

Submission to the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee inquiry into the “The future of UK music festivals” on behalf of the All Party Parliamentary Jazz Appreciation Group.

1 Foreword

The All Party Parliamentary Jazz Appreciation Group (APPJAG) currently has over 116 members from the House of Commons and House of Lords across all political parties. Their aim is to encourage wider and deeper enjoyment of jazz, to increase Parliamentarians’ understanding of the jazz industry and issues surrounding it, to promote jazz as a musical form and to raise its profile inside and outside Parliament. The Group’s officers as at the inaugural meeting on 26th February 2020 are Co-Chairs, John Spellar MP and Lord Mann, Secretary, Sir Greg Knight MP, Vice Chairs, Alison Thewless MP and Chi Onwurah MP, the Treasurer is Ian Paisley MP. Officers are: Lord Colwyn, Baroness Howe and Baroness Healy.

The Secretariat is Chris Hodgkins with the assistance of Will Riley-Smith and Louis Flood. The Secretariat operates on a pro bono basis and no expenses of any kind are paid to the Secretariat. Chris Hodgkins was the Director of Jazz Services Ltd the national organisation for jazz for 29 years; he is also a jazz trumpet player, band leader, composer, own record label and music business educator. The contact address is: appjag1@gmail.com

APPJAG is submitting evidence to the inquiry to ensure that UK music festivals and jazz festivals in particular are given the support and resources to enable them to survive and thrive up to and when normality is resumed.

2 Summary

Reference 1 - UK Music festivals generate and contribute £6 billion to the economy. Of crucial importance is music tourism contributing £4.5 billion to the economy in 2018. Jazz Festivals are an important part of the UK jazz Scene. The number of jazz festivals in the UK ranges from 91-200. Music and jazz festivals have a number of beneficial impacts that are social, political, creative and economic. The multiplier effect of festivals is such that, for example, £1 spent at Manchester Jazz Festival will generate £6 for the local economy.

Reference 2 - Without financial support 30% of the UK festival scene will not survive into 2021. As the festival sector is a £6 billion contributor to the economy that will transform it into a £4.2 billion contributor with a corresponding impact on jobs and local economies.

Reference 3 - The Association of Independent Festivals has made a number of recommendations to the UK Government that include business support packages, VAT breaks on ticket sales for a minimum of 18 months and social distancing measures.

Reference 4 - Audiences need to be confident that they can attend a festival safely and that there are facilities or support for testing, which is achievable through rapid testing and track and trace.

Reference 5 – Detailed evidence will be provided by other organisation such as UK Music, Association of Independent Festivals and Association of Festival Organisers.

Reference 6 - More and more people are motivated by the social aspect of a live event. Another growing concern for attenders is “eco impact”. There is a growing preference for people to attend cash-free music events, digital payments could revolutionise the events industry.

Reference 7 – The Association of Independent Festivals has set up a number of initiatives to address these issues such as no single use tents, campaigns to eliminate all single use plastic by 2021, a Festival Fuel Tool - festivals organisers can now use a free online tool to check their energy performance in less than a minute and campaigns to raise awareness of legal highs.

3 Addressing the terms of reference:

3.1 What is the economic and cultural contribution of the UK’s festival industry?

Overall, Mintel estimates the value of the UK music festivals and concerts market to be worth just over £2.6 billion in 2019, up from £2.46 billion in 2018.¹ Steve Heap Chair of the Association of Festival Organisers 2021 report the overall festival sector is a £6 billion contributor to the economy.²

Of crucial importance is music tourism. The trend for music tourism in recent years and 2019 in particular has been one of consistent growth and strength. The level of spend by music tourists on festivals and concerts increased to £4.7 billion in 2019, up 6% from £4.5 billion in 2018. In 2019 overseas visitors spent on average £899 as compared to the average spend of domestic visitors of £183.³

Attendances at music festivals increased by 6% to 5.2 million in 2019 from 4.9 million in 2018.⁴

In the year to May 2019 research by Mintel shows 26% of all UK adults attend a music festival, an increase of 6% on 2018. Mintel provides a breakdown of the audience 49% of attenders were

Such is Britain's love of live music that, according to Mintel research, a staggering 61% of festival-goers would prioritise going to a music festival over a holiday within the UK; and 57% would prioritise this over a European holiday.⁵

Lauren Ryan, UK Leisure Analyst at Mintel, said:

