

 **THE MET, BURY TAKES FIRST STEPS TOWARDS REOPENING AFTER LOCKDOWN**

**HISTORIC VENUE WILL WELCOME BACK STAFF AND REGULAR WORKSHOP USERS FROM AUGUST.**

**LIVESTREAM GIGS TO CONTINUE TO OFFER LIFELINE TO ARTISTS AND MUSIC FANS UNTIL AUDIENCES CAN RETURN.**

**WHAT**: Grassroots music venue and arts centre The Met in Bury takes first steps towards reopening.

**WHEN**: Throughout August

**WHERE**: The Met, Market St, Bury.

**WHO**: Livestream gigs from Lottery Winners and The Slow Readers Club now on sale, with more online events planned

**WEB:** <https://themet.org.uk/article/reopening-phase-1/>

The Met, Bury, has announced plans to begin the first phase of its re-opening plans in August, as the venue looks to adapt to the huge impact the Covid-19 pandemic has had on the music and cultural sector.

Some staff will be returning to the historic Bury arts centre as it plans to welcome selected activities, including kids’ drama classes and workshops, back to the building during the school holidays.

But the venue has stressed that a return to ‘business as normal’ is some way off for its popular programme of live music, comedy and theatre.

The Met’s Chief Executive Officer Victoria Robinson said “It’s exciting that we can begin to come back to the building and offer just a small part of what we do for young people who have desperately missed the creativity and sociability that an arts centre can offer.

“But for the whole sector of grassroots live music venues like us the lockdown and restrictions continue to mean a truly existential challenge. While August is a chance for us to work safely on what we can do during the rest of 2020, there is still a long way to go before we can safely and sustainably welcome packed crowds back to the venue in the way we did before this outbreak.”

The Met has enjoyed a high profile with music fans online during lockdown as the production base for United We Stream; an online entertainment project that saw millions of viewers raise almost £500,000 for charities and businesses in Greater Manchester over 11 weeks of lockdown. It also meant The Met played host to events featuring names including Elbow, The Killers, Hacienda Classical with Manchester Camerata and many more. Live DJ sets at the venue from the likes of Graeme Park and Clint Boon featured alongside live gigs as part of Manchester Jazz Festival, comedy from Jon Richardson and spoken word from Tony Walsh.

The venue has confirmed that streamed events will continue to be part of the programme during 2020, with gigs from The Lottery Winners (Fri 31 July) and The Slow Readers Club (Fri 7 August) now on-sale.

“Streaming is a vital chance for venues like us, and the artists who rely on small and mid-sized venues to make a living, to keep reaching fans and raising money”, says Victoria.

“We’re proud of what our team has been able to contribute to during lockdown and hope music fans across the region will continue to support the venue and artists by buying tickets for these unique events.

“We love live music and we know livestreams are a different proposition, but they are a way to help support our sector until we can welcome crowds back to the venue.”

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**Full Phase One reopening statement here**: <https://themet.org.uk/article/reopening-phase-1/>

**Online events at The Met**: <https://themet.org.uk/whats-on/online-streaming/>

**About The Met:** The Met is a charity situated in a beautiful Grade II listed building, in the centre of Bury. Featuring a busy live venue, recording studio and creative hub, The Met presents a range of music, theatre, comedy and festivals alongside specialist and general workshops for the whole community. Part funded by Arts Council England, GMCA and Bury Council to increase access to the arts and promote Bury and Greater Manchester as a good place to live and visit, The Met underwent a £4.6 million refurbishment project in 2016 and its activities are worth in excess of £2.6 million per year to the local economy.

**The Met during lockdown:** The Met was proud to work with Greater Manchester Combined Authority to deliver United We Stream during the early months of pandemic. With its programme of gigs, shows and participatory workshops on-hold, the venue has been missing out on upto 70% of its regular income streams. Despite this the venue has worked on delivering an online programme, including high profile entertainment as part of United We Stream, artist discussions live on Facebook, and regular drama workshops for young people and people with disabilities via online video. Our thanks go to funders, sponsors and our members for support during this time.

  