

MUSIC VENUES TRUST // VENUES DAY

PR REPORT



A purple poster for Venues Day 2014. The main title 'VENUES 2014 DAY' is on the left, with '2014' in red script and 'DAY' in white block letters, above a red audio waveform. To the right, the event details 'SOUTHBANK CENTRE LONDON TUESDAY 9 DECEMBER' are in white. Below this, it says 'PRESENTED BY MUSIC Venue TRUST' with a logo. Further right, 'FUNDED BY' is followed by 'ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND' and 'Supported by ARTS COUNCIL ENGLAND'. To the right of that, 'IN ASSOCIATION WITH' is followed by 'INDEPENDENT VENUE WEEK' and 'SOUTHBANK CENTRE'. At the bottom, 'IN PARTNERSHIP WITH' is followed by a row of logos: 'Musicians' Union mu', 'UK MUSIC', 'iq', 'DROWNED IN SOUND' (with an anchor icon), 'THE INSTITUTE', ':: thehub', 'noise abatement society' (with a waveform icon), 'attitude is everything' (with a circular logo), and 'Chartered Institute of Environmental Health' (with a crest icon).

VENUES
2014
DAY

SOUTHBANK CENTRE
LONDON
TUESDAY 9 DECEMBER

PRESENTED BY
MUSIC
Venue
TRUST

FUNDED BY
ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

Supported by
ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND

IN ASSOCIATION WITH
INDEPENDENT
VENUE WEEK

SOUTHBANK
CENTRE

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

Musicians' Union
mu

UK
UK MUSIC

iq

DROWNED  IN SOUND

THE
INSTITUTE

:: thehub

noise abatement society

 **attitude**
is everything

Chartered
Institute of
Environmental
Health

PUNKTASTIC

3RD OCTOBER 2014

UNIQUE USERS - 150,000 (MONTHLY)

SOUTHBANK CENTRE, LONDON
TUESDAY 9 DECEMBER



IN ASSOCIATION WITH



FUNDED BY



Music Venue Trust, Independent Venue Week, the Arts Council England and the Southbank Centre in London have teamed up to host the first Venues Day.

According to the Facebook announcement, "the first major national event of its kind, Venues Day 2014 will bring together music venues from across the UK to celebrate our incredible music network. If you own, manage or promote a live music venue, this event has been created specifically to bring you together. We want to hear from you about the challenges, the successes, good practice and the future. We will be announcing major industry speakers, key decision makers, and we will be inviting local decision makers that can make a difference to your venue."

For more, and to keep up with developments, keep track of Music Venue Trust on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#), or via their [official website](#).



29TH OCTOBER 2014

CIRCULATION – 2,000 (DAILY SUBSCRIBERS)

Music Venue Trust Announces Venues Day

29 October 2014 - Press release

UK's LIVE MUSIC CIRCUIT TO GATHER IN LONDON on TUESDAY 9 DECEMBER

Venues Day 2014 will take place at the **Southbank Centre**, London on **Tuesday 9 December**. It is the first national event specifically designed to celebrate small and medium scale independent live music venues across the UK, bringing together professionals from the sector to network, share ideas and views and plan the way forward.

Venues Day is an initiative led by the **Music Venue Trust**, which was formed early in 2014 to speak up for the live music circuit in the UK; the so-called 'toilet circuit' that is the grassroots of the UK music scene. In recent years a number of key closures have put a dent in this circuit, and changes to legislation, tough trading conditions and the overall music economy have placed many of the venues on a knife-edge.

The **Music Venue Trust** has been looking for ways to address these issues, including campaigning very noticeably and successfully on noise and planning legislation with a campaign fronted by **Frank Turner** which has already attracted nearly **30,000 signatures** from live music fans, provoking parliamentary questions and government responses. During that campaigning and discussions with politicians and key stakeholders, it became clear to the Trust that the sector was failing to be heard; key government initiatives were moving forward without a representative voice for small venues. Venues Day is an attempt to have a national conversation about what the cultural sector and the music industry can do together to ensure we continue to enjoy live music locally in the future.



PRS FOR MUSIC ONLINE MAGAZINE

29th NOVEMBER 2014

UNIQUE USERS – 1,250 (MONTHLY)

VENUES DAY TO CELEBRATE UK'S LIVE MUSIC SCENE

posted October 29, 2014 / No Comments



The Music Venue Trust will be celebrating the UK's live music scene with Venues Day.

Taking place on 9 December at London's Southbank, the event will bring together professionals from the sector to network, share ideas and views and plan the future.

More than 50 gig venues are already booked to take part in what organisers hope will be a national 'conversation' about the state of the grassroots live music scene.

Panels will include discussion on best practice, noise vs nuisance and a final debate featuring participants from UK Music and the Arts Council

England on what's next for this network.

The event follows campaigning by singer songwriter Frank Turner to protect the live music circuit after numerous venues have been threatened with closure during the last year. [Click here for the full story.](#)

Venues Day is supported by Arts Council England and is presented by the Music Venue Trust in association with Independent Venue Week and the Southbank Centre.

Venue Booking for Venues Day is open by invitation now; if you are a venue manager, owner, booker or promoter, you can apply for a free delegate pass and assistance with travel costs by contacting musicvenuetrust@gmail.com.



30th OCTOBER 2014

UNIQUE USERS - 113,700.00 (MONTHLY)

Music Venues Trust announces London conference

BUSINESS NEWS **EDUCATION & EVENTS** **LIVE BUSINESS**

The Music Venues Trust has announced Venues Day, an event due to take place at the Southbank Centre in London on 9 Dec.

Aiming to give a stronger voice to the UK's smaller gig venues, the day will see discussions between representatives of those venues and the wider music industry. There will be three main panels, dealing with: best practice, noise vs nuisance, and the question 'what happens next?'



Amongst the speakers on the day will be Horace Trubridge from the Musicians' Union, Attitude Is Everything's Suzanne Bull, Mike Weatherley MP, Lisa Lavia from the Noise Abatement Society and Dom Frazer from Guildford venue The Boilerroom.

Commenting on the new conference event, Music Venue Trust CEO Mark Davyd told CMU: "Venues Day is the first event of its kind in the UK, specifically created for the needs of the small and medium music venues. We want to change perceptions, about what these venues do, how they do it, what's good practice, and clarify the message so that the cultural sector, music industry and politicians can recognise, support and develop that work. We hope all the venues around the country will see this as an important opportunity to get their voices heard".

Venue managers, owners and promoters can apply for free delegate passes now by emailing musicvenueustrust@gmail.com. Registration will open fully on 10 Nov. More info [here](#).

DROWNED IN SOUND

4th NOVEMBER 2014

UNIQUE USERS - 470,000 (MONTHLY)

The people behind [the campaign to save endangered music venues](#) have invited DiS to chair a discussion entitled: Making Good Venues Great.

The talk will take place on Venues Day 2014 (Tuesday 9 December) at the Southbank Centre in *that* London. It is the first national event specifically designed to celebrate small and medium scale independent live music venues across the UK, bringing together professionals from the sector to network, share ideas and views and plan the way forward.

People 'in the biz' can apply for tickets now, and over the coming weeks DiS will be exploring some of the topics that we feel should be debated and venues that should be celebrated.

Here's the details about our panel...

Making Good Venues Great

What makes a good venue into a great venue? What could venues do more of to increase their value to music fans and to musicians? How do we reach new audiences and talk to the industry better?

Chair: Sean Adams (DiS)

Panelists: Horace Trubridge (Musicians Union presenting the Fair Play Venues initiative)

Suzanne Bull MBE (Attitude is Everything campaigning for better access and facilities for deaf and disabled)

Sybil Bell (Independent Venue Week presteing the IVW raising the profile initiative)

Mike Weatherley MP (Rock the House)

Steve Tilley (Kilimanjaro Live and Owner of the Sugarmill, Stoke)

Special guest panelists to be announced

Full details will be available from the [Music Venue Trust website at musicvenues.org.uk](http://musicvenues.org.uk)

09th NOVEMBER 2014

CIRUCLATION – 185,313 (DAILY)

Council restrictions are killing UK's nightlife, say club owners

As Brick Lane's Vibe Bar closes, promoters claim they are being forced out of business by overzealous regulation

"Twenty years of Vibe Bar" says the poster advertising the farewell celebrations at the Brick Lane venue in the East End of London that spearheaded the reinvention of the area as a nightlife hub. The bar, which closes for the final time at 11pm on Monday night, is actually several months shy of its 20th birthday and owner Alan Miller says he has been forced out of business by red tape.

In January the nearby Joiners Arms will also close, when its lease runs out and property developers move in.

Venue promoters around the country claim overzealous restrictions from councils stipulating the number of security staff they must employ and limiting the hours for outdoor drinking are killing the £66bn night-time economy.

Miller's decision to quit Brick Lane followed a standoff with the police over these issues, at a cost to the business of about £2,000 per shift. A curfew in his courtyard, he says, meant he lost 50% of his customers in two years.

