



## A rare glimpse of light at the end of the tunnel

### NOEA Update on the Event Research Programme Test Events

It's so good to be reporting positivity, following a period which has held so much darkness for our industry. But I have to say, the feedback from the test events last weekend; the outstanding job done by so many in the industry, many of whom were NOEA members, has left me with a feeling of immense pride and even the beginning of optimism for us all.

For those that weren't involved, here are the stats:

- Over fifteen thousand adults, non-socially distanced, non-mask wearing across four official Events Research Programme Pilot events
- One business event
- Two nightclub events in a large warehouse venue
- One music festival
- All audiences, delegates, performers and staff took tests prior to attending.
- All attendees were encouraged and incentivised to take a follow up test in five days

The events took place in and around Liverpool, and we have to pick out Andy McNicholl, City Events Manager, Liverpool City Region, and his team, for a job well done. Andy is a NOEA member, a good friend of our organisation, and someone who has worked hard to represent and speak for Local Authorities throughout this difficult period. Andy and his team are also NOEA award winners, and are highly capable, we could not have wish for these events to be in better hands.

We're not yet aware of every NOEA member involved in the events but we were delighted to see Melvin Benn and his team at Festival Republic leading the organisation of the project. As well as Melvin, we had a number of other 'friends of NOEA' at the event, including DF Concert's Geoff Ellis who, like Melvin, was a NOEA award winners in the past. Other members on site included Crowd Space Drones and Specialized Security.



Since the weekend, the feedback has been extraordinary and, for many, incredibly moving. Many of you will have seen Professor Ian Buchan's quote on the BBC where he summed up the feeling of the events as an "An Explosion of Joy"; a fitting reminder of why we all do what we do.

Behind the scenes there were amazing levels of collaboration, often amongst competitive organisations. Before, during, and now, after the event, people are pulling together with the sole intent of putting on a series of events that will convince 'the powers that be' that this is an industry that can, and will, work as we move out of shut down. There was so much at stake, we needed to prove that we could operate safely, without social distancing, and that our industry are the best people to decide if events should happen or not. The early indications are that we have achieved this objective.

At NOEA, we are actively following up with our colleagues across government and government departments; through the All Party Parliamentary Group's (APPG) we are involved in; as well as the individual MPs who have been sympathetic to our plight. The aim is to keep the pressure on so we can get back to work as quickly as possible, while retaining the right levels of responsibility. We'll use the momentum from the weekend to continue to press our case for a government backed insurance scheme, and for better long-term support for the sector; there is still so much to do.

In the meantime, I believe that this weekend saw the events industry show the world not just how good we are at what we do, but that what we do adds so much value to society. It showed that our audiences, crowds and spectators have missed us as much as we have missed them.

We hope for more good news in the very near future.

Yours faithfully,

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