each word. At the risk of testing your patience further, we need the other £200,000 by Friday 26th February. You know where to find me. New email: [therexberkhamsted@googlemail.com](mailto:therexberkhamsted@googlemail.com). Phone: 01442 877999. I urge you to be patient with my staff. They will not know the answers to all your questions. Apologies to the many I still owe a returned call. Be as impatient as you like with me. I will get to you. James

### Statement from James Hannaway on 13 Feb 10

The deadlines have gone. We have more time, but not much. A confession...For the third time (on Friday 12th Feb) I saw we could do this... AND purely with St Albans money. The first was that remarkable public meeting on a wet November Sunday. The second; early in January when a cheque for £25,000 came in with just two lines - "please find enclosed... Thank you" and "Please acknowledge receipt". Nothing more. No demands, business plans, facts or figures. Just "thank you" and receipt! Then the FSA nonsense slowed things down as deadlines were looming. However, cheques kept coming in, but now I was worried. My small, handpicked group of legal, professional and trusted advisors were calmly working non-stop and unpaid to smooth the way for small local investments, and time was running out. THIS is now resolved. So please, go ahead - invest as small as you like.

I failed them then, and could easily have failed you by withdrawing. Instead I stood my ground and refused any hint of outside venture capital which might demand too much in return, attached too long strings of influence. As with The Rex, this new St Albans' Alpha cinema is not about personal gain and will be run without interference. It was pointed out to me this week, if The Alpha works, I stand to make a small personal fortune? I didn't care three/four years ago, when I became marginally involved in the campaign. I don't care now. Hence, was seriously considering sending all your money back and taking up knitting and drinking. Then today (Fri) came a letter explaining how a huge investment/loan (plus ABL payment!) had been painstakingly considered, then sent without further thought. With such commitment, the knitting will have to wait. We will do it... £700,000 in five weeks. We will do it. My head is back on. From being at rock bottom two weeks ago, and amid all the unbelievable, hurried donations, loans, investments and trust to beat the deadline, it has taken one spark to wake and remind me how important this is to you, and how much time, as well as money, you have given. The best news is: we can buy the site with £1million of real St Albans money, small and huge, and ALL extraordinary. This is a whole city putting its money where its heart is. So, I owe you the will and energy to make it work. Thank you for your individual leaps of unprecedented trust and faith. A little more... £292,000 more!!! - will settle it. Then we will have the Odeon site to rebuild The Alpha. Banks, pro-investment, strings and outside influences might be needed for the small matter of £2.5m to rebuild it? We'll see.

### BEST/FASTEST WAY right now... SPONSORED SEATS

The best way now to win the race to secure the site is to through sponsored chairs. There are 500 seats for 'sale' at £1,000 a chair. Only 57 have gone. Sponsoring the lot will bring us £500,000. Your name, or that of a loved one, will be printed in the foyer - AND now (thinking what a great deal of money for virtually nothing!) your chosen name embroidered (knitted!) on to the seat. With great thanks and respect to those first 57 who have done it anyway. LATEST TOTAL (with breakdown) all in FIVE WEEKS...! By 10:32pm on Friday 12th Feb we have received a total of £708,382!

Total	Memberships	Seats	Donations	Investors	Loans
<b>£708,382</b>	£132,600	£57,000	£14,282	£466,000	£38,500

Now I know you are really here, I will do it with you and for you...Stay very close from here on...  
James Hannaway

### Statement from James Hannaway on 10 Feb 10

The Alpha Cinema Project purchase is now entering its final crucial phase. As I write in the early hours of Wednesday 10th February: actual cash raised has risen from £112,000 two weeks ago to more than

£620,000 - over £350,000 in the last six days alone! We also have firm commitments for a further £550,000...!!! This takes us over the £1 million we require to secure the site. The current owner gave us until 8th February 2010 to commit to this. We have gone over his deadline. However, in view of the fact that local money is pouring in, he has agreed more time. Cheques (and now electronic deposits) are reaching the newly opened Alpha account (set up early Jan) at an alarming rate. Should this continue it will bring about a successful exchange and completion. In other words, as soon as we have the million, the old Odeon site will be ours once and for all. But we have no time to waste. We are already in breach. What is important is there is no new deadline just extra time, which can be legitimately withdrawn at any time. Therefore, if we can keep this up, it will give us just enough time to turn those early promises and pledges into cash to secure the site for St Albans. It is a remarkable demonstration of the collective will to fight. The whole of St Albans, along with its surrounding towns and villages, has come together in one voice and with such urgency that your money is being put where your heart is. The cinema must not slip away from us now. If we do it like this, not a penny will have been raised from professional, outside investment. On a personal note I am awe of the people of the St Albans area for your sheer determination to not let the cinema-dream slip away. Everything you have given, loaned and invested so far is beyond all expectation. Once it is ours, My trusted team will do everything necessary to ensure its lasting and beautiful restoration (including raising the next two million!). Back to the urgency of today. We are now in sight of the finishing line, but to win the trophy, we need to turn those pledges into cash - within days. Thank you, James Hannaway