"We went through a whole summer waiting for the police to agree to a reduction in security, then they complained we weren't handing over enough people with drugs, and you're like: 'How many people is that?' The idea that you have to restrict all these businesses is ridiculous and insulting to the public. It is crushing an industry that is one of the most dynamic we have."

He acknowledges concern about binge-drinking but believes clubs and bars are held disproportionately responsible and points to a wider [backdrop of falling crime](#).

Alex Proud, owner of galleries and restaurants in London and Brighton, and the Proud Camden nightclub, said: "The environment is becoming almost inoperable. I went from running a very healthy business to almost going under two years ago. The costs of licensing and security are probably around £100,000 a year. We had two reviews and won both but they'll cost another £100,000 with barristers and so on."

"I'll be getting out of the game soon, I can't see myself running a nightclub for more than another few years."

The live music promoter Harvey Goldsmith said: "We've always had to contend with these problems but the pressure has got a lot stronger over the past three years."

"It all started when the last government started 24-hour drinking and didn't figure out the knock-on effects. Then some areas just went over the top. The authorities have got to accept that the heart and soul of a city is its night-time economy, otherwise you'll end up like Bonn or Canberra where at five o'clock the city shuts down."

The pressure on night-time venues has prompted those remaining to set up the Music Venue Trust, which is campaigning for laws to protect them in disputes with neighbours. Mark Davyd, a founder of the trust, said it was also necessary to break the link made by some authorities between music, crime and disorder. "These are cultural spaces, arts spaces – these are the colleges and universities where we grow our UK music talent," he added.

Sacha Lord, who runs Manchester's biggest nightclub, the Warehouse Project, believes his city is one place where the authorities have got things right. He recently began a trial of breathalysers [on the door of the club](#), but scanners are not a condition of his licence. This was not reviewed after the [death from drugs of clubber Nick Bonnie](#) last year, he says, because police knew about his tough approach.

"Manchester has the biggest student population in Europe. Students are supposed to come here to get educated but they come here to party and the council gets that – they are very forward-thinking," Lord says. "I've operated in Leeds and I know that if you have a venue with a capacity of 300-400 and you're insisting on ID scanning, on X amount of security, as a business owner it's just not viable."



27TH NOVEMBER 2014

UNIQUE USERS - 329,000 (MONTHLY)

Guest Column - No Thankless Task: Why I love Britain's indie venues by Frank Turner



*Independent Venue Week returns early next year (26 January- 2 February) to celebrate Britain's venues with a week of special gigs across the country. At least 85 venues will be taking part while nights are being curated by the likes of Domino Recordings, Noisey, Boiler Room, Communion, Huw Stevens, Fierce Panda and more. Additionally the event's ambassador **Frank Turner** will play two special headlining shows, including one at London's 93 Feet East, the scene of his first ever solo gig. In a guest column for Q, he explains why he's getting involved.*

I've spent a large chunk of my life hanging out at and playing in small, independent music venues in the UK. As a kid, there was nothing more exciting to me (once I got around my parents' disapproval) than heading out to the **Joiners** in Southampton, the **Wedgewood Rooms** in Portsmouth, or my local, the **Railway Inn** in Winchester. In those beer and sweat-stained back rooms I fell in love with and learned all about the music that has become my life.

This year I was honoured to be asked to head-up **Independent Venue Week**. I've never been directly involved in running a small venue myself, but plenty of my friends have, and it's a world I know well, a world that I love, and a world that helped me on my way with my music career. Running a small music venue is never going to make anyone rich – I think it will always be a slightly precarious, hand-to-mouth business to run. It's a labour of love, and for that reason alone I think it's something that anyone who enjoys live music at any level should celebrate.

Another initiative I'm involved in is the **Music Venue Trust**. In recent years the stresses and threats that small venues have to put up with seem to have escalated. Whether it's urban gentrification bringing residential property within earshot of long-established venues, changes in licensing laws, over-heavy policing, or simply the growing number of larger, corporate, TV-sponsored live shows, things have been tough.

The Music Venue Trust is set up to help with these issues and offer support. They will also be holding the **Venues Day** on 9 December at the Southbank Centre in London. It's the first national event specifically designed to celebrate small and medium scale independent live music venues across the UK, bringing together professionals from the sector to network, share ideas and views and plan the way forward. Both Venues Day and Independent Venue Week have been supported by **Arts Council England** which demonstrates how important both of these initiatives are.

I also think it's important to think about the different levels of venue that exist. Personally, I don't play too many small venues these days – to meet demand, I'm often playing Academy venues or larger. But I know where I came from, and I know that the smaller places gave me the time and space to explore my music, to find an audience and to build on it. If we lose the small venues, there will still be large live shows, but access to playing them will be ever more concentrated in the hands of the major labels and the TV shows.

A friend of mine who has run a small independent venue for many years once described it to me as a “thankless task”. I think it's important for all of us to take a moment – a week, say – to honour, thank and support independent venues.

Frank Turner [@frankturner](#)

For more, including full details of shows, visit Independentvenueweek.com.

THE INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY

30TH NOVEMBER 2014

CIRCULATION – 100,549 (WEEKLY)

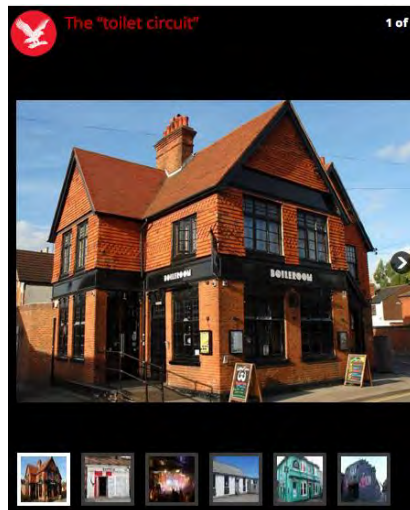
Fears for music's 'toilet circuit': Small venues that nurtured big stars are increasingly at risk of closure



Soaring rents, noise pollution orders and the converting of neighbouring office blocks to apartments have combined to force struggling venues to close their doors

It is affectionately known as the "toilet circuit", the network of small music venues across Britain from which the next stadium-filler might emerge. But now these noisy backroom clubs could face the threat of closure unless ministers change the law to protect them.

Soaring rents, residents seeking to enforce noise pollution orders, and developers converting neighbouring office blocks to apartments have combined to force struggling venues, which have traditionally spawned stars from Arctic Monkeys to Ed Sheeran, to close their doors.



Noise issues have forced the closure of the Freebutt in Brighton and the 200 Club in Newport, Gwent.

Ed Sheeran backed a successful campaign to rescue the Boileroom in Guildford, Surrey where the singer, who has announced three nights at Wembley Stadium, once played. Also under threat are Liverpool music venues The Kazimier and Nation, the home of Cream, where developers plan to rent short-term serviced apartments in an area known for late-night music.

The Buffalo Bar, a sweaty 300-capacity dive in Islington, north London, which gave Foals and The Horrors early breaks, is the latest music venue facing closure. The owners say they have been evicted at short notice by freeholder County Estate Pubs, and its leaseholder, Stonegate Pub Company, which owns the Slug & Lettuce chain.

The rock trio The Subways and former shadow attorney general Emily Thornberry, the local MP, are protesting against the decision. "It's been going for years, and some very important bands started there," Ms Thornberry said. "It's been around for 14 years, opening late, and no one has complained to me. I've written to the leaseholders and hopefully they'll come round."

Developers are being encouraged by planning law amendments to bring disused spaces back into use. They are allowed to build flats on top of an established venue, move the residents in and if one person complains about the noise, that venue could face closure.



More than 30,000 music fans have signed an e-petition urging the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) to ensure anyone who buys or rents a property within a set distance of a music venue should sign a waiver giving up the right to complain about noise.

Frank Turner, the folk-punk singer, and ambassador for next January's Independent Venue Week, hopes to meet Culture Secretary Sajid Javid to broker a solution. "The toilet circuit is vital," he said. "It gave groups like Biffy Clyro and Arctic Monkeys space to develop, hone their craft and build audiences. Without these clubs the only people able to play the O2 Arena will be X Factor Christmas tours."

Turner wants to see the "agent of change" principle, which applies in Australia and Canada, introduced here. Any developer building an flat block near an established live music venue would have to pay for soundproofing, while a live music venue opening in a residential area would be responsible for the costs.

A resident who moves close to a music venue would be assessed as having done so understanding that there's going to be noise – and venues must manage their impact.

Turner said: "I'm not opposed to development but there's an imbalance of justice. It only needs one or two residents moving in to make a noise complaint and a venue that's been there for 25 years can get shut down. The agent of change principle seems entirely sensible. It just gives some recognition that there is a culturally significant precedent there."