"The growth in music festivals and concert attendance is being driven by a weakened Pound, due to economic uncertainty surrounding Brexit. As a result, events in the UK are now perceived as better value for both British and overseas music fans who are searching for their summer festival fix. We expect festival attendance will continue to increase with the rise of 'day festivals' which appeal to wider audiences".⁶

Jazz Festivals are an important part of the UK jazz Scene. The number of jazz festivals in the UK ranges from 91-200.⁷ Jazzwise, in its European Festival round ups, put the number of major jazz festivals in the UK as thirty five in March 2017 – February 2018;⁸ as forty in March 2018 – February 2019,⁹ thirty four March 2019 – February 2020¹⁰ and thirty eight in March 2020 – February 2021.¹¹

The Jazz Guide supplied details of seven additional festivals in 2018, five in 2019, five in 2020 and there are four planned for 2021.¹² Appendix 1 contains details of the EFG London Jazz Festival and Bude Jazz Festival

Jazz festivals have a number of impacts, social, political, creative and economic.

Webster and Mackay identified a number of additional impacts:

- Temporal impact and intensification and transformation of experience – audiences can focus around the event and the experience of the event
- Discovery and audience development – "Jazz festivals are sites for learning and personal development, for musicians, audiences, and crew (including volunteers)"¹³
- Place-making, festivals are associated with towns which help create an identity and generate positive value in terms of tourism
- The mediation of jazz festivals – media and social media coverage has a positive impact

¹ Mintel Press Office, *Raving mad: UK music festival attendance at highest level in four years*. Mintel 23rd August 2019. Available at: <https://www.mintel.com/press-centre/leisure/raving-mad-uk-music-festival-attendance-at-highest-level-in-four-years>. Accessed 5th December 2020.

² Open Air, *The Out Door Hospitality Magazine*. Summer 2020. Issue 36. p60

³ Andy Edwards, *UK Music: Music By Numbers 2020*. UK Music 2020 p24

⁴ *Ibid* 3 p24

⁵ *Ibid* 1

⁶ *Ibid* 1

⁷ Emma Webster, George McKay. *The impact of (jazz) festivals: An Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded research report* (Equinox Publishing Ltd, Jazz Research Journal, Vol 9, No 2, 2015) p170

⁸ Jazzwise, *European Jazz Festival Guide March 2017 - February 2018*. Published April 2017 pp 22-28

⁹ Jazzwise, *European Jazz Festival Guide March 2018 - February 2019*. Published April 2018 pp16-21

¹⁰ Jazzwise *European Jazz Festival Guide March 2019 - February 2020*. Published April 2019 pp 16-23

¹¹ Jazzwise *European Jazz Festival Guide March 2020 - February 2021*. Published April 2020 pp18-25

¹² Jazz Guide – Live Music Magazine. Available at: <https://www.thejazzguide.co.uk/>

¹³ *Ibid* 116 p180

- Environmental impact –festivals can have negative impacts such as overcrowding, parking, noise anti –social behaviour.¹⁴

An economic assessment of the Manchester Jazz Festival in 2013 showed that “... each £1 of public sector investment generated £6.87 of new income into Manchester.”¹⁵

Manchester Jazz Festival received £92k per annum from 2014 to 2018 and Serious Events Ltd received £452,778 for 2014 to 2018 for the London Jazz Festival. Both festivals are on standstill funding from Arts Council England from 2019 onwards.¹⁶

Jazz Festivals are subject to change. New festivals such as the Bristol Jazz and Blues Festival now in its sixth year and the Love Supreme Jazz Festival in Sussex arrived in 2013. JazzLeeds Festival has gone from an initial one-day event in 2017 to a five-day event in 2018.

The quality of the UK jazz festival scene can be judged by the international bands that come to play year in and year out. The UK festivals also add further qualitative value by introducing local bands to new audiences.

“At a festival, guests can see a range of genres and styles, big and small bands and solo artists. Around any festival are assorted business and events including readings, poetry, book sales, CD sales and food and drinks events that have important social, economic and networking benefits.”¹⁷

Jazz festivals provide a range of additional benefits such playing to an audience that isn't made up of a bands existing fan base which is useful in terms of development and stagecraft. Jazz festivals help emerging artists to launch their career by accessing new audiences.

Production members, crew, press and marketing agents and managers are also play a part in the development and organisation of jazz festivals, which helps to sustain careers all year round.