### Latest figure on 8 Feb 10: £520,985

Received over the weekend and counted today:

£101,870 by post, £25,000 electronic transfer, £50,000 electronic transfer, plus one cheque for £3,800 together with cheques/money paid in to bank so far (See table below) = **£520,985**.

Total	Memberships	Seats	Donations	Investors	Loans
£340,315	£85,225	£36,000	£9,590	£206,500	£3,000

### Statement from James Hannaway on 7 Feb 10

Firstly, sorry I didn't make Saturday with the latest information. I am told (from everyone who reads websites) I should send updates daily at this crucial time. It is unlikely. However, I will send important things as they come in. These are the figures and breakdowns up to Thurs 4 Feb: We received over £100,000 on Fri of last week!!! Taking the total before the weekend to around £350,000 - in FOUR WEEKS..! This shows both phenomenal trust alongside extraordinary leaps of faith, beyond all expectation. The startling thing, and a true indication of your hope and determination, is that... We can raise that £1million to buy the site - if all the 'pledges' (in blue below) come in - WITHOUT needing professional investors outside St Albans...!!! This has been my hope all along. We may well need them and banks to help fund the next stage (£2.5m) for restoration, but that's the next bridge. Let's buy the site with our money first and worry about the rest... in March. The 'have yet to pay' lines (in blue) are taken from your tick-boxes on the early forms produced after the public meeting on 29th November. Many cheques have already come in since the bank account was opened on 5th Jan. If the rest come in now - we will own the site. Deadlines: Mon 8th exchange. Mon 15th completion. Time is a little tight. Pledges will do to exchange. But we must have that million by Monday 15th February. Cheques to: The Alpha St Albans Ltd. Posted to: The Rex High St Berkhamsted HP4 2FG. Electronic banking is now available (but no phone or card stuff just yet). For electronic transfers use the Rex account for the time being - BUT PLEASE write/email to say you've done it with all your details and which 'box'. a/c: 45364675, sort code: 09-01-27, Write to: The Rex, High St, Berkhamsted HP4 2FG. As for the rest, the ups have been very up and the downs, close to despair. However, in just two short months with Christmas, snow and this recession getting in the way, AND AGAINST ALL ODDS we're almost there. It's not well-done yet but it is closer. Save the (first) celebrations until the fear of disappointment has passed. Whatever happens it has been a great ride so far and while 'thank you' seems too little, it is big. Stay close... James."

### Cheques/money paid in to bank so far: £234,080

Total	Memberships	Seats	Donations	Investors	Loans
£234,080	£82,090	£33,000	£8,990	£107,000	£3,000

**MEMBERSHIPS (ABL)** - 677 people have said they would like membership, of these:

- approx. 288 have paid £82,090
  - approx. 389 have yet to pay - this would give us **£106,020**
- SEAT SPONSORS** - 163 people have said they would like seat sponsorship/equip, of these:
- 33 people have paid £33,000
  - 129 have yet to pay - this would give us **£129,000**
- INVESTORS** - 305 people said they would like to invest, of these:
- 9 people have already paid £107,000
  - 45 people said they would invest a total of approx. **£616,000** if not more
  - 251 said 'yes' to wanting to invest but they did not stipulate an amount!
- DONATIONS** - 255 people said they would make donations, of these:
- 71 people have already made/paid £8,990
- LOANS** - 224 people said they would make loans, of these:
- 2 people have paid £3,000
  - 8 people have said they would loan approx **£36,000**