Frank Turner is ambassador for next year's Independent Venue Week

Defra argues that current legislation "strikes the appropriate balance between managing the noise environment and considering the needs of business", but Mr Turner says the Music Venues Trust campaign believes some ministers are sympathetic. Turning the volume down is not an option, he says.

"I do play unplugged now and then but if I'm going to a punk-rock show I want it to be loud. Venues can be sound-proofed. There's so much red tape and the profit margins running a club are so small that fighting a legal challenge is often enough to close a club.

"I hope ministers recognise that live rock music generates a lot of economic activity, without being a subsidised part of the arts. That should be taken into account as much as complaints about noise."

A debate on "noise v nuisance" will be held at London's Southbank centre during the first national Venues Day on 9 December.



DECEMBER 2014

CIRCULATION – 2,500 (MONTHLY)

Networking event to bring venues together

THE MUSIC Venue Trust (MVT) has announced details of Venues Day 2014, a conference and networking event which aims to bringing independent live music venues together.

The six-hour event, organised in conjunction with Independent Venue Week, has received funding from Arts Council England and will be held in the Purcell Room at London's Southbank Centre on 9 December.



11th DECEMBER 2014

UNIQUE USERS – 3.5 million (WEEKLY)

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b04tljkd>



'Christmas' payday lenders; live music venues; unwanted charity freebies



PayDay Loan firms say new regulations facing the industry have led to a sudden proliferation of 'Christmas Pay Day Loan Companies' advertising online. The Consumer Finance Association says many of these companies are unregulated, and is warning people who are short of money this Christmas not to use them. The Money Advice Service says around 1.4 million people will turn to high-cost short-term loans this festive period.

Available now
🕒 45 minutes

Live music venues threatened with closure because of complaints about noise say the responsibility for sound proofing should rest with the new neighbours. The English folk-punk singer Frank Turner started out playing in so-called "toilet venues", and says their survival is vital for new musicians starting out.

Plus the unwanted freebie presents sent out by charities. Six years ago the rules were tightened to restrict how many gifts charities can send donors - so why do the pens, cards and coasters still keep coming? Winifred Robinson finds out.

Presenter: Winifred Robinson
Producer: Natalie Donovan.



11th DECEMBER 2014

UNIQUE USERS – (N/A)

Newsletter #113: This Business Of Live Music



POSTED

11 Dec 2014

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For a country which punches well above its weight as one of only three global net exporters of music, the disconnect between that and the grass roots live music sector and its role in supporting the next-generation of hit-makers has arguably never been greater.

Little appears to have changed in the ten years MusicTank has looked at issues afflicting live, from [noise abatement](#), and [Licensing Act](#) reform to [form 696](#) and [secondary ticketing](#).

In some areas the sector appears overburdened in regulation which duplicates pre-existing law (the Licensing Act 2003), yet is crying out for more considered regulation in others (ticketing and noise abatement). Above all, regulation desperately needs to better balance the live sector's ecosystem with consumers' interests.

It's beyond the realm of this editorial to cover 'chapter and verse', the complex and at times, conflicting interests of the live music business, but the 'helicopter view' is one of a (apparently) healthy, burgeoning sector that's pretty much out-performed the recorded industry since 2009. Focusing in on the detail reveals a stark division between the record gross takings of sell-out stadium tours commanding ever-higher ticket prices (and for which there seems no limit to consumer appetite), and the vital small capacity venues sector that forms the bedrock of grass-roots live performance, which is fighting for its very survival.

With that in mind, the [Music Venue Trust](#) should be congratulated in facilitating Tuesday's Venues Day, which drew a capacity audience of venue owner/ operators the length and breadth of the UK, unanimously galvanized in their daily struggle to stay afloat.

Presented as celebration of small venues rather than a funeral wake, it necessarily began as gloomy discussion whose role call of 'macro' issues remains all too depressingly familiar – relaxed planning laws, threats from development, indifferent landlords, over zealous licensing enforcement, neighbourhood intolerance and hard-nosed breweries chief among them.

But there are 'micro' issues that continue to stifle. Informal conversations with a range of stakeholders present revealed internal mechanics of an industry that doesn't always appear to pull in the same direction at the same time...

Small venue owners complain that promoters don't understand the venue business – that venues can't operate solely from the profit of 'wet' sales (drinking at venues is in steady and continued decline); that they can't routinely take a hit on splitting door takings unless takings are sustained at capacity or near-to-capacity levels; that the perilous economics of running a venue are simply not understood by other's in the ecosystem – promoters, musicians and booking agents alike.

The simple truth is that the vast majority of small capacity live music venues ironically can't sustain themselves solely through live music; rather they cross-subsidise live music from the profit made by club nights and private hires. It's a pretty grim state of affairs.

Savages' Jehnny Beth's artist perspective illustrated just how badly-served the artist community can be by some in business of live, be they promoter, venue or booking agent – issues long-championed by [Andy Inglis](#) (who frequently considered himself as being in the customer service business first, and the music industry second...).

The overzealous and pernicious way in which noise abatement cases are brought (and on an increasing basis and at great cost to venues) remain the single biggest threat, in a process that appears to be trying to catch venues out, rather than working proactively towards a mutually acceptable solution.

It's with heavy anticipation that the venues business awaits the outcome of heavy lobbying, led by artist **Frank Turner**, for the adoption of the 'agent of change' principle. This would place the responsibility for incoming businesses bringing change to an area to manage and be responsible for that change, bringing to an end incidences of, say, new residential developments near pre-existing music venues forcing venues to remedy noise issues.

Despite the inevitable gloom, there is a clear desire to make the small venue experience great; for venues to do their bit for new music that they all feel so passionate about. And amidst the call for unity (literally the suggestion of the formation of a Union for small venues), some interesting ideas were floated:

- lobbying Government for an extension of the tax status recently afforded theatre and orchestras (VAT is crippling small venue businesses);
- pooling of knowledge via a website (to help each other);
- booking agents 'gifting' back a successful band, to, say a venue that helped them on their way in the early years (supporting and acknowledging the importance of this sector);
- local authorities having to include cultural policy as part of planning policy;
- take a lead from Unesco and introduce its protective status to areas of music heritage and high cultural value;
- further highlight the economic value live music brings to cities, towns and neighbourhoods;
- make a case for state funding for UK bands to be able to do UK tours (in the same way funding is available for touring overseas);
- learn from (and copy?) European state-funded models for live music.

As commented by Music Venue Trust founder, Mark Davyd, "...the 'rule book' for the small venue sector was written in the 70s, little has changed since and there's been a definite lack in asking [government] for what we need...it's time to do something radical."

Having over-regulated music in small capacity venues to within an inch of its life the Government has latterly set about to de-regulate it in part (small venue capacity exemption), and for its part has proved it is listening.

Much more could and should be done, however. There's a powerful economic and cultural argument encompassing employment, GDP and cultural value that aren't in anyone's interests to be ignored.

echoes and dust

11th DECEMBER 2014

UNIQUE USERS – 3,010 (MONTHLY)

Echo Chamber: Venues In Crisis

Dec 11, 2014 | 0 comments



Music Venue Trust | Independent Venue Week

On Tuesday, 350 people converged on the Purcell Rooms in the Southbank Centre. The venue (hire fee graciously waived) played host to the inaugural Venues Day, organised by the recently created Music Venues Trust. The people, a mix of venue owners, agents, relevant bodies such as the Musicians Union & the Arts Council of England, and interested parties (including at least one MP and a Lord), had gathered to talk about the state of the UK's small venues and what, exactly, could be done about it.

At first glance, the turnout was impressive. More than 120 venues were represented from all over the UK, with 350 total attendees. Thinking further on this, sadness takes root as I realise that if the scene was really as healthy as some people would have you believe, the room would be all but empty, the panellists addressing 5 bored-looking press folk and a handful of volunteers.

When an individual venue shuts its doors, after the initial outpouring of sadness, there's often a period of reflection which starts with "actually, I can't remember the last time I went to a gig there" and ends with "they must have been doing something wrong. I bet I could have made it make money". Dangerous thoughts, these (and ones I've been guilty of myself in the past). Because when you look across at a sea of worried faces belonging to people who have travelled from as far afield as Plymouth and Scotland, who run venues with pretty illustrious reputations, it is overwhelmingly clear that they can't all simply be 'doing it wrong'.



So what, exactly, is the problem? The problem mainly is that there isn't a single problem. Rising alcohol tax, brewery fees and rents alongside the hike in VAT to 20% on the one side have met deflating wages, less disposable income and a devaluation of music on the other. Cheap chain pubs doing outrageous deals on beer means people resent having to pay a fair price for a pint, and a rising outspoken DIY movement lamenting how hard it is to be an independent musician at this level (and it is hard, don't get me wrong) has seen people hold off on that pint of beer so they can buy a CD directly from the band they want to support. A noble aim, without a doubt. But if the venue you've just seen them perform in goes under because no-one's buying beer at live gigs, then that strikes a blow to small bands everywhere.

