

Islington Folk Club Bookings Officer Report for 2024 AGM

Covering the year: 1st January - 31st December 2023

A variety of methods used to book guest artists including: direct approaches from artists or their agents, contacting known performers, following suggestions from Committee members, scouting at other clubs/festivals, looking at past performers on the web-site.

- The venue: all events held at the Brewhouse & Kitchen with just one evening becoming unavailable at short notice - we moved to The Alpaca in Essex Road. Artists comment favourably on the Brewhouse room and on the Club as a whole. They are happy to return.
- 41 Club evenings were held comprising: 37 guest nights (including one 3-way split) and 4 sing-arounds (held at start/end of term where attendance might be problematic).
- The Club was closed for 11 weeks in the year: one week at Easter, throughout July and August, and one week at Christmas,.
- Fees: artists given a guaranteed fee or, if greater, 90% of the door (Jan-June), rising to 95% (Sept-Dec).
- Entry charges: members £6, non-members £8 (Jan-June), members £7, non-members £9 (Sept-Dec). Note: membership £2 pa is used for admin, rather than for paying performers.
- We are competing locally with at least two clubs who don't charge entry or (presumably) guarantee their artists a fee (sometimes the same artists as us).
- Gender equality in artists booked: 22/41 acts involved women performers
- A variety of performer formats (solo, group etc), instruments and musical styles was represented. Musical categories included: English traditional, singer-songwriter/contemporary, American old-time, music hall, blues, political, humorous/eccentric, bluegrass, some world music.
- Artist cancellations. Just two: John Kirkpatrick replaced by James Delarre at short notice. Dave Webber & Anni Fentiman replaced by John Kirkpatrick. Note: a few weeks before their evening each artist is sent confirmation of fee agreed, details of the Club evening and practical information such as travel/parking etc
- A few artists used amplification (usually their own, on one occasion provided by the booker), a few others might have benefitted from it, particularly on busy nights.
- Attendances: highest 77 (with more people outside), lowest 26, average 43. With competition it is very important that artists attract their own crowd.
- Surplus on artists of £400 over the year (Jan-June £255, Sept-Dec £145)
- Most acts exceed their guaranteed fee. - helped by £1 price increase from September.
- One solo artist and one trio required accommodation (provided by the booker)
- Arsenal Thursday UEFA fixtures had some negative impact in the spring term. No such fixtures after September.
- Competition from other Clubs is a factor. We have an informal agreement not to book acts too close to one another other. Just one occurrence of this in the year (The Kimberleys) with a detrimental effect on attendance.
- More young people and women seem to be attending.

Roger Trevitt, Bookings Officer Jan-Dec 2023