

**LICENSING ACT 2003**  
**APPLICATION FOR A PREMISES LICENCE**  
**THE PIPELINE, 6 LITTLE EAST STREET, BRIGHTON BN1 1HT**  
**STATEMENT ON BEHALF OF THE APPLICANT**  
**THOMAS ISMAIL EKREM EVRENOS**

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**Introduction**

The Pipeline started 2009 in East London. The ambition was to run a music led venue with good quality food and drinks. After 7 years in London the venue rent tripled, and we could not afford to stay at our leased premises. In 2017 we reopened at 6 Little East Street. We kept the concept of running a music led venue. The new premises in Brighton was a listed grade 2 building with a history of problems with complaints from both the Police and Environmental Health Officers.

We understood that because we had a license that was based on previous tenant's activities that we were going to have to make operational changes and improvements in order to rebuild strong relationships with the neighbouring community from those that they had with the previous tenant. We feel that we have achieved that; we have put operational procedures in place and our business has always been one which does not attract any complaints nor cause any issues or disturbances.

Since the pandemic we have, thanks to support from Arts Council England, created a very good and inclusive DIY live music venue with gigs on a very regular basis. We are holding approximately 200 live music events per year and only open the upstairs space when we have artists performing. We host regular events in collaboration with BIMM, University of Sussex and Water Bear College of Music and more. We were also part of the Homegrown Festival this April which hosted around 50 local bands performing in 6 venues across the city.

Having a small capacity of just 60 we are often the first venue for new bands to play. We have fostered many Brighton-based, and international grassroots touring artists who have later become big worldwide success stories. We are committed to providing affordable access to original live music for our community. Our concept also includes supporting local promoters who can use our space for free to put on shows.

We have full professional production, backline and PA in-house, so artists need only bring hand instruments when they perform. The venue's social media reach includes around 13,000 followers with high levels of communication. The venue prides itself as being 100% independent, we do not benefit from the support of a large brewery or from being part of a chain. We employ 10 members of staff, including some who are specific to our live offering.

We are an active member and founder of Music Venues Alliance Brighton together with most of the local grassroots music venues.

### **Responsible authority representation and Council Licensing Policy**

This licence application is only in receipt of two representations from the Police Licensing Team and the Licensing Authority.

As stated, we took over the existing licence which was reviewed as it was an alcohol led vertical drinking establishment. We feel that by fully committing to being a grassroots music venue on the first floor rather than a sit down restaurant, we would still be operating in the spirit of the decision made by the Licensing Committee to prevent the premises operating in a fashion it was operating when it was reviewed.

To be clear, our premises has a food provision which is served daily at the premises and will continue to do so. The issue is our business model, and our survival depends on being able to have live music upstairs more than 24 times a year, which is what our current licence permits. We do have to be honest and state that the venue has provided live music on more occasions than 24 times in the last twelve months. However, what this does prove is that the venue can operate as a grassroots live music venue in this location without complaints and continue to promote the licensing objectives. The effect of post-COVID challenges has meant that the venue needs to be resilient and flexible with its booking policy.

The representation from the responsible authorities does not include any noise complaints or crimes involving the premises, because we haven't generated any. We feel that this demonstrates the premises is being managed in accordance with the review decision previously made to prevent it being a virtual drinking establishment.

This application simply wishes to replace the provision of food with a formal commitment to only operate a grassroots music venue in the first-floor function area. The only issue raised by the authorities was about compliance with the conditions which this application would completely remedy.

Since this visit, we have worked hard to reach an agreement with the responsible authorities and have updated policies and procedures. These are attached at **PL01**. All the suggested conditions attached to the application are agreed with the responsible authorities. We had tried to get these amended as a minor variation, and our understanding was they were happy with the new proposals but would only be able to agree to the amendments if we significantly reduced our operating hours, however, reducing our operating hours would completely destroy our ongoing viability and ability to keep the venue going. The reason why we can confidently say this is felt across the whole grassroots music sector: On its own the music program presented by venues such as ours at The Pipeline do not make a profit and often run at a loss, and trading hours are therefore vitally important.

The Music Venue Trust Annual Report 2023 recognised that the average profit margin of a UK grassroots music venue is 0.5%, and that at its core, the provision purely of live music is a loss-making activity; the national subsidy invested by GMVs in order to provide grassroots music is over £114 million. It is other revenue streams, like late-night provision of food & beverages, which enable GMVs like ours to provide their cultural activity. The Pipeline has been generated losses the last two years.

The suggestion from representations to cut our trading hours makes us no longer a grassroots music venue. Grassroots live music in the whole of UK is normally happening between 8-11pm. For a small venue it means that the band arrives between 5-7pm, soundchecks and start around 8pm. To close service in the bar at the same time as the band finish, as suggested by the representation, is not viable. The musicians might want to have a drink after the show, guests might want to wind down before they leave the premises etc.

We feel that operating a grassroots venue means we wouldn't add to cumulative impact in Brighton Centre as the clientele and offer we want to provide has demonstrated that

this doesn't lead to complaints or crime and disorder problems which the policy seeks to reduce.

Brighton Licensing Policy was drafted in a large part to protect the amenity of the residents. There are no complaints from our residents in respect of how Pipeline is operated and managed and importantly no residential representations were received to this application which you are determining.

We have also future proofed the operating schedule so that if granted as requested the venue can only operate as a grassroots venue for this point forward or it would need to go back in front of members again for a future formal variation application.

### **Conclusion**

We have been successful in managing our venues with later hours without any complaints since we took over the premises. We are part of the growing a successful live music community in Brighton that resident and the Council support and are proud of.

We simply request to members to regularise our licence in line with how we are now primarily operating. We do offer food daytime and evening trading hours but need to be able to have the upstairs room as a grassroots music venue rather than a sit-down restaurant to be able to remain viable.

The responsible authorities are both supportive of the transition to a live music venue but have concerns about the operating hours. We submit that we have demonstrated that we can operate these hours and promote the licensing objectives. We therefore hope the Committee are understanding in respect of our transition from a restaurant to offering live music more than 24 times a year and amend our licence as requested with our existing operating hours intact so we can finally become a permanent grassroots live music venue and our that will be successful for years to come.