Did you know the bar takings from the majority of live nights rarely even cover the venue's costs? I didn't. Neither did most of the promoters I know, who will

always try and negotiate getting the full door fee because otherwise they won't be able to pay the bands. Did you know the overwhelming majority of venues are subsidising the cost of their live music programme with other income? That club night you complain about being kicked out at 10.30 for, that's what's paying for the gig you just attended. And yet these venues are still doing it. They're still putting on gigs, booking bands, giving time over to live nights when the space could be used for something more profitable. Because they truly want the live music scene in the UK to still exist, and they want to be a part of it. So they're spending money they don't have on PA systems, monitors, microphones, trying to keep the

dressing rooms in good repair, doing everything they can to provide the best space they can to the bands who are playing there. Far from vilification, these people deserve a medal.

And yet even money issues pale somewhat in comparison to redevelopment and noise abatement orders. Financially successful venues can still be undone by a single signature, and that spectre was palpably hanging over the room. 14 of the venues represented had received noise complaints in the past year. One venue owner had spent £11,000 defending a noise abatement order (out of a total profit of £20,000 on the entire year). If that's representative, that's a huge burden to put on an already strained sector. Not to mention the emotional toll of thinking you might lose something you've put your heart and soul into over the last 15 years because it doesn't 'fit' with developers' view of what the area should now be like, or risks reducing the value of the shiny new flats that wouldn't even have been built had the reputation of your venue not made the area more desirable.

Finding solutions to this shapeless, shifting gamut of issues is even harder than identifying the issues themselves. Where do you even start raising defences when you're being attacked from all sides simultaneously? Well, you start by getting everyone in a room so each person can really, truly realise that they're not alone, which is exactly what Mark Davyd and the Venues Trust did on Tuesday. There's no representative body for live music venues. None. Just let that sink in for a second. There's no union, society or association which seeks to represent the very real concerns and problems that small venue owners are facing. They have no collective bargaining power right now. That needs to change, and hopefully Venues Day is the first move towards creating a body which can act in their interests in the same way as the Musician's Union, Performers Rights Society and the Association of Independent Music were set up to act in the interests of other parts of the industry. As Davyd pointed out, a collective could have a single lawyer on retainer to deal with noise complaints, rather than 14 venues each individually paying a different firm, each individually having to set out their case to someone who may not have dealt with anything similar before. A collective could lobby MPs for a change in the noise abatement and planning laws; protected status for venues as cultural landmarks; tax-breaks of the type received by theatres. More than that, a collective could provide support, a place to discuss issues with likeminded people, to share experiences and commiserate about the situation – despite the obvious passion for live music which must exist for venue owners to subsidise it out of their own pockets, there was a sombre air to the day. Nobody can stay entirely positive all of the time, particularly in such straitened circumstances, and emotional support is often as important as the financial kind.

However, like all multi-faceted problems, there isn't a single solution, and forming an association isn't going to immediately solve everyone's problems.

It's time to have a real, honest conversation about how bad things are right now. Jo Dipple of UK music said that live music revenues had gone up 28% in the past year, and Mike Weatherly MP made the claim that a venue which puts on live music takes 40% more revenue than one without (I didn't get the source for either of these statistics, I'm afraid 0 if you know them, please link to them in the comments). But those figures only apply to the very top of the scale, and while I'm sure both speakers were trying to put a positive spin on the situation, it seemed like a bit of a slap in the face to say to people who are seeing lower turnout and lower bar takes, night after night, 'but people love live music! More people are going to gigs than ever before!'. The money is at the top – in recorded music, the top 1% of bands & solo artists now earn 77% of all revenue (hat tip to Sean Adams for the link) – and that isn't set to change anytime soon.



Telling people who are struggling to make ends meet that their sector is doing fine is like telling a check-out worker on minimum wage that the supermarket CEO is earning millions of pounds a year, so what's all the fuss about? And expecting the people at the top of the ladder to put some money towards saving the rungs at the bottom is about as realistic as expecting that same CEO to give every single checkout worker in their company a pay rise so they're earning at least a living wage. It might sound like a noble pursuit, but I think we all know it's not going to happen any time soon.

It was mooted that an entire cultural shift is needed – that people don't simply 'go out to a gig' because they fancy some live music; rather, they go out to see bands they already know. Getting people to think about going to see a band they've never heard of in the same way as trying out that new restaurant that's recently opened could really make a difference to the scene as a whole. But where do you even start with achieving something like that? Seeing 4 local bands at your local pub has cost around £4 for the last 15 years, and when people don't even want to pay that much, what can you do?

What really needs to happen is an end to this pervasive belief that there's still loads of money to be made in music, and the equally pervasive opinion that anyone who actually makes money from music is somehow evil and not to be trusted. Musicians have day jobs. Even relatively successful musicians. We wish we didn't have to, but the vast majority of us do. Venue owners can't have day jobs. Running the venue IS their day job. They have to be able to make it profitable and we shouldn't resent them for that. The hard truth is that while there will always be another band, there may not be anywhere for them to play if things carry on as there are. Bands can scrimp and save by rehearsing and even recording in their bedroom, if they have to. Venue owners simply don't have the same sort of cost-saving options.

I'm not a venue owner. I don't personally know any venue owners – not well enough to chat about their financial situation, at any rate. I don't know exact details of how they're struggling and it's not my place to tell them what needs to be done to turn things around. But I do want to help. My interest comes from the fact that live music – particularly live music in small venues – is a huge, huge part of my life. On average, I go to a gig every couple of weeks, mostly at venues of 200 capacity or below. If small venues didn't exist, I wouldn't be writing this piece, because I wouldn't have met Dan. The first five times we met were at gigs – The Unicorn, The Bull & Gate, 93 Feet East, The Borderline and The Wheelbarrow. Without small venues, I think it's unlikely that we'd ever have met in person. I'd actually go further than that and say without small venues, Echoes and Dust probably wouldn't even exist – I know Rumour Cubes wouldn't.

As music fans, ask yourselves how much of your life would be different if your favourite small venues hadn't existed. Because it became increasingly apparent yesterday that without some fairly major interventions, they won't exist forever, and just as we lament the fact that the kids of today rarely get the opportunity to spend an afternoon aimlessly browsing through the racks of their local record store, so too will we lament the fact that the kids of tomorrow won't get the opportunity to lose themselves amongst 50-60 sweaty, joyous bodies crammed into a local venue watching a band play their heart out. Without small venues we obviously wouldn't have the bands who now play stadiums, but I don't even think we'd have the music fans who buy tickets for their shows. Music is truly an ecosystem, and we need to nurture every facet if we want the whole to survive.



12th DECEMBER 2014

UNIQUE USERS – 28,000 (MONTHLY)



There is a lot that is right about the British music scene – great artists, great venues, enthusiastic fans, top music schools and colleges, and a shedload of history that reverberates across the world. There are also a lot of problems – venues closing, erratic live audiences, shoddy treatment of musicians and fans alike, prices (too high or too low), and so on.

However, what happens if you get around three hundred and fifty of the country's venue owners and managers and music bookers, agents, PR's, and various industry body representatives into one place? They talk. They highlight the good, the bad, and the ugly, and discuss what to do about those things. So they did in the Purcell Room and adjacent space in London's Southbank Centre, on Tuesday 9th December 2015.

The day was organised by the Music Venues Trust, a body that was founded in January 2014, and whose purpose is to 'to protect the UK live music network'. In holding this event, the Trust effectively helped to create a UK live music network by getting people together and forming relationships along the way with many more people than those actually present.

Two things were most impressive about the event, apart from the fact that it happened at all.

One, while the Trust clearly has ideas of what it wants to do, it was listening, big time. No pushing through a particular agenda, no railroading through of votes from those present, but a lot of collecting ideas.

Two, the Trust is proceeding on the basis of openness and candour. Thus it was highly refreshing to hear in the opening remarks of Mark Davyd, criticism of a venue. The **** in **** apparently celebrated **** with the artist **** and with guests charged **** for it in a way that entirely missed the point of what was being celebrated. Naughty venue, made anonymous in this write up, to spare its blushes.

More seriously, Mark said that the Trust, having set up the event hoping people *might* come and it *might* work, now have a basis on which to carry on "making it up as we go along." The delegates got the message that this is both about the current day and about succession planning for those who are running venues in twenty to thirty years time. They got the fact that collaboration can help. They understood the principles Mark suggested underpin the thinking of the Trust: that venues need to be celebrated and not for there to be a wake decrying their problems; that they can be radical; that they can be bold; and that there is basis of collective experience – three thousand years in that one room – to draw on, to share and learn.

There were several stage panelists, besides Mark, on the day, as sessions went over Making Good Venues Great; Noise vs Nuisance; and, What Next? Mike Weatherby MP said that some of his parliamentary colleagues resented his Iron Maiden T-shirts (why?). He talked about work he has done, including on constraining the ability of people newly moved near to a live venue to make complaints about noise which could result in its closure. He also said, "Live music is what it is all about. We're one of only three countries in the world that exports music."