3.2 What has been the impact of cancellations on local economies and those who derive income from festivals during 2020?

The example above of Manchester Jazz Festival that evidences the “multiplier” effect of jazz festivals where Manchester Jazz Festival in 2013 showed that “... each £1 of public sector investment generated £6.87 of new income into Manchester”. Many jazz festivals such as Bude and Upton have been cancelled which will impact on the local economy especially in the hospitality sector as the multiplier effect is stripped away.

Steve Heap Chair of the Association of Festival Organisers calculates that without financial support 30% of the UK festival scene will not survive into 2021. As the festival sector is a £6 billion contributor to the economy that will transform it into a £4.2 billion contributor with a corresponding impact on jobs and local economies.¹⁸

The UK's Association of Independent Festivals (AIF) has warned that the current economic shutdown could collapse up to 92% of the 65 AIF member festivals.¹⁹

The Guardian in its coverage of the effect of Coronavirus on cultural events produced an incalculable list of major cancellations. The full list is available here

¹⁴ Ibid 116 pp.178-183

¹⁵ Jiayi Li and Zhouji Chen, *Economic Assessment for Manchester Jazz Festival 2013* (Manchester Business School 2013) pp.3-4

¹⁶ Chris Hodgkins, *Arts Council England funding of National Portfolio Organisations (NPO) for jazz 2014/2018*. Available at: <https://www.chrishodgkins.co.uk/2018/01/23/arts-council-england-funding-of-national-portfolio-organisations-npo-for-jazz-20142018/> accessed 6th December 2020

¹⁷ Sammy Stein with Debbie Burke. *Gender Disparity in UK Jazz A Discussion*. Published Queen Esther Publishing LLC 2020. P44

¹⁸ Ibid 2 p6

¹⁹ Gideon Gottfried. *UK Association Of Independent Festivals Predicts 'Festival Wasteland' In 2021* Pollstar 13th May 2020. Available at: <https://www.pollstar.com/article/uk-association-of-independent-festivals-predicts-festival-wasteland-in-2021-144570> Accessed on 5th December 2020

<https://www.theguardian.com/culture/2020/mar/13/coronavirus-culture-arts-films-gigs-festivals-cancellations>

However the tenacity of jazz festivals is such that the EFG London Jazz Festival went ahead (Please see Appendix 1) Another example was the 36th annual Birmingham, Sandwell & Westside Jazz Festival was held from October 16-25, but saw a series of last-minute changes before it launched.

But, despite those changes, it saw 43 performances from 49 musicians attract full houses – reduced due to coronavirus – and viewers tuning in virtually as well.

The festival, which had been postponed from July, saw 24 alterations made to a printed guide at the last minute.

3.3 What are the risks to festivals taking place in 2021 and beyond, and how can these be mitigated?

The major risk is the economic fact that many jazz festivals already run on a shoe string will not have the financial resources to continue.

The findings of the Impact of Covid-19 on DCMS Sectors: First Report by the select committee for Digital Culture Media and Sport. MPs said the response of the Department of Digital, Culture, Media and Sport had been hampered by the Department's fundamental misunderstanding across Government of the needs, structures and vital social contribution of sectors such as the creative industries. The Report found the loss of performing arts institutions and cultural workers would put at risk the Government's 'levelling up' agenda and reverse decades of progress in cultural provision, diversity and inclusion.

The £1.5 billion recovery funding for arts and culture was welcomed along with the lowering of VAT to 5% for concerts. Regrettably, there were concerns about the delivery of the fund and the criteria that have been set by the DCMS. The fund was designed to support the survival of cultural and heritage organisations that are of international or national cultural significance, or that contribute to the levelling-up agenda, and that are at risk of no longer trading viably by the end of this financial year. Swathes of individuals and volunteer organisations crucial to a healthy music scene will fall through this particular crack. Bands and musicians do not suddenly arrive at the O2 Arena there is an infrastructure that assiduously works to get them there. A crucial part of that infrastructure are jazz festivals and if that infrastructure is left to flounder through a lack of recovery investment, the UK will lose its competitive edge, in terms of music development, music exports and "soft power". Who determined who is of national cultural significance? Any future funding to assist festivals must militate in favour of festivals whose significance is at a local, regional and national level and should not be judged by a subject assessment of "international importance. Furthermore it needs to be recognised if this infrastructure is not sensibly financed then music tourism will quickly wither on the vine with a deleterious impact on the economy around festivals.²⁰

The Association of Independent Festivals has made a number of recommendations to the UK Government. These are:

