

DEREHAM BLUES FESTIVAL

Dereham Blues Festival - Opening Headline Acts Announced

The Dereham Blues Festival is back in July later this year featuring not one, but two fantastic UK top blues acts for the opening concert on July 6th at The Dereham Memorial Hall. The two acts, When Rivers Meet and Kyla Brox, both playing with their backing bands, are real rising stars at the top of their game on the UK blues scene with many recent awards under their belts.

When Rivers Meet are fronted by husband and wife Grace and Aaron Bond and hail from Essex, although they met in Downham Market in Norfolk. So a real regional talent gaining a breath-taking reputation across the UK blues scene. Last year, they won four UK Blues Awards, for: Emerging Blues Artist of the Year; Blues Band of the Year; Blues Album of the Year; and Most Inspirational Online Performance of the Year.

Kyla Brox hails from Manchester and her raw talent has seen her described as “the finest female blues singer of her generation”. She was the winner of the UK Blues Challenge 2018 and the European Blues Challenge 2019, and voted Best Female Vocalist in the 2019 European Blues Awards. Kyla Brox is widely regarded as one of the very best soul-blues singers the British Isles has ever produced.

The festival organisers want to thank the Friends of Dereham Memorial Hall for putting on this opening concert and their continued support of the Dereham Blues Festival. All the past opening festival gigs have been magnificent and stunning sell-out shows. The 2022 gig will again be a must-see event.

Tickets for the festival opening gig go on sale on 1st March and will be available on line at www.ticketsource.co.uk/fodmh/t-dyprgq . Get your tickets early to avoid disappointment. It is set to be another sell-out show.

The Covid pandemic meant that the difficult decision was made not to hold the Dereham Blues Festival in 2020 and 2021. However the festival is truly back in full swing over five days 6th to 10th July and better still, this year will see even more Dereham town centre and nearby venues - 19 in total - hosting some of the best blues acts drawn from the region and across the UK. So still very much “a whole lot more than 12 bars of blues”. It is fantastic that many of the past venues are very much up again for hosting bands. In addition we welcome some super new venues.

Festival Chairman Harry Collins said; “It is so good to be back this year. Even better, that the bands, venues, organisers and sponsors are all so willing to continue to support the festival. It is testament to everyone’s commitment to this unique and special “free-to-attend” festival, that this year’s event looks like it is going to be just as good as ever. I am really looking forward to what is going to be a wonderful experience!”.

For all the latest information about the festival, venues, bands and festival programme, head to <https://www.derehamb bluesfestival.org.uk> . A printed festival programme will also again be produced and should be available from May onwards.

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Also look out for the Dereham Blues Festival stand promoting the festival at the Dereham Community Day on May 14th in the Dereham Memorial Hall.

A new feature of the 2022 Dereham Blues Festival is a “pop-up” blues buskers event in the new Ellenor Fenn Garden, the community garden in the centre of Dereham. Make sure you visit the Ellenor Fenn Garden on Saturday 9th July to support the buskers, some of whom will be young musicians from local schools.

The festival is sponsored by four local organisations Minors and Brady, Dereham Taxis, Orchard Caravans and Stephenson Smart. The festival organisers want to express their heartfelt thanks for their continued interest and support for without their sponsorship it would not be possible to put on the festival.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

The 2022 Dereham Blues Festival will run from Wednesday July 6th to Sunday July 10th.

You can download high res. images from the last Festival, which was held in 2019, from the website here: <http://www.derehamb bluesfestival.org.uk/about/media-centre>

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

The festival in 2019 attracted 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@derehamb bluesfestival.org.uk

There was no festival in 2020 and 2021. The Covid pandemic meant that the difficult decision was made not to hold the Dereham Blues Festival in those years.

Dereham Blues Festival is 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 the 2019 headline show saw the fantastic Hamilton Loomis perform a storming set, culminating in a spontaneous standing ovation.

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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 – <http://derehammemorialhall.co.uk> .

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 some 12 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: Minors and Brady who are the Headline Sponsors; Dereham Taxis, who are the Main Sponsors; and business sponsors Stephenson Smart and Orchard Caravans. Please see our website for more details: www.derehambluesfestival.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.derehambluesfestival.org.uk/wanna-play> Applications open each September and close the following February.

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