Suzanne Bull, MBE, of Attitude Is Everything talked about the value of embracing accessibility in venues. Ruth Barnes, Amazing Radio DJ, chaired a session and joined in the general mood by making some sharp observations and pointed questions.

Jehnnny Beth of the band Savages (and a Blues fan, by the way) shared her thoughts on what venues could do better for musicians. These included things as simple as providing clean microphones, and treating the headline artist and any support acts the same way.

Horace Trubridge of the Musicians Union stressed the importance of venues and communities working together. Certainly, the Music Venue Trust had done well on the day working with the music community, with student support from both The Institute and BIMM.

Amongst the talk, there were hard facts, a core of serious knowledge and intent. Concrete information from a survey of venues that 90% plus of them feature Indie Rock, whereas Latin American music is lowest at a shade over 30%, was interesting. So, too, was the figure that pubs that put on live music take on average 40% more revenue than those that don't. A particularly interesting question was posed for people to ponder, by Evelyn of the Tiki Bar and

Grill in Plymouth, about how venues can help encourage customers to listen to music they normally don't listen to and to acts they've not heard before.

The Southbank Centre were highly praised for their help with the event, and that should be repeated. That Purcell Room is a great space.... Steve Tilley, a panelist who is co-owner of The Sugar Mill in Stoke, summed up how many felt, "God, we need some help."

The next stages in provision of that help should be the Independent Venues Week, 26th January to 1st February (not a Music Venues Trust project) and a report from the Trust itself in January. Roll on the New Year. As one delegate put it as the day closed, this was "the first step to a good thing."



12th DECEMBER 2014

UNIQUE USERS – 190,000 (MONTHLY)

MUSIC VENUES DAY 2014: SOUTHBANK CENTRE, LONDON - CONFERENCE REVIEW

Music Venues Day 2014

Southbank Centre, London

9th Dec 2014

As the name suggests the Music Venues Trust, championed by Frank Turner among others, was set up to help protect the UK live music network. To that end they had a day earlier in the week exploring issues surrounding live music venues in modern day Britain. Louder Than War's Ben Easton was there for us – check out his report below.

We all have our own first live music experience. That first glimpse into the world of rock 'n' roll all dripping with a mix of sweat from the walls and other people's pints. It's a rite of passage like losing your virginity, only with a lot less awkward silences. Personally, I saw The Rascals at Dingwalls when I was a greasy haired 14 year old and afterwards I

wanted to don a leather jacket and smash a guitar up. Nothing else in my teenage years made me feel like that and it is something that I will cherish until the day I die. For some, it is the moment they realized they were a Rocker, a Mod or a Punk. They are probably the most important moments from one's adolescence and, more often than not, they took place in the grimy yet enigmatic local venue.



However the live music venue we all know and love is a breed that is on the brink of dying out. On 9th December, at the Southbank Centre in London, small music venue owners, Members of Parliament, music industry agents and music lovers sat down to discuss where it is all going wrong for arguably one of Britain's most precious cultural symbols: the live music venue, as part of Music Venues Day 2014. From Plymouth's Tiki Bar and Grill right up to Inverness Ironworks, over 120 live music venues were represented eager to find out what can be done to save our live music venues from extinction.

Mark Davyd, Music Venues Day organiser and head at Tunbridge Wells Forum, NME's Best Small Venue 2012, led the day by regaling the story of The Marquis venue, now the Floridita, a fine dining restaurant in Soho. He recalls, "About a mile from here, there is a restaurant called 'The Floridita'. On the outside of it there's a little blue plaque. That blue plaque says 'Keith Moon played here in 1965'. Just to be clear, Keith Moon did not play the Floridita in 1965". His impassioned speech about how the, now defunct, Marquis venue seemed to strike a chord with everyone in the room, who, unfortunately, are all faced with the same problems of redevelopment or even closure.

This is a problem known all too well and seen far too often up and down the UK and, in fact, it is estimated that 30 pubs close every week in the UK. Steve Tilley of Kilimanjaro Live / Sugarmill in Stoke made clear that there is 20% tax straight off the bat for venues, a number that is definitely too high for this sector.

Two of the days most interesting cases were that of The Fleece in Bristol and The Boiler Room in Guilford, both of whom have had a tough year with noise complaints, property development nearby and have faced up to £11,500 in legal costs. Dom Frazer, owner of The Boiler Room, said, "This has been one of the worst years of my life". Once again, these are not just music venues that will always be there. These are businesses and people's livelihoods at the risk of shutting down.

The event's most heated panel was 'Noise vs Nuisance' in which members of the Noise Abatement Society and Chartered Industry of Environmental Health came under fire in regards to noise complaints and how the venue is supposed to deal with these. Alarminglly it seems that, in the case of The Boiler Room, venues are actually responsible for noise if new development takes place, despite how long the venue has been there and Dom Frazer suggested that "Noise is subjective", which seemed to be the general consensus of the room. Towards the end of this panel, it was suggested that there should be steps taken to put in place "Complaint for Complainants" which proposes the idea that if a neighbour or developer makes a complaint about noise and there is no evidence to reinforce the complaint, the venue can make their own complaint about the neighbour or developer, which, again, went down a treat throughout the small venue community.

The day was not marred entirely by the problems faced but addressed what can be done to improve the small music venue circuit and celebrate how small music venues develop Britain's most exciting and important exports; Artists. After talking to Nik Sharpe, owner of The Cookie in Leicester who have put on bands like Royal Blood and Wolf Alice in the last year, we agreed that although small music venues face some tough times, it is important to connect music venues together and catch people when they're young so that they grow up with the venue, 14+ gigs for example. There has been far too many cases of teenagers ignoring their local live music venue and going straight into the world of warehouse parties and concrete laced E's. Every gig is an event, not just those on Monday or Tuesday nights. We also chatted about how successful acts need to go back and play these small venues again. "It's such a simple task in the grand scheme of things that benefits not only the venue, but the support bands and the local kids. But once they hit the big time, they fuck off" Sharpe said and he's completely right.

By the end of the afternoon, it was agreed that two main steps were to be developed in the near future: Tax Breaks from 20% for live music venues and a Music Venue Union connecting every willing venue together, creating one unified voice. Fantastic stuff!

Small venues are the lifeblood of the British Music Industry and the breeding ground for some of the world's largest artists. Each venue is special and means something to someone. Unfortunately, times have changed and no-one can just splash out two hundred grand on a drug fuelled UK tour and a music video with a monkey and boomerang in it but all other sectors of the music industry have adapted to the internet age and low physical record sales so can the music venue circuit. It was an extraordinary eye-opening day and one that, although disconcerting at times, was filled with positives and lots to take away for the future. Maybe all we need to do as music lovers is scrawl around our wallet for a couple of extra quid, head down to the local live music venue and go at it like we did when we were 14... Seems simple enough.



18th DECEMBER 2014

UNIQUE USERS –

Pop and rock
Music blog

Show us the money: how the music industry can save the UK's small venues

Independent venues are more than just places to see bands - they're at the heart of their communities. But if the music industry doesn't step in soon, we'll be writing even more obituaries for these vital outposts of culture

● [Access all areas: how small venues can make big changes for disabled fans and artists](#)



What makes a great venue? From the perspective of musicians, it's when owners realise that good customer service is at the core of everything they do. Give the musicians the basics so they are able to do their job. That includes a comfortable and warm backstage room, plenty of time for a sound check, a respectful crew and a good sound system. Most of these things can be achieved with common sense more than money. But can owners of venues really raise the bar if all they offer is a fridge stuffed with Red Bull? Sadly the lack of resources is keeping standards too low for independent music venues in the UK, compared with, say, the rest of Europe.

Often, venues don't feel like an artist's home any more. They're treated as normal, independent businesses rather than being valued as centres of culture in their communities. Venue owners are often former musicians and they are passionate about live music. But even the best of them are forced into dark alleys to survive, making compromises and potentially killing their passion for the music as it's dragged down into the shit with them.

Last week, I was a panelist at Venues Day, a conference that was organised by the [Music Venue Trust](#) and [Independent Venue Week](#) about the future of independent music venues in the UK. I was asked to represent the point of view of the artist, discussing what makes a good venue great.

The event took place at the Purcell Room, in London. It was the first time I'd taken part in a conference. Venue owners from all around the UK had filled the room, and someone had told me the participants were "very angry". I had no idea what to expect, although I knew very well that many small, independent music venues have been in crisis for a long time.

I got involved with the issue the day my favourite venue in London, the [Luminaire](#), shut down in 2009. That day, I lost more than just a place to see live music - I lost my second home. As I walked into the Purcell Room, it was even more clear to me that the owners of such venues need help. They need money, and they need it now, or more of the hundreds of venues that are essential to the culture of the UK and the music business in particular, will follow the fate of [Madame Jojo's](#) and the [Buffalo Bar](#) in London, which are each soon to become extinct.

