

Welcome to our first newsletter

To get things going, this letter will be longer than usual.

Before we set out future aims, it might be interesting to reflect on how we got here:- I remember sitting in a pub, post gig, with Aethelred's bluesmen talking about venues. We couldn't think of any local venue dedicated to the blues.

Ian (Aethelred) Boyle said "why don't we start our own club? We could be the house band and invite headline acts to play". None of us had done anything like this before and it seemed a stretch, but after another drink or two we decided to give it our best shot.

So we looked at venues and came across the Thornton Hough village club.

At that moment, it all clicked.

Lovely intimate space, great acoustics, a reasonably priced bar, ample seating, brilliant p.a. and a resident engineer (club owner Neil). We were offered the first Friday each month on a probationary period of 3 months.

That was at the end of last year and we decided to take the plunge and arranged the first meeting for February.

Our initial aim was to attract a big enough audience to justify opening the club and paying the bar staff. We asked local bands to play. All of them have done us proud – often charging rock bottom fees to help the venue get off the ground.

So far, we have had enough support to satisfy Neil that we have potential. After the first £5 gig, it became clear that the minimum price we could charge would be £7.50. All the people running the club are volunteers and Aethelred's bluesmen have not taken any fee.

But we have just about broken even.

We do need to keep our heads above water financially but we are determined that the club will always be run on a 'not for profit' basis. We are enjoying setting up and running the club and our sole objective is to create a blues community in the area based around monthly and additional 'one off' blues gigs.

Now that we have more confidence in the viability of the club, we have booked bands for the whole of the remainder of 2023.



We will always support local bands but as we gain experience and (we hope) membership we expect to start occasionally booking top class blues performers from around the country.

Ticket prices depend entirely on the cost of hiring bands. Because there is an admin charge to use the 'we got tickets' facility, we are discounting the online booking fee so that it will always cost the same as buying at the door. What we ask you to pay is your share of the band booking fee plus any actual costs. There is no admin to pay for.

The club now has a free of charge bank account and our finances are checked and correlated by an individual with accounting knowledge. The bank account gives us the facility to offer tickets on line giving certainty to members who want to see any particular act. Tickets will always be available to buy at the door subject to availability. To make things easier we have also bought a card machine. The limit of attendance at the club is 100.

At present we are walking the financial tightrope between booking bands who quite properly ask for higher fees and making sure that the club breaks even and therefore has a long term future.

We'll keep you posted!

What we have set out to do is to create a club with members who share a genuine enthusiasm for the blues. Any blues. And we will try to book bands and individuals from the complete range of the genre. Acoustic, full bands, blues rock, duos and solo artists. What we need from our members is sufficient attendance. It's as simple as that. We will try to cater for all tastes and book a range of cracking bands. So please come along whenever you can to join in this exciting journey along with like minded people in a safe, comfortable, respectful and above all enjoyable atmosphere.

I hope you will have gathered that we are very much amateurs learning on the job and making it up as we go along. So any suggestions for improvements and constructive comments and criticism are genuinely welcome. If we can have a conversation on our site or person to person in the club we can begin to build the community and make this a club we can all be proud to own.



Oh! And a final specific. We are looking for someone to volunteer to be membership secretary. It requires a level of attention to detail that Aethelred's bluesmen can't maintain (the clue is in the name!). If anyone wishes to become involved, please let us know. It will involve maintaining lists of members in the first instance but may grow to include email details etc so that we can make special offers for members on any merchandise, discounts or any other benefits we can dream up!

Apologies for the long read.

Future newsletters will only happen when we feel we have something more to tell you and/or to give space for your ideas, suggestions and opinions.

www.wirralblues.club