

**Colchester Borough Council**

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Your ref  
Our ref IAMMUSIC26.07.14  
Date 29 July 2014

Dear [REDACTED],

**Re: I Am Music Festival**

I am writing to you formally on behalf of the Colchester Safety Advisory Group regarding the I Am Music Festival.

As agreed at the meeting we held at Colchester Police Station on 24<sup>th</sup> July, I am confirming the points discussed with you that lead to the decision for Colchester Borough Council to withdraw the Castle Park venue hire.

- 1) No evidence to show provision of safety barriers / fencing had been secured:**  
In the latest event plan given to Colchester Borough Council 'Niche Event Hire' show in the 'List of Contractors & Suppliers' on page 24 - the status shows 'TBC'. At the stated meeting you were asked to provide written evidence of this provision which you were unable to do. This point alone would have made the event unsafe to proceed. In turn your Safety Officer received a call from the company 'SFX' to say that without fencing he could not proceed with assembling the stage.
- 2) No evidence to show that provision of emergency lighting had been secured:**  
In the latest event plan given to Colchester Borough Council no contractor / supplier information is provided. At the stated meeting you were asked to provide written evidence of this provision which you were unable to do. This point alone would have made the event unsafe to proceed.
- 3) No evidence to show that provision of additional toilet facilities had been secured:**  
In the latest event plan given to Colchester Borough Council 'Mobile Thrones' show in the 'List of Contractors & Suppliers' on page 24. At the stated meeting you were asked to provide written evidence of this provision to which you advised you had booked the provision 'Simply Loos' who are not listed in the Event Plan. You were asked to provide written evidence of this provision which you were unable to do. This point alone would have made the event unsafe to proceed.

**Continued.....**

- 4) **No evidence to show that provision Security services were fully in place:** In the latest event plan given to Colchester Borough Council 'VIP Security' show in the 'List of Contractors & Suppliers' on page. At the stated meeting you were informed that your Safety Officer received a call from the company stating that they had only been paid half of the contract cost and that without the further payment they would not be attending. You stated that the contract agreement was for 50% up front and 50% after the event. You were asked to provide evidence of this contract agreement which you were unable to do. This point alone would have made the event unsafe to proceed.
- 5) **Intelligence given to Essex Police stated that 'Silk Road' had become funders of the event due to the financial difficulties the group were in:** this would significantly change the 'Threat Assessment' of the event that Essex Police undertake. This would make Silk Road a stakeholder in the event as they would therefore have an element of control, as well as wanting to see their financial contribution returned. At the stated meeting you were asked to clarify this arrangement to which you stated there was no financial commitment from 'Silk Road' to the event; this was contrary to the intelligence received by Essex Police.
- 6) **Information received by Essex Police, via your Safety Officer, stated that Silk Road were given 3000 tickets to give away free:** this would significantly change the demographic of people attending the event and again would change the 'Threat Assessment' of the event that Essex Police undertake. At the stated meeting you were asked to clarify this arrangement to which you stated that you had only given Silk Road 100 tickets. Essex Police spoke to the Designated Premises Supervisor at this Licensed premises who confirmed they did not hold the tickets but that they had been asked to sell as many as possible.
- 7) **No evidence to show how many tickets were in circulation:** At the stated meeting you were asked to provide evidence of how many tickets had been sold. At previous meetings and in emails different figures had been quotes. You were unable to tell us how many tickets had been sold, nor how many had been given away. You were also unable to tell us how many had been printed.
- 8) **No evidence to show that provision amnesty bins had been secured:** In the latest event plan given to Colchester Borough Council there is no mention of the use of amnesty bins in your Drugs Policy. You had given verbal reassurance to the Safety Advisory Group on 18<sup>th</sup> July that you would secure amnesty bins via the charity Only Cowards Carry. Information passed to Essex Police and Colchester Borough Council by your Safety Officer stated that the order had never been placed and that they were no longer available via that charity. You were asked to provide written evidence of this provision which you were unable to do. Which in turn significantly decreased the possible effectiveness of your Drugs Policy and increased the appropriate Police input.
- 9) **The Park and Ride system over capacity:** At the stated meeting the Safety Officer clarified that he had gained quotes for two double decker buses but this was not followed up in time. Therefore one minibus and one coach had been ordered but it would take a considerable amount of time to move the amount of people likely to use the operation.
- 10) **No automated ticket software would be in use:** At the stated meeting you were asked to clarify how you would manage entry given that you had chosen not to use automated ticket software, against previous advice. You stated that this would be done manually at each gate. Essex Police raised a relevant point on your website that stated that if tickets had not arrived, that email confirmation could be used to gain entry. When asked how a manual system would stop people gaining entry using

both tickets and email confirmation a satisfactory solution was not reached.

Therefore meaning that at any one point you could not accurately record how many people would be in the park.

- 11) Sound check could not take place:** At the stated meeting it was clarified that with no staging in place a sound check could not be undertaken.
- 12) Acts pulling out due to payment issues:** At the stated meeting you were asked to clarify the situation regard the four major acts pulling out. You stated it was not due to non-payment but that the Music Company did not follow the agreed payment schedule. You were asked to provide written evidence of this provision which you were unable to do.
- 13) No provision for a back up PA system had been secured:** At the stated meeting you were asked to provide written evidence of this provision which you were unable to do.

A formal debrief for this event will be arranged with the Safety Advisory Group during September 2014.

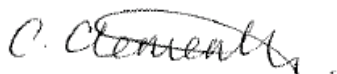
I would further draw your attention to the statement you have on you website:

*"It is with much regret that the I Am Music Festival 2014 scheduled for 26th July 2014 in Castle Park, Colchester, was postponed by Colchester Borough Council less than 48 hours before the event was due to take place. Unyime Udo and fellow directors wish to make the following statement on behalf of I Am Music Community Group, the organisers of the Festival."*

*"Throughout the planning process for the festival we worked closely with the Council and engaged, on the Council's recommendation, a Health and Safety consultant approved by the Council to advise on all matters concerned with health and safety. Despite providing all requested information and assessments, and giving assurances to the Council of appropriate agreements with suppliers for the provision of fencing, emergency lighting and toilets, the Council representatives were not willing to accept the plans and engage with us further to keep the event on track."*

As you know this to be factually incorrect, the Safety Advisory Group would ask you to remove it. Firstly, Colchester Borough Council did not postpone your event, they withdrew the venue hire. Secondly, you did not provide all requested information and assessments, to Colchester Borough Council or Essex Police. Thirdly, your assurances were verbal with no attempt to provide evidence which is not appropriate for any event with less than 24 hours to set up and this point is clearly covered above.

Yours sincerely



**Cassandra Clements**  
**Colchester Safety Advisory Group - Chair**

CC: Colchester Safety Advisory Group  
Chief Inspector Rachel Nolan – Essex Police

**Textphone users dial 18001 followed by the full number that you wish to call.**