The disastrous financial situation of independent music venues has direct consequences for everyone, including musicians. Take branding. No artist should have to play with a Jack Daniel's logo on the stage if they don't want to, or a Vodafone sticker on their monitors if they don't want to. Artists should not become vehicles for advertising if that's not how they choose to run their business. Don't get me wrong, I am not 100% against branding; I understand the need to raise money. But the stage is a sacred place, and if a venue makes a deal with a beer company, it should not involve the musicians.

Let's take another example: during Venues Day, many owners acknowledged that club nights are how they're able to survive these days, which means they book two events in one night. Who can blame them? They need money. But what does it mean for the artists? Well, it means that even if they sell out a show, the promoter might book a club night to start after you finish. They eject you, your crew and your fans at 10pm, then a DJ comes in and a whole new crowd invades the premises. Instead of playing at 10pm, your show needs to start at 8.30, which means support bands have to play at a painful 7.30pm. Obviously, there is no time after the gig to sell your merch or to meet your audience. Not only does it kill the band's small chance of making extra money, but it also kills guitar music. Who wants to see rock'n'roll at 8.30 at night?



It is urgent that we find solutions to finance independent music venues which respect the spirit of live music and musicians. Artists are their customers, too, and we know that branding and club nights are not enough to keep some of our venues afloat.

How can we achieve this? One solution became apparent during the conference, where owners were joined by promoters and booking agents. Let's do the maths: the venue owners need money and the large agents need to make a healthy profit. Got it? The last panel of the day, entitled What's Next?, was supposed to address solutions available to venue owners. I took the mic to suggest that the industry itself should fund small venues. Agents, big promoters and venue groups should reinvest part of their annual profits into small venues. This is an idea my friend [Andy Inglis](#), who used to co-run the Luminaire, has been talking about for years. After all, they belong to the same industry, don't they? Just because small venues are the grassroots of the industry, that doesn't have to mean they can't benefit from the profits the others make.

I was surprised by the audience's lack of response. The Music Venue Trust cautiously expressed its intention to create a charity system to support small independent venues, but I didn't get the feeling it would pick up the funding idea and make it a priority. From what I understood, the two main ideas taken from the day were the need for tax cuts for small venues and an online resource for venues to share ideas and advice. Although it is important to begin with a couple of rallying points and get recognition from government, I still believe that music industry support is essential for the survival of independent venues.

At this point in the conference, I didn't get a sense of much anger or desperation in the room. I could only assume people were too scared to speak up. Or maybe I'm totally wrong and most venues *don't* want funding to come from the industry. I believe the idea is more popular among professionals than we think, but maybe it demands a bigger effort – or someone, a hero, to fight for it.

Next January, my band [Savages](#) and I will settle in New York City for three weeks to play a series of club shows. We sold out all nine shows in just one hour, which has never happened to us so fast before. Could this become a new model? Audiences love to see live music in small venues. Let's hope they survive before we realise how much we needed them.

■ Find more information about Venues Day 2014, the speakers and partners on venues-day.com

27th JANUARY 2015

UNIQUE USERS – 5,000,000.00

What's Happening to Our Music Venues?

In December 2014 Music Venue Trust organised the first national gathering of small and medium scale music venues from across the UK, Venues Day 2014. This week sees the first publication of the research conducted by the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance in the lead up to and during Venues Day. **Understanding Small Music Venues: An Interim Findings Report** is intended to be a discussion document about how these venues operate, the challenges they face and the role they play.

Over 120 venues were represented at Venues Day and 107 participated in the research project which is still ongoing. What quickly emerges is that our live music venue circuit is in a perilous and precarious state, facing an uncertain future that despite the passion of the people involved in it is at real risk. We need to be openly discussing and airing those challenges with our live music industry colleagues, and working together to tackle that range of issues so we not only maintain and preserve this circuit but actively start to improve it. We feel that past failures to talk about the ecosystem of UK music have meant that people who don't actively work in it perhaps don't understand the structure of the industry, or the vital role that this network of venues plays in maintaining it.

The UK is, quite literally, a music world leader, punching vastly above its weight in terms of the impact our artists and musicians make across the globe. A huge proportion of the music we export, which generates thousands of jobs, develops the artistic careers of our best writers and musicians, and is such an important part of the UK's standing on the international cultural stage, starts in a small venue. This is the grassroots of our industry, the research and development department of our major international music industry partners.

I think it is impossible to overstate this; if we in the music industry don't act to make sure we have a Troubadour or a 12 Bar Club, we should stop thinking we are going to produce any more Adeles.

Our UK music scene, arguably the best in the world, is built on a robust ecosystem that starts with a first live concert in front of as few as ten people on a Tuesday night in Guildford and climaxes with 3 nights at Wembley Stadium. And it's not just the musicians - our industry and other parts of the creative sector are filled with people who cut their teeth promoting, booking or simply working the door at a small venue. This small venue circuit is the training ground and the entry level experience for our lighting engineers, sound technicians, and cultural organisers at all levels; we need to ensure we do all we can to protect it.

A full report will be released on Monday 9 March 2015, when we at Music Venue Trust will be announcing our response to what has been learned. In the meantime, you can read the interim report at [this link](#)

MusicWeek

THE BUSINESS OF MUSIC

28th JANUARY 2015

UNIQUE USERS – 100,000

CIRCULATION – 5,218

Music Venue Trust outlines 'perilous and precarious' state of live venues

The UK's live music venue circuit is facing a "national challenge", created by events and developments which have left the network in a "perilous and precarious state".

That's according to the Music Venue Trust, that has published an interim report outlining challenges faced by the live circuit and recommended improvements.

With findings undertaken by the Institute of Contemporary Music Performance, a full report will be published on March 9. Research comprised of surveys (107 respondents), 18 interviews, which were conducted with delegates during Venues Day on December 9, and the results of panel discussions on the same day.

According to the report, a significant challenge is "huge increases in new residential developments in historically industrial areas". Noise abatement legislation reportedly results in complaints from residents - which isn't always the fault of the venue - and therefore risks closure.

According to respondents, competing with pubs that run karaoke and DJ nights is becoming increasingly difficult thanks to new licensing laws. Meanwhile, funding requests that have been turned down and unaffordable costs result in "strained relationships" with PPL and PRS.

The positive contribution live venues say they make to society include their role in building communities, providing cultural experiences, heritage, youth engagement and giving work experience opportunities.

Representatives from across the live sector celebrated this week when the London Mayor's office agreed to seriously consider additional support and protection for local music venues, following a high-profile roundtable at City Hall.

The meeting came just days after [Soho's 12 Bar Club](#) was forced to relocate to Islington after the building's owner earmarked the site for development. It's the latest in a line of music venues across the country to be negatively affected by redevelopment plans or neighboring residential buildings.

Check out this week's issue of *Music Week* to find out more.





Brought to you by PRS for Music

28th JANUARY 2015

UNIQUE USERS – 150,000

CIRCULATION – 217,183

MUSIC VENUE TRUST CELEBRATES SMALL VENUES IN NEW REPORT

posted January 28, 2015 / 0 Comments



Noise complaints and planning legislation are two of the biggest threats to the UK's small venues, an interim report has claimed.

The Music Venue Trust's Understanding Small Music Venues interim report has outlined some of the challenges facing the UK music's grassroots network of venues.

According to the organisation, the full findings of the report will be published in March – it aims to outline how these venues operate and the challenges they need to overcome.

Mark Davyd, chief executive of the Music Venue Trust, said: 'There is a national challenge to our live music venue circuit brought about by a sequence of events and developments which have left that network in a perilous and precarious state. Music Venue Trust feels that we need to take an overall view of the challenges out there.

'We feel that past failures to talk about the ecosystem of UK music have meant that people who don't actively work in it perhaps don't understand the structure of the industry, or the vital role that this network of venues plays in maintaining it.'

107 participated in the research project which is still ongoing.

The interim announcement comes midway during Independent Venue Week (IVW), an initiative set up to showcase the importance of the smaller venues with live gigs.

Check out our interviews with [IVW ambassador Frank Turner](#) and [rockers You Me At Six](#) on how playing these small



RECORD of the DAY

In tune. Informed. Indispensable.

28th JANUARY 2015

UNIQUE USERS – 5000 (daily)

Music Venue Trust Publishes Interim Research Report: "Understanding Small Music Venues"

In December 2014 music charity **Music Venue Trust** organised the first national gathering of small and medium scale music venues from across the UK, **Venues Day 2014**. This week sees the first publication of the research conducted by the **Institute of Contemporary Music Performance** in the lead up to and during Venues Day. **Understanding Small Music Venues: An Interim Findings Report** is intended to be a discussion document about how these venues operate, the challenges they face and the role they play.

