

opinion

It's important to support the music you love more than ever right now

Danielle Lett



Lockdown has been extremely frustrating for all of us, to say the least. Devastation has struck pretty much any and every sector you can think of in a number of ways. Hospitality, tourism, sports, education, transport – everything has been affected and continues to be hit as the months go by.

I'm sure, like myself, many of you reading this will have had a music festival (or two, or even three) planned for the summer, with some gigs lined up in between to keep you going.

But of course, all of that went out the window as soon as Covid struck and lockdown was announced. No one, except those in the scientific fields, could have predicted this going on for as long as it has.

I distinctly remember back in March seeing the breaking news that Glastonbury had been cancelled. My sacred fest, Download Festival, which takes place a couple of weekends before, shortly followed suit.

But I remained fairly hopeful, albeit naively. "Maybe we'll still have some have events on, towards the end of summer. We've still got Reading to look forward to, guys." How wrong I was.

Latitude. Wireless. Reading & Leeds. All cancelled. Smaller gigs, stadium-sized concerts and everything in between. All cancelled. Or postponed, if you were lucky enough. Refunds were promptly issued, and people were left worried about the state of live music to come.

Having been to my last gig back in March before lockdown was announced (it was Employed to Serve, at a sweaty, sold-out show at the Underworld in Camden, for anyone interested), I was sure to



The UK's live music and arts sector contributes over a whopping £5bn to the UK's economy annually

Picture: GETTY IMAGES

make the most of what was to be my last hurrah for some time to come. Exactly how long that was going to be however, I was unsure.

For the last few months, I've been worried if we'll ever have the prospect of live music to look forward to again.

As the months go on, research from the scientific community grows, and government advice changes.

Am I hopeful? Well right now, no. Already I've had previously postponed gigs get rescheduled yet again, moving from autumn to now spring and summer next year. And with Glastonbury's Michael Eavis having already said that a 2021 edition of his festival might be a no-go, it doesn't bode well for the future of live music in the

current state that we're in.

Other festivals slightly more optimistic include Download Festival and East Anglia's very own pride and joy Latitude (which both fall under the Live Nation UK umbrella), as the two have already revealed some of their 2021 lineups over the past few weeks.

While a government support package of £1.57 billion was announced for the UK's cultural sector back in July, there's still more we can do as individuals in the meantime to help keep our beloved music and arts scene going.

Support your local music venues. If you have some spare change lying around, why not donate it to some of your favourite places which are potentially on

the brink of closing? We can all cast our minds back and remember some of those amazing nights out we've had with friends, whether it was spent discovering new bands in our local round the corner, or taking the trek further afield to see our favourite artists on tour off the back of a new album.

And support the musicians you love. Buy a record if you can, or get some merch. If one of your favourite artists is doing a pay-per-view live stream gig, try and tune in. It might not seem like a lot at the time, but for the bands, the artists, the venues, the crew and the promoters, it all adds up, and right now, every little helps.

I fully understand there's bigger things going on right now, but the

country's live music and arts sector accounts for a whopping £5.2 billion annually to the economy – with an estimated 60 per cent of jobs potentially at risk right now.

If a summer – and now an autumn/winter – of no live music means we can hopefully get through this and have 2021 to look forward, then I'm all for it.

So please wear your mask, wash your hands and keep your distance where possible. If you ever want the buzz that comes with live music again, we need to follow the rules so we can get back to doing what we love best. Nothing will be better than that first gig back after lockdown, reunited with friends, pint in hand.