- *"For Government to acknowledge a distinction between retail and seasonal businesses in terms of ongoing business support.*
- *A continuation of all original employment (furloughing and self-employed schemes) and business support packages until the festival industry can get to the planning and sales stage of 2021 events.*
- *For Government to issue clear guidance and timelines regarding when large organised gatherings will be able to operate alongside high-level guidance on social distancing measures that would be expected in order to maintain public safety.*
- *That Government advises large, single-event premises license fees rolling over to 2021.*

²⁰ Chris Hodgkins, *Jazz musicians and volunteer promoters – falling between the cracks*. Published available at <https://www.chrishodgkins.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/Jazz-Musicians-and-volunteer-promoters-falling-between-the-cracks.pdf> Accessed on 7th December 2020. P1

- VAT breaks on ticket sales for a minimum of 18 months so that festivals can see a result of this support (certain cultural events and exhibits are already exempt).
- If large, organised gatherings are going to be last in line as part of a phased re-opening of business, ongoing support must also be phased accordingly.²¹

Additional risks are the effects of Covid on sponsorship. Uncertainty is such that sponsors will be unwilling to commit.

3.4 What measures are needed for audiences to attend festivals without social distancing, and how realistic are they?

Foremost audiences need to be confident that they can attend a festival safely and that there are facilities or support for testing, which is achievable through rapid testing and track and trace.

A prima facie example of the problem of social distancing is encapsulated in an email the author received from Paul Kelly, Chair of Swanage Jazz Festival on the 8th December 2020:

“The challenge for us at Swanage is venue capacity. Reducing the venue capacity to 1/3 is totally uneconomic for us. The recent increase in capacity to 50% helps a bit but still may not be economic. We need to get tickets on sale by late March for a Festival in mid-July. That means we have to have a programme offer by mid-late February. Making a judgement of what the situation might be in mid-July is rather difficult.

The Swanage audience come from all over Britain. We are charging about £100 for a weekend stroller at Swanage so we need to create a Festival offer with sufficient value to justify that price (plus hotels and food). We’ve moved the Festival into indoor venues and cut the production budget significantly in the process – so there’s more money for the music! But in consequence some of our venues are quite small. Putting on a band that costs £750 - £1,000 in a venue whose capacity is reduced to 60, makes absolutely no sense from a number of standpoints.

I don’t think our situation is any different to many Festivals all of which will have similar planning and economic issues. The problems is that without work, of which Festivals provide a considerable opportunity, both the supply side of music and technical services both start to become ‘unstable’, with the result that the whole sectors of what was quite a healthy industry become seriously eroded.”

3.5 What has been the impact of the temporary VAT cut and Culture Recovery Fund on festivals and their supply chains, and what else can the Government do to secure their futures?

The main festival organisations: Association of Independent Festivals and Association of Festival Organisers, as well as UK Music and LIVE will be providing detailed evidence to answer this question.

3.6 How has the structure of the UK festivals market evolved over recent years, and what has this meant for consumers, artists and the wider industry? What further changes might be anticipated?

According to Mintel 45% of festival attenders visit a music festival to see a particular artist. This has been the primary reason for visiting a festival over the years. However, more and more people are motivated by the social aspect of a live event and Mintel cites the reasons:

- 41% of festival attenders enjoy time with friends/family.
- 19% of attenders it is the opportunity of meeting new people.
- 15% of attenders take pictures/selfies.
- As many as seven in 10 or 69% event-goers say that the range of alternative activities (e.g. non-music) available at a music event is important, up from 64% in 2018.

²¹ Ibid 19

- Activities such as adventure and health are continuing to be paired with music and this is becoming more vital, as 48% of those aged 19 and under attends music events for the entire experience.²²

Another growing concern for attendees is “eco impact”. Young people want more from festivals and they expect organisers to operate sustainability policies: 67% of music event-goers aged 20 - 39 when attending a music event, use initiatives such as recycling and travelling by public transport attempting to limit their environmental impact

Mintel articulates the future needs of music festival attendees and the changing face of music festivals:

- A third of attendees would like reduced waiting time to pay for food and drink.
- 32% of event-goers would like to see a reduction in crime (i.e. theft). Safety is becoming a priority.
- Improved facilities and shorter queues for toilets
- There is a growing preference; 61% of attendee wants to attend cash-free at music events (61%).²³

“Digital payments could revolutionise the events industry, particularly for remote events like festivals. As so many attendees want events to improve waiting times while purchasing food and drink, it is crucial that strategies are implemented in order to streamline the experience and maximise ancillary spending.”²⁴

