

DEREHAM BLUES FESTIVAL

Dereham Blues Festival 2024 - A Community Blues Explosion

Now in its tenth year, the Dereham Blues Festival which is hosted by the town, its people and venues, returns for 2024. Every year thousands of visitors come to Dereham for five days of solid, top notch blues and soul music, supported and welcomed by the wider community. The festival dates for everyone's diaries this year are Wednesday 10th July to Sunday 14th July.

The opening concert on Wednesday evening 10th July at the Dereham Memorial Hall will feature the amazing and fabulous Toby Lee.

Toby Lee is a truly exceptional young man and a blues phenomenon. At only 19, he's been playing the blues in the top flight in the UK since when he was just an eight year old kid and winning top blues awards at the highest level. In 2018 and again in 2023 he won "Young Blues Artist of the Year" at the UK Blues Awards in London. In 2016 he was cast as Zack Mooneyham for one year in the West End production of 'School of Rock the Musical' by Andrew Lloyd Webber. Toby has played with several of the greatest blues artists around, for example performing with Buddy Guy, Walter Trout and on Joe Bonamassa's "Keeping the Blues Alive at Sea" Mediterranean cruise and jamming with the man himself.

With such class and so many young blues artists making waves across the world, no wonder that the blues genre is very much alive and in good health.

Equally thrilling is the other act at the opening concert. Catfish are one of the UK's most exciting blues-rock powerhouses on the circuit today. They have quickly established themselves on the scene as one to watch, and the band has been making waves in the last few years, with regular tours and festivals appearances in the UK, Europe and the USA. They have established themselves as a real force in the British blues scene and are multi blues award nominations and winners in each of the past recent years.

Do not miss these sensational performers. Get your tickets early from TicketSource (<https://www.ticketsource.co.uk/whats-on/dereham?q=Dereham%20Blues%20Festival>) to go to what will again be, a sell out gig and a tremendous opener for the 2024 Dereham Blues Festival.

It's a mark of how far the Dereham Blues Festival has grown in prestige and reputation that it keeps on attracting the very best, blues awards winning acts to come and play in the town. So come and see Toby and Catfish in Dereham this coming July 10th. It is going to be huge.

For over a decade now, the town has embraced the Dereham Blues Festival and is a magnificent host to the thousands of visitors who come each year to put Dereham and its festival firmly on the UK map as a premier blues music event. Year on year the Dereham Blues Festival has grown and evolved, and the 2024 festival will be no exception.

Last year saw the introduction of a very successful acoustic blues busking event in the Ellenor Fenn Garden which will be on again this year. But there is more exciting news to announce.

To further expand and extend the festival into the community, which is being supported by a generous grant from Dereham Town Council, there will be a number of educational, informative and practical blues and soul music workshops, open for anyone to attend. The workshops will be held at various venues over the five days of the festival and will cover different aspects of the blues. So if you want hands on experience or to find out more about the blues genre, check out the workshop programme which will be announced shortly on the festival website at www.derehamb blues festival.org.uk .

What else is new for 2024? We welcome The Greenstones pub and restaurant as a new venue. We thank Dereham Town Council for their grant towards the workshops, and thank once more our existing sponsors



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Minors & Brady, Dereham Taxis, Orchard Caravans, Stephenson Smart and Quote Four. For without their support and sponsorship, the festival could not exist as their support drives a huge sense of community spirit in Dereham.

An exciting new promotional event is also being staged at the Dereham Memorial Hall ahead of the main festival. The "Big Gig" will be held on 25 May at the Dereham Memorial Hall featuring not one, but two top UK blues acts - Mississippi MacDonald and Santiago and The Soulmovers. They were both big hits at last year's festival and it is fabulous to welcome both back for a dedicated concert for them to show again what tremendous blues musicians they are. The aim of this concert is to provide a hot, exciting, quality, appetiser for the actual festival in July. More information will be available shortly on the festival website at www.derehambluesfestival.org.uk.

The organising committee for the Dereham Blues Festival has welcomed new members to join the existing group of volunteers who put on the festival each year. Under its enthusiastic chairman Harry Collins, the whole committee work hard throughout the year to drive the evolution of the festival onwards to continued success and to extend the festival's involvement into the wider Dereham community. The festival committee want to thank all the people in Dereham for their continued support and willingness to embrace this remarkable music festival in which the vast majority of the entertainment is free to attend and in doing so, help Dereham remain a great place to live, work and play.

Contact : Jim Niven (volunteer) 07528492288, email: rednef59@hotmail.co.uk

24th January 2024.



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NOTES TO EDITORS

The 2024 Dereham Blues Festival will run from Wednesday July 10th to Sunday July 14th.

You can download high res. images from previous Dereham Blues Festivals from the website at: <http://www.derehambluesfestival.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 continuing success last year maintained the festival's status as one of the go-to events on the Blues calendar.

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 and remain fully involved and are determined that the festival has a long-term future.

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

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. Some 15 town venues host the acts playing over 100+ sets over the five days of the festival. Entry to the venues is free.

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 plus 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.

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.

Opening acts - Info

Toby Lee: <https://www.toby-lee.com/>

Catfish : <https://www.catfishband.com/>

Email: info@derehambluesfestival.org.uk

Website: <https://www.derehambluesfestival.org.uk/>



