

Live Music Forum Meeting
8 December 2006 at DCMS, 2-4 Cockspur Street, London
Minutes

Attendees:

Chair

Feargal Sharkey

Members

Jim Mawdsley (JM)	Generator North East
John Smith (JS)	Musicians' Union (MU)
Deborah Clarke(DC)	Action with Communities in Rural England
Claire Whitaker (CW)	Serious
Chris Taylor(CT)	Performing Right Society
Charlotte Ray (CR)	PRS Foundation
Pete Jenner (PJ)	Sincere Management
Charlotte Meller(CM)	Local Authorities Co-ordinators of Regulatory Services
Robin Osterley(RO)	National Music Council
Dr Martin Rawlings(MR)	British Beer and Pub Association

Observer

Marc Jaffrey (MJ)	Music Manifesto
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Guests

Andy Martin (AM)	MORI (For first part of item 2 only)
Caroline Callahan(CC)	MORI (For first part of item 2 only)

DCMS

Paul Aley(PA)	Music Branch
Suzi Daley(SD)	Music Branch
Andy Thomas (AT)	Music Branch
Marianne Siponmaa (MA)	Music Branch
Lucy Blackburn (LB)	Licensing Team
Adam C. Cooper	Evidence and Analysis Unit
Andrew Simpson	Publicity and Promotions (for item 5 only)

Apologies

Mark Ringwood	Roots Around the World
Martin Hopewell	Primary Talent International
Andy Williams	Welsh Music Foundation
Stephen Godsall	Local Government Association (Bournemouth)
Barbara Tucker	Department for Education and Skills

Agenda Item 1: Introduction and minutes of last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed.

The Chair explained that the Forum was now moving into its final stages and the 'Live Music Promotion' and 'Impact of Act' sub-groups were continuing to draft their recommendations. He suggested the Forum meets once more early in the New Year when final drafts of the recommendations will be agreed before presentation to Ministers and publication.

Agenda Item 2 : Live Music research: Presentation from IPSOS MORI Research

The Chair thanked representatives from MORI for their hard work in completing the 2nd round of research which focused primarily on the experiences of smaller venues, who included live music as part of their application, during the transitional period.

It was explained that the September meeting, at which MORI was due to report, was postponed as IPSOS MORI would not have been able to present their research because the data were not ready for release. This is in line with the best practice guidelines in the Office of National Statistics Code of Practice relating to the release of Government research.

The research report had been published on the DCMS website on the 7th December [www.culture.gov.uk/Reference_library/Research/research_by_dcms/live_music_exec_summary.htm.]

MORI then gave a short presentation on the key findings of the research. This was followed by a Q and A session, after which MORI left the meeting.

Members broadly welcomed the results of the research. Members agreed that the findings reinforced the other evidence gathered by the Forum and based on all of the information currently available members agreed that it would be difficult to substantiate the suggestion that there had been a widespread national impact (throughout England and Wales), upon live music brought about by the introduction of the Licensing Act 2003. There were however several outstanding issues which Forum members would need to consider carefully. Members agreed that thought should be given as to how to ensure that those premises with a licence to stage live music were encouraged to do so.

MR mentioned the relevance of the recent British Beer and Pub Association research to the MORI findings. The BBPA's work contained anecdotal evidence to suggest that there would be an increase in the number of licensees (up to 30%) applying for variations, i.e. some of these might include variations to stage live music.

He also flagged up that the BBPA's research indicated that 16% of people who go to pubs go specifically to listen to live music which was more popular with customers than recorded music, dancing or pub quizzes.

The Forum agreed that such figures were very useful when making the case for live music.

Action: Forum to consider issuing press release to respond to research findings.

The Chair said that, although useful to both sub- groups, the results of the MORI research would be of particular significance to the final recommendations made by the 'Impact of the Act' group.

