



SUPPORTING AND  
CHAMPIONING  
LEISURE-TIME MUSIC

# Making Music Council report 2021

2021 saw us continue with online council sessions, this year we held one bigger meeting with breakout rooms, rather than the six separate meetings we held in 2020.

The Council meeting is for members only and to look at 'the bigger picture': the direction you want your association to be taking, in terms of service provision, or lobbying, or on more specific issues.

## Feedback on the website

The first session focussed on how members use the Making Music website and what they would like it to do.

The key themes were:

### Resources and Guidance

- Resources on topical topics should be quick and easy to find – such as Covid recovery and Brexit.
- Members also wanted quick access to topics on the practical side of running a music group, such as governance, policies, templates, PRS, safeguarding and finance.
- Growing and retaining membership was also a priority for many groups.
- There was a general theme around difficulties in finding content:
  - members did not know about the full range of resources and benefits available on the website
  - finding the relevant items was not as easy /quick as it should be
  - search function is not focussed enough
  - navigation menu not clear
- Personalisation of content was also discussed, such as members being able to personalise their homepage based on preferences or content being directed to people based on their interests (e.g. content specific to promoting groups or treasurers).

### Tools

- The idea of a membership directory to facilitate groups contacting each other and sharing ideas was popular.
- There was some discussion about the vacancies and events listings and how effective they are as promotional tools.
- The Music Bank received positive feedback, but it was felt it could offer more still.

### Services

- There were several suggestions for new services:
  - A music arranging service
  - Support with finding copyright holders
  - Conductors and additional players database
  - Venue search

The feedback from these sessions will be very helpful as we embark on a project to deliver a new website in 2022. Improving how members can find relevant content is central to the new website project. We are also taking the chance to think about how we can use the website to improve how we deliver our existing services to members and add new ones. As always with projects like this there are several competing priorities that all have to be balanced against cost.

## Post Covid

In the second session we looked at groups' concerns about restarting activity after the Covid-19 pandemic. From the discussion it was clear that many groups were still in fire-fighting mode and concentrating on dealing with Covid-19 related issues and were not yet looking much beyond that.

Some of the key themes were:

- How long will Covid specific measures have to be in place – and how will groups know if/when to ease them?
- Will we have to shut down again in the autumn?
- What Covid induced changes might stay permanently. Such as:
  - Contracts with professionals to cover possible future pandemics
  - Increased online ticketing and cashless payments
- Will audiences be ready to return / under what circumstances will they be happy to return?
- There were concerns about the financial impact of needing bigger venues to accommodate Covid measures, and a suggestion that Making Music could look at funding to help cover temporary increased venue costs
- Concerns about not everyone wanting to return to in person group activity, and how this will impact the finances (membership subscription income) and music (e.g. not all sections of the orchestra being fully represented).
- Generally, groups did not want to continue with online solutions for rehearsals and performances for longer than they had to, but there was some interest in continuing hybrid rehearsal to increase engagement, and online committee meetings seem set to stay.
- Recruitment of new members post Covid also remains a key concern, as it was pre-Covid.