### Update from James Hannaway following Herts Ad Fri 29 Jan

It is true the deadlines are firmly in place. The flexibility we had hoped for is not available. Fair enough. Since the November meeting we have worked day and night to bring in the money properly and in time. It has become clear only in the last few days we must raise the £1million purchase price from St Albans only. Professional investors wanted too much in return. This is not a gold mine or the venture for quick easy money. It is a very long-term investment in to something, which, if done properly, will still be here in a hundred years time. But only if we do it right - now. Since that meeting on 29 November, there have been many highs, lows, and hopes dashed, including enthusiastic banks. Never mind. This is the first time we are able to tell you of the definite deadlines and how we need to raise the money purely from you - St Albans. I admit now, having listened to all the advice of those who 'know better' I wish I'd come out and said this stronger in the first place. Believing everyone's ideas were better, because they sounded clever and had to do with business plans etc, has only slowed it down. Put simply. We have one shot at this cinema after 15 years of dereliction and a billion balloons of hot air spouted by everyone from every council chamber, bar-room and street corner. There is no business plan. There are sums and figures and clever guessing but it's all so what? The business plan is to restore cinema on London Rd for less than £3.5 million. What more do you need to know? I could retire and go fishing or get a dog to kick. Two weeks ago at a low ebb, a trusted friend asked me straight - "Why are you doing this?" I couldn't answer him there and then. The best I can come with now: I'm doing it because you have asked me - every day and night for the last five years. You can have a Rex as easy and as hard as we did once before down the road in Berkhamsted. But this time we know what we're doing. So once again we must come to you for the money to make your dream come true. The big London Suits are out. (Think Man Utd..!) It is up us now. I'll give you inches of my life if you give me fractions of yours. Yours is the money, mine is the rest. So now what? The best and quickest way is to sponsor those 500 chairs at £1,000 a seat. Many have already gone but there are more than 300 left. Please don't give anything you can't afford. It is not a charity. It is a limited company. To repeat, while, like the Rex, it is not driven by profit it has to make one to sustain. So too the audience will never be held captive to inflated prices as long as I am in charge and (with all the right legalise) long after I'm gone. All those bigger local investors (£25,000+) will have a letter/email before Monday (before the end of January as promised - just). It has taken this long to tell you what you need to know. Now, though there are fewer questions than answers, you'll find them. Then we can go. Those £2,500 gems are now released to donate/lend/invest. A letter/email early next week will tell you what to do. So far in only three weeks since the bank account was opened you have paid in over £100,000. Still cheques only until we have card machines installed. Not long but more than a week. Cheques with full names addresses, emails and WHAT FOR to: The Alpha St Albans (address below). Watch [allaboutstalbans.com](http://allaboutstalbans.com) for updates. A very big apology to those who have gone missing from our answering system. Please contact the Rex again. If all fails before 15 February and the site is bought for development, all your money will be returned in full. Thanks to the extraordinary leap of faith from the one who sent a cheque for £25,000 with just the line: 'Please acknowledge receipt'. Here's what we've raised up to last week... 27 Jan

Total	ABL members	Chairs	Donations	Investors
<b>£104,580</b>	£57,570	£18,030	£3,980	£25,000

**28 Jan 10**

The time is crucial even urgent, but we still have time and contributions have not stopped coming in. Currently standing £108,000. We will break this down for all to see by Saturday night. Full information for those big (potential) investors - £25,000+ will be finally available by Friday evening - will be sent a full to each one over the weekend. Time has been tight from the outset but we have worked day and night for the past eight weeks (Inc Christmas and the snow!) to collate the many (now into thousands) individual offers and real contributions, research all obstacles and regulations, on top of talking to banks and venture capitalists. It is our intention to raise the first £1million for purchase entirely from these local funds. Banks haven't been as helpful as they have sounded. And venture capital has too many strings. This might all change overnight...!? Please be assured we will not stop until the time runs out - 8th Feb Exchange, 15th to Complete. So keep a close eye on this site and the Rex [www.therexberkhamsted.com](http://www.therexberkhamsted.com). This site All About St Albans will have the complete up to date information as it comes in. The Rex won't be far behind. BUT PLEASE... DON'T look anywhere else or believe any rumours. Remember talk always believes itself and never "lets the truth get in the way of a good story". A better maxim/cliche to hold on to... "Only believe half of what you see and none of what you hear". Any questions call James Hannaway's line at the Rex 01442 877999 and be patient. The box office girls and boys will not be able to answer all your questions, so please be patient. Leave your name and number or email and one of us will get back to you within days. Stay close and don't lose heart. A million thanks, James Hannaway