3.7 How can festivals be supported to reduce their environmental impact and tackle the dangers of illegal drug use?

There are a number of initiatives that have been set up by the Association of Independent Festivals to address these issues:

- Take your tent home – no single use.
- Running a campaign to eliminate all single-use plastic at their events by 2021.
- Festival Fuel Tool - festivals organisers can now use a free online tool to check their energy performance in less than a minute. Supported by AIF and produced by not for profit industry think-do tank Powerful Thinking, this simple tool asks a series of questions and provides the user with an energy rating based on industry benchmarks.
- Legal Highs - working with expert drug charities and services, the AIF planned and organised a coordinated blackout of festival websites to raise awareness of legal highs on the 5th May 2020/05. The campaign involved 26 festivals and gained national media from the likes of BBC, Sky News and The Guardian, reaching 9 million people through websites and twitter.

Appendix 1

EFG London Jazz Festival

The **EFG London Jazz Festival** is one of the landmark jazz events in the UK, joining up the immense cultural map of London, bringing music from world class creators and emerging artists, celebrating the cultural diversity surrounding jazz and its related genres, producing new work and building synergy with the other cultural driving forces in the jazz scene. efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk

The organisers of the event are Serious who also produce a year-round programme of major concerts, festivals and national and international tours, learning and participation and talent development programmes, as well as specially commissioned bespoke events. Parallel to this it has established a registered charity, Serious Trust, to fundraise and support the next generation of artists and audiences through its artist development, learning and participation and commissioning programmes. serious.org.uk

²² Ibid 1

²³ Ibid 1

²⁴ Ibid 1

The **EFG London Jazz Festival 2020**, that ended yesterday, was heralded a phenomenal success

'For the Festival to be happening this year is an amazing achievement. The ten-day show goes on, and it's found a way to turn the situation into a positive'
(Radio Times)

Two weeks ahead of the Festival we transformed ourselves into a fully digital event, with 129 exclusive streams involving more than 700 artists shown to an audience of hundreds of thousands watching online, expanding our audience to every corner of Britain and right across the globe.

'This year we were connected to the artists, audiences, supporters and our wonderful musical community in a different way and we are grateful to everyone who has been a part of this digital journey. From the joy of the artists being able to perform together after such a long time, to warm comments from the music scene and our global audiences, the Festival was surrounded with positivity. We are ecstatic for being able to find a way to channel the artists' exquisite music, ideas and inspiring visions once again.'

Jazz is the sound of resilience and we continue to learn from it, be amazed by it.'
(Pelin Opcin, Director, EFG London Jazz Festival)

EFG London Jazz Festival were thrilled that artists, audiences, venues and all our partners supported the Festival through this most turbulent year. The festival had a number of sponsors EFG Private Banking, and Arts Council England as well as to PRS Foundation, Edwardian Hotels, ABRSM, Help Musicians UK and Champagne Thiénot.

The huge increase in digital streaming led us to seek out experts in the field to support our plans, and we were delighted to partner with MixcloudLive, showing exclusive streams from our ground-breaking new music series Between The Lines, and more. The whole programme will live at efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk/mixcloud

They continued our media partnerships with BBC Radio 3, Jazz FM and Jazzwise, who backed us with extensive coverage, cross-posted digital content, and live-broadcasted Festival events. It was great to see such a major programme of films and specially created content on BBC TV, BBC Sounds and iPlayer including a special version of Jazz 625 hosted by Jamz Supernova and Moses Boyd, a film of South African cellist Abel Selaocoe and the final of the BBC Young Jazz Musician competition. The broadcasts all live at efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk/broadcast

The EFG Elements Series featured four spectacular shows: Cassie Kinoshi's SEED Ensemble celebrating Pharoah Sanders' phenomenal oeuvre, special films of Kansas Smitty's and Judi Jackson, with our opening gala Jazz Voice completing the selection. Jazz Voice itself saw a huge audience of over 58,000 viewers, with over 40% of views coming from outside the UK – demonstrating the most positive aspect of the current situation; the ability to take our Festival productions out to a global audience.

'The Jazz Voice finale served up Bill Withers' Lean On Me - a statement from the heart, whose message of connectedness and community – not to mention the consoling power of music – resonated deeply. (★★★★☆ The Arts Desk)

The international jazz scene was highlighted with special performances by Tigran Hamasyan, Linda May Han Oh, Emile Parisien & Vincent Peirani and exciting musical discoveries from Switzerland, Lithuania, Sweden and a psychedelic Turkish event, featuring special names Moğollar, Baba ZuLa, Islandman and İlhan Ersahin's Istanbul Sessions.