Over **120 venues** were represented at Venues Day and 107 participated in the research project which is still ongoing. Music Venue Trust CEO **Mark Davyd** explained the need for action:

"There is a national challenge to our live music venue circuit brought about by a sequence of events and developments which have left that network in a perilous and precarious state. Music Venue Trust feels that we need to take an overall view of the challenges out there. We need to be openly discussing and airing those challenges with our live music industry colleagues, and working together to tackle that range of issues so we not only maintain and preserve this circuit but actively start to improve it. We feel that past failures to talk about the ecosystem of UK music have meant that people who don't actively work in it perhaps don't understand the structure of the industry, or the vital role that this network of venues plays in maintaining it.

The UK is, quite literally, a music world leader, punching vastly above its weight in terms of the impact our artists and musicians make across the globe. A huge proportion of the music we export, which generates thousands of jobs, develops the artistic careers of our best writers and musicians, and is such an important part of the UK's standing on the international cultural stage, starts in a small venue. This is the grassroots of our industry, the research and development department of our major international music industry partners. It is impossible to overstate this enough; no Troubadour or 12 Bar Club, no Adele.

Our UK music scene, arguably the best in the world, is built on a robust ecosystem that starts with a first live concert in front of as few as ten people on a Tuesday night in Guildford and climaxes with 3 nights at Wembley Stadium. And it's not just the musicians - our industry and other parts of the creative sector are filled with people who cut their teeth promoting, booking or simply working the door at a small venue. This small venue circuit is the training ground and the entry level experience for our lighting engineers, sound technicians, and cultural organisers at all levels; we need to ensure we do all we can to protect it."

The interim report is available to read online or download from [this link](#)

A full report will be released on Monday 9 March 2015, when Music Venue Trust will be announcing its

28th JANUARY 2015

UNIQUE USERS – 100,000

Challenges for small music venues outlined in new Music Venue Trust report

BUSINESS NEWS **LIVE BUSINESS**

The Music Venue Trust has published an interim findings report into challenges currently facing small venues in the UK. The full report is set to follow in March.



Amongst the issues facing venues interviewed for the report are the two covered heavily in the media recently, complaints about noise (often from a single person) and changes to planning legislation making it easier for developers to convert buildings containing or next to venues into flats or offices.

Diminishing audiences at a grass roots level were also of concern, with various causes suggested. The recession was an obvious one, while some venue operators also said that the student audiences they rely on had dwindled, in part due to increased tuition fees.

Also coming in for criticism was the Live Music Act, which removed the red tape surrounding putting on small gigs in pubs and such like. In doing so, respondents said, the Government created more competition for venues focused on new music, proving right **predictions made by former Luminaire owner Andy Inglis** in 2013.

The music publishing sector's collecting society PRS For Music also comes in for heavy criticism in the report, accused of trying to collect money from venues that don't play PRS-registered music and charging more than many small venues can afford in fees, which then put them at risk of going out of business.

Announcing the report, Music Venue Trust CEO Mark Davyd said: "There is a national challenge to our live music venue circuit brought about by a sequence of events and developments which have left that network in a perilous and precarious state. Music Venue Trust feels that we need to take an overall view of the challenges out there".

He went on: "We need to be openly discussing and airing those challenges with our live music industry colleagues, and working together to tackle that range of issues so we not only maintain and preserve this circuit but actively start to improve it. We feel that past failures to talk about the ecosystem of UK music have meant that people who don't actively work in it perhaps don't understand the structure of the industry, or the vital role that this network of venues plays in maintaining it".

"The UK is, quite literally, a music world leader, punching vastly above its weight in terms of the impact our artists and musicians make across the globe. A huge proportion of the music we export, which generates thousands of jobs, develops the artistic careers of our best writers and musicians, and is such an important part of the UK's standing on the international cultural stage, starts in a small venue. This is the grassroots of our industry, the research and development department of our major international music industry partners. It is impossible to overstate this enough; no Troubadour or 12 Bar Club, no Adele".

"Our UK music scene, arguably the best in the world, is built on a robust ecosystem that starts with a first live concert in front of as few as ten people on a Tuesday night in Guildford and climaxes with three nights at Wembley Stadium. And it's not just the musicians – our industry and other parts of the creative sector are filled with people who cut their teeth promoting, booking or simply working the door at a small venue. This small venue circuit is the training ground and the entry level experience for our lighting engineers, sound technicians, and cultural organisers at all levels; we need to ensure we do all we can to protect it".

Read the interim report [here](#). The full report will follow on 9 Mar.

ech(((o)))es and dust

<http://echoesanddust.com/2015/01/interview-beverley-whitrick-of-the-music-venue-trust/>

28th JANUARY 2015

UNIQUE USERS – 3,000

Interview: Beverley Whitrick of the Music Venue Trust



Music Venue Trust | website |

By: Dan Salter

As part of our ongoing coverage of [Independent Venue Week](#) we spoke to Beverley Whitrick of the newly formed Music Venue Trust to find out what the state of the industry is and why we need an organisation like theirs.

(((o))): What's the reasoning behind Venues Trust? Why have you set-up and what are you aiming to achieve?

BW: The Music Venue Trust was created in January 2014 to protect the UK live music network. Its immediate focus is on securing the long-term future of the iconic venues which make up the grassroots circuit, venues like Southampton Joiners, Tunbridge Wells Forum, the 100 Club, Exeter

Cavern, Hull Adelphi, Manchester Band on the Wall etc. These venues have played a crucial role in the development of British music over the last 40 years, nurturing local talent, providing a platform for artists to build their careers and develop their music and their performance skills. As the majority of these venues are independently run they have been unrepresented at a national level and therefore not included in consultation about changes in policy that might affect them. Music Venue Trust aims to champion and safeguard venues by providing a collective voice and lobbying on their behalf. In the long-term we hope to secure a network of venues by buying them and leasing them back to the operators to be run as music venues in perpetuity.

((o)): Why are independent venues important to the UK music scene?

BW: Music venues are an integral part of the cultural infrastructure of the UK, providing places where people can experience live music as audience members, participants and organisers in their local community. Often they attract people who may not attend events in other cultural spaces such as arts centres, theatres, galleries etc. and many are in smaller towns or in parts of cities where they perform an important role in terms of focus for the local creative community. Not only do musicians have their first experiences of playing in front of audiences, allowing them to develop their craft, in smaller venues, but many people that go on to work as professionals in the arts or music industry do so thanks to opportunities volunteering or working as bookers, promoters, technicians, sound engineers etc. in independent venues.

((o)): The inaugural Venues Day seemed to be a great success – is this something you were expecting or were you concerned the event wouldn't really kick anything off?

BW: Venues Day 2014 was created in response to venues saying that they lacked opportunities to network with their peers, and the evidence collected over the months leading up to it that similar fights are being fought in isolation across the UK. We were originally aiming for 80 venues to attend so we were a little anxious when booking opened but once we had confirmed the first few then we were able to use that information to encourage others to come along. In the end over 120 venues were represented on the day so we are very proud of achievement.

((o)): Have you had any feedback from venues about the day?

BW: We have received a great deal of feedback which we have used to shape our thinking about how to proceed as an organisation in 2015. We believe that if you are going to work on behalf of people then you need to keep listening to their thoughts on what you are doing.

((o)): A key idea that seemed to emerge from Venues Day was that of tax breaks for venues along the lines of those given to theaters & orchestras. What needs to be done to make that a realistic goal?

BW: Tax legislation is extremely complex but we are working on advancing on this issue both at a political level (Kerry McCarthy MP and Mike Weatherley MP undertook to take this forward on our behalf following their participation in Venues Day) and by discussing it with legal and financial experts. The fact that there is a general election in 2015 will slow up any progress we might make but it is something we are working towards.

((o)): What are your plans for the next 12 months and beyond?

BW: After some down-time over Christmas we returned to work with 3 commitments for 2015. The first was to establish the Music Venues Alliance, the second and third are as follows:

Lobbying / Campaigning / Profile-raising – Coming out of Venues Day we have an incredibly long list of organisations keen to meet and discuss potential future work. Our priority is to pick a small number of issues on which we believe something can be achieved relatively quickly. If we can gain agreements that will save venues money, help with legal issues or ensure that they are treated as cultural venues rather than nightclubs by their local authority then we believe that these are things that are to everyone's benefit. Once we get started and get some gains under our belt then we will be in a stronger position for developing long-term strategic plans.

Venues Day 2015 – When we undertook Venues Day 2014 we were cautious about the use of the word inaugural as it wasn't clear whether there would be a need or a will to repeat the event. We can now confidently say that there is a demand for further opportunities for networking, information sharing and collective discussion. The first event of a kind can never be replicated but we will undertake to work with the Music Venues Alliance to design something that will bring people together for mutual benefit in autumn 2015.

((o)): What can our readers do to help the cause?

