



Dates for the 2020 Dereham Blues Festival Announced

The dates for the 2020 Dereham Blues Festival have been announced and the Festival will take place from 8th-12th July next year. The annual festival will again feature an exciting opening headline concert and then continue over the next four days. As in previous years, Dereham will be buzzing - with town centre restaurants, pubs, bars, and other venues full to bursting with music lovers enjoying some of the finest and hottest blues acts around.

The 2019 festival was another hugely successful event, with the opening gig at Dereham's Memorial Hall proving to be absolutely show-stopping. Texan blues star Hamilton Loomis wowed the packed house with his supreme power, showmanship and blues virtuosity. The runaway success of this concert, and the very fact that the festival can now attract such an up-and-coming star from the USA, illustrates that the Dereham Blues Festival has come a long way since its beginning seven years ago. However, this was not all the opening concert had to offer – Hamilton Loomis was also brilliantly supported by Norfolk's own international bluesman Ron Sayer, backed by top local back line The Shunters Blues Band from Norfolk Blues Society

Over the next four days, no less than 50 blues bands and performers played their hearts out around 13 town centre venues, which were all free to attend. The standard of the bands and artists was consistently outstanding, with many returning – not only from Norfolk but from all around the UK - to be part of the annual Dereham Blues Festival. Their commitment to and support of the event and their sharing of individual blues styles is right at the very heart of the festival. Chairman Harry Collins adds: "Their passion and energy certainly shows that the blues is very much alive in Norfolk and is also a real factor in attracting younger musicians and audiences."

The festival was founded in 2013 by local blues aficionados Stewart and Doreen Aitken and has grown every year since. The 2019 festival was bigger and better than ever, and for the first time extended over five days – an evolution that will be repeated in 2020.

Dereham Blues Festival is unique in the way that the venues in the town each have their own programme of "free to enter" gigs, with some venues hosting larger bands in their grounds and some offering acoustic blues and jam sessions. The festival is organised and run each year by a dedicated group of volunteers who simply love blues music. The festival does not cater only to blues purists; there is an increasingly diverse audience attending – young, old and families alike who turn out in greater numbers every year.

Dereham itself receives a huge uplift during the festival week, with the atmosphere often described as fantastic! The town centre really comes alive, as music and the fans who enjoy it spill out into the streets to share experiences and soak in the vibe. Thousands from the region and across the UK now visit Dereham during festival week. Hotels, B & Bs, taxi firms, bars and restaurants all report that the festival is good for business and also creates a sense of social benefit within the town.

The value to the town is further recognised by local businesses that graciously and willingly support the festival with various sponsorship deals. The organisers are truly grateful for their support and such a free to attend festival could not exist without them.

The 2020 festival next July will soon be here, and plans are already well under way to make the Dereham Blues Festival an even bigger and better experience. Further



announcements will be made over the next nine months and details posted on the festival website, so keep up to date by regularly visiting <https://www.derehambluesfestival.org.uk> which - like the festival itself - continues to grow and is now easier to use and to find out all the information you need.

If you are a blues artist or band and want to play, applications for the 2020 Festival are now open. Go to "Wanna Play" on the Festival website at <https://www.derehambluesfestival.org.uk/wanna-play>

So, blues fans, make sure the 2020 festival dates 8th-12th July are safely in your diaries to ensure you don't miss out on Dereham's famous 'more than 12 bars of blues'.

ENDS

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NOTES TO EDITORS

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

Full information, biography, music and media kit for [next year's headline], the opening act for this year's 2020 Dereham Blues Festival, can be found at [artist's website]. You can download high res. images from the website here: <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 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 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 – <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 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; Heineken, who are the Main Sponsors; Stephenson Smart, also a Main Sponsor; Orchard Caravans, a Business Sponsor. Please see our website for more details: www.derehamb blues festival.org.uk/about/sponsors

The 2020 Dereham Blues Festival will take place from 8th to 12th July 2020.

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.

