

## **GRASSROOTS MUSIC VENUES (GMVs) – DEFINITION**

This definition is the one contained in the Mayor of London's Music Venues Rescue Plan (October 2015) and agreed at Venues Day 2015 (October 2015) by leading figures from within the music industry and from government. The definition is being used by Arts Council England and the Department of Culture, Media and Sport in discussions surrounding the future of music venues. It is based upon extensive audits and surveys of UK music venues, and is comparable to the EU-wide definition of similar music venues implemented by Live DMA in more than a dozen European countries. The definition of Grassroots Music Venues contained in this document comprises the only widely accepted measures and parameters for describing dedicated music venues, and its creation in 2015 was welcomed by the Culture Minister Ed Vaizey and the head of the BPI Geoff Taylor. We are not aware of any other definition of this sector.

### **DEFINING GMVs - CULTURAL AND SOCIAL ROLE**

We define the cultural and social importance of a grassroots music venue (GMV) by testing its reputation, role and activity against six criteria:

#### **1. The elephant test**

*Musicians and audiences in the town/borough/city think that is the grassroots music venue.*

#### **2. Focus on cultural activity as its main purpose and its outcomes**

*The venue's raison d'être is the music it programmes.*

#### **3. It is a music business, run by music experts**

*An organisational focus on music. Other ancillary services (alcohol, food, merchandise) subsidiary or dependent upon music activity.*

#### **4. It takes risks with its cultural programme, and that risk taking is the ignition system of the engine that is the UK music industry**

*Programmes artists that deserve audiences with no expectation of direct financial reward; as a result of this loss-making activity, significant economic returns become available to the UK music industry.*

#### **5. A Beacon of Music and key generator of night-time economic activity**

*The presence of a grassroots music venue (or venues) provides a central beacon of music activity that inspires towns/ boroughs/cities to be musical, and the absence of one causes a dearth of music activity. By programming and reputation, GMVs attract audiences who add significant value to other aspects of the night-time economy (restaurants, pubs, bars, clubs, transport).*

#### **6. Plays nicely with others**

*Occupies an important role within its local community and is open to further networking.*

A Grassroots Music Venue displays some or all of these characteristics, dependent upon factors such as location, economic climate, or seasonal variations.