



Dereham Blues Festival 2023 - Opening Headline Acts Announced

Dereham town's blues festival is back again in the second week of July this year, bigger and better than ever featuring another top international blues act for the opening concert on July 5th at The Dereham Memorial Hall. The act from USA is the fabulous Grammy nominated Danielle Nicole and her band [<https://daniellenicolemusic.com/>]. And this year, the support act on the night will be local star Ross Stewart.

Danielle Nicole is a powerful blues vocalist with a unique style and is the result of years of intensive roadwork. Also her "distinctive, inventive bass work", has resulted in her not only becoming the first woman to ever be nominated in the category of bass Instrumentalist in The Blues Foundation's 2012 Blues Music Awards, but also the first woman to receive the honour twice. Nicole has continued to tour the world and hone her sound and she has formed a top reputation for getting "..... down to the nitty gritty."

The support act Ross Stewart, is a true example of the future of live blues in Norfolk and beyond. At just 18 years of age, Ross hailing from Long Stratton in Norfolk, already plays with a maturity and generosity way beyond his years in both his singing and guitar playing. An important part of the remit of the Dereham Blues Festival and its supporting organisation the Norfolk Blues Society, is to help and encourage young musicians in the region. Every once in a while, we encounter a young player like Ross who is more than especially skilled and stands out from his peers. He is an exciting prospect and it is fabulous to have to chance to see and hear him play in the festival's opening concert.

Festival Chairman Harry Collins said: "I am so looking forward to this year's festival again. We came storming back last year after Covid and we are determined to keep going this year. As every year, the festival organisers want to thank all of Dereham for their continued enthusiastic support for the town's festival, which truly puts Dereham on the map, this year from July 5th to 9th. Also thanks again go out to the Friends of Dereham Memorial Hall for putting on the opening concert."

All the past opening festival gigs have been magnificent and stunning sell-out shows. Last year's double billing of regional hot favourites When Rivers Meet and the fabulous The Kyla Brox Band put on a stunning show that wowed the audience. 2023 is set to repeat that with a top international act with the added local interest of Norfolk's own rising blues star Ross Stewart.

Tickets for the festival opening gig go on sale on 1st March and will be available on line at www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on?q=Dereham%20Memorial%20Hall . Get your tickets early to avoid disappointment. The Memorial Hall is a small theatre and every seat is in high demand. So make sure you get your seat booked as soon as possible as it is set to be another sell-out show.



DEREHAM BLUES FESTIVAL

The festival this year again will feature more blues acts playing in more town venues than in previous years. Mark the dates 5th to 9th July for the chance hear top blues music, when the streets in the town will be buzzing with visiting blues fans.

The return of the town's blues festival last year after a two year absence due to the Covid pandemic was a remarkable success, despite the break. It is testament to the community spirit in Dereham that the town's blues festival came back stronger than ever.

Building on last year's success, the Norfolk Blues Society's Blues Busk event will return on Saturday afternoon 8th July in the town. A super place for all the family to go and see some fabulous acoustic blues acts.

Festival Chairman Harry Collins said; "We are determined to build on last year's triumphant festival return. It is testament to everyone's commitment in the town to this unique and special "free-to-attend" festival continues to go from strength to strength."

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

The popular printed festival programme will be available from May onwards with festival volunteers promoting the festival around the town and at the Dereham Community Day on May 13th at the Dereham Memorial Hall and in Fleece Meadow.

The festival is sponsored by five local organisations Minors and Brady, Dereham Taxis, Orchard Caravans, Quote Four 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 2023 Dereham Blues Festival will run from Wednesday July 5th to Sunday July 9th.

You can download high res. images from previous Dereham Blues Festivals from the website at: <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.

Following a two year break due to the Covid pandemic, the festival stormed back in 2022 and attracted well over 2000 music fans from across the county and beyond. The success last year maintained the festival's status as one of the go-to events on the Blues calendar.

Email: info@derehamb bluesfestival.org.uk

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.

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 opening concert featuring a well-known national or international blues act. Previous years have seen Paul Jones, Dr. Feelgood, Andy Fairweather Low and the Low Riders, Georgie Fame, and in 2019, Hamilton Loomis from the US. Last year the headliners were When Rivers Meet and the The Kyla Brox Band.

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-term 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>



DEREHAM BLUES FESTIVAL

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, Quote Four 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.

