



2020 Dereham Blues Festival – Opening Headline Act Announced

Preparations are in full swing for the 2020 Dereham Blues Festival, which is promising to be the biggest and best so far! As with last year's hugely successful event, the festival will again span a full five days, running from Wednesday 8th July to Sunday 12th July.

This year's headline act will be the very accomplished and super-talented boogie-woogie rhythm and blues star Mike Sanchez [www.mikesanchez.com], performing with his band The Portions.

Born to Spanish parents in London's East End, Sanchez grew up learning the piano and guitar, subsequently developing a love of 1950's American roots music which has hugely influenced his successful career ever since. Sanchez can count superstars such as Imelda May, Robert Plant and Bill Wyman amongst his friends, spending four years playing with the latter in his 'Rhythm Kings' group alongside previous Dereham Blues Festival headliners Andy Fairweather-Low and Georgie Fame. With a fantastic track record of performing with some of the greatest blues and rock stars, Mike is a huge catch for the 2020 festival.

Sanchez will be supported by When Rivers Meet [www.whenriversmeet.co.uk], a talented blues and roots rock duo consisting of Aaron and Grace Bond from Essex.

The festival opening concert, organised by the Friends of Dereham Memorial Hall, will be held at Dereham Memorial Hall on Wednesday 8th July. Tickets will be on sale from the end of January at <https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/fodmh>. Go to the festival website <https://www.derehamb bluesfestival.org.uk/> for more information.

Following what will undoubtedly be a knockout opening concert, Dereham will then be awash - for a further four days - with the unmistakable beat of the blues, emanating from more than twelve around the town and filling the air with every conceivable style of this great, eclectic musical genre. The festival caters for blues aficionados, complete newbies, and anyone in between, with its many and varied forms – blues has something for everyone!

With over a hundred performances over the next four days, the rest of the week will feature top acts, drawn both locally and from across the rest of the UK. All performances are free to enter and are at venues that are all within walking distance of the town centre.

The Dereham Blues Festival website has been re-vamped and modernised to meet demand for the increasingly popular event. All festival information on the venues, the bands and the programme will be posted on the website



<https://www.derehambluesfestival.org.uk/>. Keep heading to the website for all the latest news.

There are more chances for blues bands and acts to play at this year's festival. So, if you 'wanna play', get your interest in early to the organisers via the festival's website at <https://www.derehambluesfestival.org.uk/wanna-play>. Applications close on 14th February.

The Dereham Blues Festival continues to grow and is eagerly anticipated each year as an important and unmissable event on the town calendar.

Dereham, the heart of Norfolk, it's where the beat is!

ENDS

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PR & Media contact:

Carolyn Coleman support@derehambluesfestival.org.uk / tel. 01362 695084

Jim Niven media@derehambluesfestival.org.uk / tel. 07528 492288

Richard Pallett crossroad_blues@outlook.com / tel. 07944 619287

NOTES TO EDITORS

The 2020 Dereham Blues Festival will run from Wednesday July 8th to Sunday July 12th.

The Dereham Blues Festival started in 2013 and in its first year attracted 500 people to the market town.

The festival now attracts over 2000 music fans from across the county and beyond and has become one of *the* go-to events on the Blues calendar. Email: info@derehambluesfestival.org.uk

Dereham Blues Festival is now a not-for-profit company under its chairman Harry Collins, who leads the devoted team of blues volunteers, many of whom are themselves active gigging musicians. The founding members are Doreen and Stewart Aitken who have run the festival since its 2013 inauguration.

Some 50+ acts perform in the festival, drawn from 'local-grown' talent in Norfolk and the greater East Anglia region, and from all over the rest of the UK.

The festival kicks off each year with a well-known national or international blues act. Previous years have seen Dr. Feelgood in 2016, Andy Fairweather Low and the Low Riders in 2017, Georgie Fame in 2018, and last year's 2019 headline show saw the fantastic Hamilton Loomis perform a storming set, culminating in a spontaneous standing



East Bilney Garage

Stephenson Smart



ovation.

The opening night is held at Dereham Memorial Hall – for more information about this venue, other events held there, and the work of the Friends of Dereham Memorial Hall, please see their website – <https://derehammemorialhall.info/>

The market town of Dereham in Norfolk has seen significant growth over the past few years and the town's Blues Festival reflects and supports this continued social and economic development. The estimated 2000 or so festival visitors provide a real economic boost to the town as well as bringing the place alive throughout the festival week in July.

The Dereham Blues Festival continues to be a real success story in the region thanks to its two lead organisers: Norfolk Blues Society founders Doreen and Stewart Aitken. As founding members, they remain fully involved and are determined that the festival has a long future.

The festival is entirely run by a volunteer group of twelve local Norfolk blues enthusiasts and is supported by the Norfolk Blues Society, who can be found at <http://www.norfolkbluessociety.org.uk>

We are proud to be associated with the following sponsors of the festival and we thank them for their support: East Bilney Garage, who are the Headline Sponsors; Stephenson Smart, who are the Main Sponsor; Orchard Caravans, a Business Sponsor. Please see our website for more details: www.derehamb blues festival.org.uk/about/sponsors

Any band who wishes to play at the annual Dereham Blues Festival in July must apply via the website – <https://www.derehamb blues festival.org.uk/wanna-play> Applications open each September and close the following February.



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