BW: Your readers are welcome to opt in to the Music Venues Alliance to receive information about our work as it progresses and participate in any discussion that might take place amongst members. They can write to us at musicvenue@trust@gmail.com with a message titled MVA if they want to know more. And of course the most important thing that anyone can do to support independent venues is to go to them!

((o)): You have an initiative to get people to sign up to be 'venue champions'. Can you tell us more about that?

BW: As part of the lobbying/campaigning/profile-raising work we are undertaking we want to help venues to demonstrate that they are important as cultural and community resources, particularly to their local authority and other official bodies. One of the ways of doing this is to apply to be listed as an Asset of Community Value. This requires a music lover who lives nearby to volunteer to be a Venue Champion and bring together a minimum of 21 local people prepared to complete and sign a nomination form to submit to the local authority. We have lots of information about the process and can offer support for Venue Champions so interested individuals just need to get in touch to learn more. They can write to us at musicvenue@trust@gmail.com with a message titled Venue Champion.

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28th JANUARY 2015

UNIQUE USERS – 6,000

Music Venue Trust interim report highlights small venue challenges

Music Venue Trust has today (27 January) published the first piece of research from the Venues Day 2014, held on 9 December.

Venues Day 2014, the first national gathering of small and medium scale UK music venues, brought together more than 120 venues, with 107 participating in the research project.

'Understanding Small Music Venues: An Interim Findings Report' hopes to open a discussion about how small venues operate, the challenges they face, and the role they play in culture.

The interim report details the challenges that small venues face, including money, community engagement, cultural value, youth engagement and education.

"We need to be openly discussing and airing the challenges with our live music industry colleagues, and working together to tackle the issues so we not only maintain and preserve the circuit but actively start to improve it," said the Trust's CEO Mark Davyd.

"We feel that past failures to talk about the ecosystem of UK music have meant that people who don't actively work in it perhaps don't understand the structure of the industry, or the vital role that this network of venues plays in maintaining it."

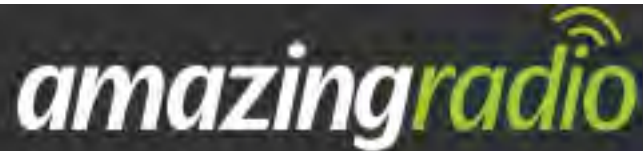
The full report is expected to be published on 9 March and will include the Trust's response to the research. The interim report, meanwhile, can be read [here](#).

The Music Venue Trust is a music charity that seeks to preserve, secure and improve the UK's network of small to medium scale independent music venues.

Pictured: Venues Day 2014.

Photo credit: Music Venue Trust/Pat Pope





28th JANUARY 2015

UNIQUE USERS – 5,000

Laura Marling & Ghostpoet Support Independent Venue Week

Tuesday, January 20th, 2015 - by Ruth



If that headline isn't impressive enough, **Frank Turner** has taken on the hefty responsibility of being the Ambassador for **Independent Venue Week** this year, taking over from **Radiohead's** Colin Greenwood in 2014.

All of next week (26th January – 1st February) independent venues up and down the land are putting on special gigs and events to celebrate their existence. Most recently on board are **Clinic**, **Peace**, **Palma Violets**, **Evi Vine**, **Fat White Family**, **Andrew Weatherall** and **Pixel Fix**. We here at *Amazing Radio* will be bringing you numerous on-air interviews with some key artists, as well as those venue owners and bookers working hard behind the scenes. Keep your eyes and ears open!



Frank Turner said, "It's great to see **Independent Venue Week** back again for a second year and with so many more venues taking part. There's been so much support recently for the work these places do and opportunities they offer young and more established artists. It's vital we all celebrate their existence during **Independent Venue Week** and do what we can to support them so they are still around for years to come."

Hear hear! There's no denying that indie venues are at the very heart of the music industry.

PRS for Music, **UK Music**, **Arts Council** and the **Musicians' Union** have all lent their backing in what's proving to be a much bigger week of events than the inaugural year in 2014 – it's grown five-fold in just twelve months!

Amazing Radio's Ruth Barnes, from *The Other Woman*, chaired a session at a recent **Venues Day** event at the **Southbank**, where **IVW** co-founder Sybil Bell joined prestigious names from the music biz – including an always passionate Jehnnny Beth from **Savages** – in addressing the main issues faced by indie venues across the country.



We thought we'd fire some questions at Sybil ahead of next week's events:

Hi Sybil, there was a recent event at the Southbank where independent and small venues aired their grievances, what was their main gripe?

“ The event wasn't born out of a gripe as such. It came about because there was a groundswell of activity around small venues and what's going on in their world. The day was to bring everyone together to share their experiences and see if there were common things happening that could be shared for the benefit of everyone.

Those experiences were positive and negative – I guess it's just the nature of the beast that the negative ones seem to be the focus and in many ways that's understandable because we are all trying to preserve these venues and their existence to support new artists coming through and also provide the local community with somewhere safe, well run and properly kitted out for music fans to come and enjoy live music.

Some of the issues covered were agents not letting artists play smaller venues as their careers had taken off when the venues had supported them in their early days, many venues facing noise issues with new residential properties springing up next to them even though they have been around for many years (decades in some instances!) and financial constraints on venues both at a national and local level including collecting societies and the way they collect revenues, as well as better support within the industry to put bands into venues and help keep them going.



Are you optimistic that things will get better?

“ Totally. There is a growing momentum around support for venues particularly as so many have been closing. It's a shame that it takes closures to bring to people's attention how vital these places are to our cultural past, present and future. Unlike so many countries in Europe, venues in the UK get no financial support from government. But **Venues Day** and **Music Venue Trust** are working actively to change that.

The day brought about some direct actions including Jo Dipple, CEO at **UK Music** offering a seat at **UK Live Music Group** (chaired by Paul Latham of **Live Nation**) to a music venues alliance which will then be the voice of venues as **UK Music** – that was an immediate response on the day, which was hugely positive. There was also talk on the day from Mike Weatherly and Kerry McCarthy to look into tax breaks for small venues – much like similar tax breaks as the ones small theatres get.

There are other things happening behind the scenes which will come to light when they are fully ready but it's important that any new initiatives are well thought through and have a real impact with support from the industry and wider stakeholders.

Artists are also beginning to be more supportive of these venues – we certainly have many more large artists playing smaller venues this year and we hope and expect that to grow every year as we continue **Independent Venue Week**.

It's all heading in the right direction but there is still much to do – this really is the beginning of a collective effort.

It's easy for punters to forget how hard it is for these venues to stay open, has the recent run of closure announcements had an impact on the popular psyche?

“ Absolutely. As I mentioned before, it often takes a threatened closure for people to jump and say this shouldn't happen but we need people to be more proactive and make gig-going a more regular part of their week. The costs for operating businesses have gone up and whilst everyone is feeling the pinch, these places are one-offs and once they're gone, that's it. It's not like a pub or coffee shop where a location can have multiple venues. And it's more than just about the music, it's where culture thrives. You'll always

have a better night out in a venue with mates than streaming music in your bedroom on your tod.



Are independent venues, through initiatives like Independent Venue Week, starting to be more connected to/supportive of each other?

“ I'd like to think so – I think also **Venues Day** certainly helped to bring people together literally and also in spirit. Support from **Arts Council England** has been instrumental in both events taking place; that kind of recognition for the work we're both doing is a big deal for us as organisers and also recognises the importance of the venues and their continued existence.

The first **IVW** we ran had just 17 venues – not because we didn't want to include more venues but because it was our first year and there were just two of us (also working on other projects) and we wanted to do a good job on a small scale – the not running-before-

you-could-walk approach. It's paid off for us and with 90 venues now on board and two more people in the team, it feels like we're heading in the right direction.

This year, we also have some locations with multiple venues over the week and those venues were all asked to work together to a program so they weren't in competition with each other. They've all done that and mostly knew each other anyway. It's tough enough being a venue – creating competition between them locally or even nationally through some of those venues competitions is outdated and not really what the venues need. Who's to say one venue is better than another – they all do a hugely important job and that's what's important and what we want to celebrate.

We've been able to work with more curating partners too and helping some venues program line-ups that would perhaps be out of their reach normally. For **IVW**, we have to remind ourselves this is only our second year – we have such hopes and ambitions for where the project will head and the support and awareness we can offer the venues. It's all pretty exciting.

What's your favourite indie venue?

“ That's an impossible question to answer! I love so many for different reasons – **The Joiners Arms** (Southampton) **The Forum** (Tunbridge Wells), **Notting Hill Arts Club**, **The Kazimier** (Liverpool) **Clwb Ifor Bach** and **Gwdihw** in Cardiff. This year, we've been lucky enough to get support from Vauxhall so Joe my business partner and I have a car each so we'll be driving around the country visiting as many venues as we can outside London whilst Reo and Chloe go to the London shows. I'm really looking forward to visiting the **Hull Adelphi** and **Hebden Bridge** among others.