The buzzing UK jazz scene was at the core of the festival with performances from Shabaka Hutchings, Emma-Jean Thackray, Ashley Henry, Nikki Yeoh, Bill Laurance, Rosie Turton, Sarathy Korwar, Camilla George, Tenderlonious and many more.

This work was illuminated by a series of talks: ARTicle 10: Conversations in the era of Black Lives Matter, (referring to Article 10 of the Human Rights Act: “Everyone has the right to freedom of expression”), that:

‘provided a platform to discuss pressing issues such as racial inequality and the legacy of colonialism in light of the many marches and protests that have marked 2020. Given the longstanding engagement of improvising musicians with socio-political matters this debate was entirely pertinent. The informative and inspiring speakers, sharing African-American and Black British perspectives, gave us much to think about, and more importantly, every reason to turn constructive intention into effective action.’ (Kevin Le Gendre, Curator & Host)

The Festival ran a dedicated digital showcase of artists from Serious’ Take Five talent development programme. Take Five Presents featured online performances from some of the most exciting emerging artists from across the UK; you can catch them all on our [dedicated YouTube playlist](#).

The iconic Church of Sound returned to the festival with Gary Crosby’s Groundation with Nathaniel Facey, Shirley Tetteh and Moses Boyd, in celebration of Charlie Parker’s Songbook on his 100th birthday

They worked with Kings Place to deliver an impressive programme of young British artists including Dinosaur, Binker Golding, and Yazz Ahmed. London’s jazz clubs rose to the Festival occasion in their usual creative fashion, enabling audiences right across the world to enjoy the unique London vibe.

The Festival created new performances in Jazz Yoga, a special event where online audiences experienced award-winning multi-instrumentalist Shri Sriram playing live with yoga teacher Constanza Ruff. British performance artist GAIKA, with Azekel & Miink, presented PALATIUM: a new show that folds Black visionaries into contemporary electronics and sets the results against a backdrop of experimental film.

‘The EFG London Jazz Festival has really pulled together something amazing to keep this music alive, and to keep us being creative and keep the community together. That’s something I’ve just been so grateful for since the beginning of the pandemic – these kind of angels – these people who’ve really pulled together to make it possible’
(Linda Oh on BBC 6Music Cerys Matthews)

EFG also helped us to create a digital exhibition space that will be a resource for Serious and the Festival in years to come. Looking at the history of album cover design between the US and the UK, Esquire Cover Club was edited by John Fordham around the collection of Stefano Wagner, and features contributions by Ralph Steadman and Val Wilmer. The exhibition will be online at www.esquirecover.club into 2021.

This year, the Festival worked with over 300 music industry professionals, including venue staff and freelance production and technical staff, ranging from stage managers to camera operators, sound engineers to video editors. We also engaged with many creatives working in film, including teams from BBC Studios and Three Shades Creative. We continued to work closely with our crucial production suppliers who’ve had our entire PA, backline and crew needs covered as ever!

You can watch selected EFG London Jazz Festival concerts and events for free on our [YouTube channel](#) and website efglondonjazzfestival.org.uk

The next EFG London Jazz Festival will run from Friday 12 to Sunday 21 November 2021.

Bude Jazz Festival

Bude Jazz Festival has been going for over 30 years and in its current format extends over 4 days from the Tuesday after the August bank holiday Monday. It takes place in a number of halls, pubs and other venues in the town centre - typically 8 or 9 venues. There are around 16 or 17 gigs a day for which either stroller tickets or one-gig tickets are required. There are also a number of free events in

the bandstand, a parade, and busking. In 2018 and 2019 the festivals were successful, had a good atmosphere, and just about broke even (which is all we set out to do).

For 2020, all the bands and venues had been booked and they had started advertising and selling tickets. They put a pause on this during the first lockdown and then reluctantly decided they would have to postpone everything until the same time next year. They are hoping that vaccinations will allow them to go ahead and that they can simply roll forward the programme that they had already arranged for 2020. However there is a big uncertainty as to whether all the venues and all the bands will have survived this long period of intermittent or no activity. At the moment they think it is still too early to try to get any certainty from bands or venues but will aim to start finalising the arrangements in February and March - when success of vaccination rollout is clearer.

They did lose some money on the 2020 festival but given their dates were able to postpone before major expenditure was incurred and they have enough in reserve to fund a festival in 2021 - whether enough people will come to make it viable is another matter.

© Chris Hodgkins
December 2020