

Performing Arts Panel Notes – Venues Meeting

Summary

Feedback from the meeting was:

- The things people **value** most are the wide variety and high quality of venues and performances, the amount of live music and the positive attitude of the performing arts community.
- They would like to **see more** rehearsal space, street events and performers, youth events, collaboration between venues and a central information hub.
- Venues' biggest **issues** are licensing, conflicts between MDC, venues and residents; event clashes and a lack of collaboration between events, venues, groups etc..
- They would like FTC to **help** with: creating a central information point, promotion and reaching audiences outside of Frome and mediating between MDC, residents and venues.

Recurring themes highlighted in red.

1. What do you value most/want to preserve and see more of within the local performing arts scene?

Good mix of free/ticketed events

Lots of venues and a good variety of venues

Everything!

Continue what is currently happening

Live music

Variety of performances

Professional performances – theatre and dance

The strength of the performing community arts scene

Black Swan Exhibitions

The cinema

2 Theatres

Festival

Film Club

Museum

Wheatsheaves

Accessibility

Intimate/cosy venues

Value the Memorial Theatre – the asset

Attitude – positive, collaborative, ‘can do,’ ‘give it a go,’ no closed doors – this ethos should be preserved

A good environment for young people

Passion for performing arts

Safe environment

Volunteers and people are valued

Enthusiasm from volunteers

Theatre and opportunities for young people

Non-traditional venues

Range of practitioners

Appreciative audiences

Professional standard of amateur work

Mutual support

Open mindedness

Good support from local press

See more of:

Rehearsal Space

Promotion

Drama therapy

Touring workshops

Sharing equipment and collaborating

Things for 20-30 age range – more to keep them in the town

Children and teenager workshops

Day/weekend activities

Opportunities

Personal spaces

Pop Up Venues

Variety of buskers

Jim Brawster – Audiences Southwest – Lives in Frome and could help find audience research/statistics

Interaction of different local groups/performers i.e. carnival and rugby club

Greater cooperation between venues regarding calendar, communication and bookings

List venues on website

Volunteer loyalty scheme

Single information point – where to find bands/gigs?

More street performances

Collated information

Opportunities for paid roles

Reward volunteering with tickets – time banking

Promotion outside of town

Targeted concessions

Involving schools

Outreach officer – connecting venues

Capitalise on reputation

More drama

Jazz venue

A marketing database/distribution list to be shared

2-for-1 midweek opportunities – combine entertainment, food and drink

Central list of venues would be useful – some venues have noise issues

Outside events and pop ups e.g. bandstand - sound issues may be a problem

Youth events – to encourage more involvement as performers and audiences e.g. Vallis – venues such as Frome College, Merlin Theatre and Media Arts Centre

Local seminars

Workshops and theatre groups

Town Centre development

Music at the independent market

Performances at Cooper Hall

2. A) What is the biggest issue the venue/venues in which you work currently face?

PA and lighting access

MDC do not allow external signage

Cooking smells

Cannot put out stalls in Justice Lane (Black Swan Arts)

Band practice space – Football/rugby/cricket clubs, Cheese and Grain – potential for more events

Event ideas – busking festival, comedy festival, literary festival

Events clashing – calendar with free listing

Cheap storage areas

Share Shop PA and equipment to share more

LA15 Sound level monitoring

Sponsorship from corporations/companies – don't undersell the potential of the festival and town as a means of attracting people

Catering for everyone not just

Reputation of previous venues

Licensing – threat of removal or limitation

Lack of policing after hours – do the police not want to police after 11pm?

Residents are favoured too often in licensing decisions, to the point of shutting venues down. This should not be the case if people move close to an existing venue.

Marketing and publicity costs, especially targeting those outside of Frome

Venue management – why does the venue take the hit when trouble happens outside and later on?

Hirers understanding the limitations of venues and equipment

Expensive to maintain buildings

Finances – where does the money come from?

Novelty is better than weekly events

What is there for under 18s?

Central media hub/wiki page

Central notice boards needed to avoid fly posting

Need a way to locally source available bands through a form of directory with an easy booking feature

Promotion – attracting the 'right' sort of customer with a good balance

More collaboration needed - Linking up, sharing resources – bartering collectively

- Common box office
- Share things like PAs
- A day to promote venues
- Loyalty scheme card for those visiting multiple venues
- Visibility – being joined up with Frome events
- People's time
- Audience dilution
- Publicity and audience building
- Marketing
- Advice on free and social media training
- MDC
- Parking
- Physical space
- Availability of venues with grand pianos

B) How do you think the town council might be able to help?

- Welcome pack to give to new residents through estate agents
- FTC is best placed to facilitate and support venues/events
- Funding – generating profits, access to grants, underwriting by FTC (events <> grants panel)
- Youth Events- costings, no drinks (safe space), find a dedicated space for young people e.g. buying the Cork St toilets.
- Administration
- Insurance
- FTC could help with funding for marketing outside of Frome and advice on insurance etc.
- A 'What's On Frome'
- Make Discover Frome more comprehensive and for everybody
- Venues map/finder – for events, performances and gigs
- Build on the concept of 'The List,' speak to Rose and move online as well
- Tourism and visitor – cultural help (Visit Somerset) – potential overlap

The dance centre needs funding (LAG?)

Audiences – reaching out

Transportation – to allow older people and people using public transport to access events

Overall promotion of Frome's arts scene

Lobby and signpost re Mendip Licensing

District councillors should not always side with residents

Provide mediation for complainants to resolve issues

Encouraging cross subsidy of venues by hiring out other parts of buildings – e.g. Rook Lane acts as both an office space and hireable venue

Clash diary – coordinating information, with venues feeding in information

Events for the community as a whole

Pubs should allow children and teens in

Carry on supporting the festival

Take licensing back from MDC (not community focused)

Get serious about Saxonvale

Central hub for space, set building, rehearsal space etc.

Contribution to resources or directory

More presence online

Linking to events/festivals

Building audience

Venue map and contacts

Noticeboards

'What's On'

Training

Connections

Interface with MDC

Directing trade to location

Mini festivals

Venue open days

Promotion of venues

Initial Outcomes On the Night:

Steiner School would like to offer space at competitive rates

Frome Arts Grapevine Facebook group can be used to find equipment, bands etc.