
From: planningcomments@staffs Moorlands.gov.uk
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To: Planning Comments (SMDC)
Subject: Comment Received from Public Access

Categories:

Application Reference No. : SMD/2025/0312 Site Address: The Foxlowe Market Place Leek Staffordshire ST13 6AD
Leek Comments by: Sophie Asquith Music Venue Trust
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Submission: Support

Comments: Music Venue Trust is a UK registered charity established in 2014 that acts to protect, secure and improve the UK's Grassroots Music Venue (GMV) circuit. Music Venue Trust provides advice to the government, the cultural sector and the music industry on issues impacting the network of venues and is the nominated representative that speaks on behalf of the Music Venues Alliance, an association of over 800 venues from across the UK.

We write to offer support to the Staffordshire Moorlands District Council in consideration of the planning application made by Foxlowe Arts Centre Ltd, in order to expand the provision of their Grassroots Music Venue by development of the site at 1 Market Place, Leek ST13 6AD. Foxlowe Arts Centre as a much valued Grassroots Music Venue and cultural community space is a member of our Music Venue Alliance.

Music Venue Trust is extremely pleased to have the opportunity to support these positive plans of the venue in expanding their capacity to provide community and grassroots live music and art in Leek. It is our hope that the clear public desire and support for Foxlowe Arts Centre and the strength of this application demonstrates the cultural value of the proposed plans, and that Leek can be a place where local and national music talent can flourish and grow.

Music Venue Trust is confident that granting this application will strengthen and diversify the cultural provision of the area, boosting the local economy and furthering Leek's evening and nighttime hospitality offering. Enabling Foxlowe Arts Centre to develop their grassroots music provision with an expanded home and an established theatre performance space will give the venue the increased capacity and high-quality facilities needed to not just remain resilient but advance and improve.

Music Venue Trust recognises that GMVs contribute to creating a rich cultural environment for the local community, boost the local economy and increase much needed footfall to high streets and visitors to our towns and cities. In our 2024 Annual Report launched at Parliament in January this year we announced that the UK's GMV network

generated 19.4 million individual audience visits across 2024. GMVs collectively make an enormous contribution to the national economy; totalling £525 million, and across the UK over 30,000 are employed by the sector. Music Venue Trust therefore urges the council to support successful operators such as Foxlowe Arts Centre who are working to drive the sector, taking risks on grassroots musicians and developing the talent pipeline.

This is work which is increasingly more urgent in this time of challenges and crisis for the sector; in a climate where frequent closures result in a decrease of opportunities for local live music provision, creating barriers to access. Staffordshire Moorlands District has the opportunity to directly address and counter this in their area by supporting this application, and Music Venue Trust hopes that the application is granted as submitted.

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