Agenda Item 3: Draft recommendations:

i. Impact of Act

JS, Chair of the 'Impact of the Act' sub-group, outlined how work on his group's recommendations was already underway based on the research and discussions during the Forum's term. But thought that this couldn't be fleshed out until MORI's findings and their implications had been further absorbed and analysed. He also stressed the importance of ensuring synergies between the conclusions of both sub-groups.

His sub-group had met the day before (the date of the publication of the research) to have an initial discussion on how its emerging conclusions would be affected by MORI's findings. To a great extent MORI's research had confirmed the sub-group's view that, broadly speaking, it was "business as usual" since the new Act was implemented. Nevertheless it was important now to look at where there could be improvement. He said the sub-group's message to Ministers should be that, although the research shows that the 2003 Act had had no adverse impact on live music provision, there is still room for improvement. Therefore, efforts should go into ensuring that live music provision is increased over what was previously available.

JS then outlined the chief areas around which the sub-group wanted to make recommendations

Action: Sub Group to meet again shortly to prioritise recommendations and work towards providing a draft to members in January.

ii. Promotion of Live music

JM, Chair of the Promotion Sub Group, had circulated his group's paper prior to the meeting asking for comments. He asked members to urgently feed through any additional comments. He was now working with the Chair to finalise the group's recommendations.

Action: Sub Groups to send Forum the final draft of recommendations in order to agree final text at the January meeting, if practicable.

Agenda Item 4: Revised timetable for presentation of recommendations to Ministers and publication dates.

The Chair said that the two sub-groups were now working on their recommendations and hoped ideally to be in a position to present them to Ministers early in the New Year before publishing the final report in February or March. He stressed however that these were the original optimum timescales and may not now be realistic.

Agenda Item 5: Design ideas for report and options for report launch event.

Andrew Simpson circulated a rough draft of the design mock up which was broadly welcomed by the Forum. He said that DCMS and the designers recognised the need to ensure that the design and format should reflect the diversity of the sector. Andrew thanked members for providing photos for inclusion in the publication.

The Chair said the launch date was dependent on a number of factors including the two sub-groups providing their drafts in time.

That said, he stressed that the most important thing was not to work to some unrealistic timescale at the expense of well considered recommendations. He wanted to produce a final report with which everyone was happy and that everyone felt accurately reflected all the work and commitment of the last two and half years. If this meant delaying the publication and subsequently having to find another launch date then so be it.

Members also discussed a possible strategy for the publication of the Forum's final report.

Agenda Item 6: London Councils' (formerly Association of London Government) response to Licensing Fees Review Panel Consultation

The Chair tabled his letter written on behalf of the Forum to the CE of London Councils (and to the consultants who undertook the relevant work).

In brief, the Forum are unhappy with the LCs' response to the Fees Review Panel (available on the LC website) in which the LCs have proposed an alternative model for licensing fees. The model seems to be largely predicated on the assumption that live music, along with alcohol sales and extended opening hours i.e after 11pm, are the key drivers of authorities' costs, through the increased likelihood of objections and consequent administration. Licenses that therefore include these permissions should incur an additional cost to the licence holder. The Chair's letter asked for the evidential basis on which the LCs had made the judgement that licences including live music raised an increased number of objections – as this was not the experience of the Forum.

Agenda Item 7 – Any Other Business

The Legacy of The Forum

The Chair said there were concerns within the live music sector about the end of the Forum, and how the good work it had started would continue to be developed and taken forward. Members felt strongly that the unique structure and composition of the Forum, made for a close but independent relationship with Government, and this was key to its credibility with the sector and to its success so far. Members also agreed that it was crucial that the Forum's recommendations tried to ensure that there were mechanisms and structures in place to take forward the work. However, it was noted that the Forum couldn't continue in its current form because of rules on the establishment of standing bodies and public appointments.

The Chair therefore stressed that, in addition to making proposals and suggesting mechanisms for taking specific actions forward, the final recommendations should outline what kind of structure would be needed to ensure live music remained high on the Government's agenda and how any subsequent body might feed into Government.

Date of Next Meeting - 27th February.