

Express

# Letters

## Money spent on consultants could go towards jazz festival

I WAS disappointed to read the article in The Brecon & Radnor about a report produced for Brecon Town Council by Nod Knowles Productions of Bath saying very negative things about our Brecon Jazz Festival.

We enjoyed a wonderful jazz festival last year even though it was on a smaller scale which is perhaps the way forward.

For the past 20 years we have attended the jazz weekend with friends from as far away as Paris, London and Essex. A friend from Colchester joined us again last year and looks forward to returning this year.

I would appreciate knowing which events Nod Knowles attended. I feel sure that if he had attended the concerts I was at he could not reach such negative conclusions.

Also I would be interested to know what were the experiences of the town councillors who went to concerts. I was also disappointed to note what little appreciation there was for the huge effort made by Brecon Jazz Club.

They not only organised packed out

events throughout the weekend but keep jazz alive in the town with monthly, highly appreciated, concerts in The Muse throughout the year.

This provides much needed support for young Welsh musicians and we benefit from top quality music which lifts our spirits.

Many of the musicians at the Brecon Jazz Festival are young people even if the audience tends to be older, and what's wrong with an older audience?

The Brecon Fringe caters for all ages and a wide variety of musical tastes and is hugely supported by young people and that is terrific. Just pop in to The Clarence any time throughout our Brecon Jazz Festival and you will see the place is crowded with young local people enjoying blues and rock as well as big band sounds.

I would also suggest that the Theatre didn't get the audiences it could have because of a recent change of management, so everything was advertised too late for people from far afield to organise travel and

accommodation. It also meant that many local people had already booked other events. I believe a stroller for the theatre alone would have attracted larger audiences and could have provided better promotion for the many wonderful, as yet, unknown young bands who came to entertain us. Well-known artists such as Rollins could have been charged for separately.

There were other well-known artists such as Jacqui Dankworth and Charlie Wood who packed the Cathedral and Tina May's concert at the Guildhall was a sell-out.

So what is the point of this study? The money spent on such studies and consultations should go instead to the people who put in the long hours and huge effort to organise the events. So can Brecon Town Council please donate the money which was earmarked for more consultation to Brecon Jazz Club so we can enjoy another successful jazz weekend next August?

E Maclean  
Sennybridge

## Alternative options have no substance

I READ with some disappointment the findings and scope for future music events in Brecon led by the Town Council.

In the absence of Brecon Jazz being as an international event in the future, without a major sponsor stepping forward to take it on, the council pointed out the possibility for other music events in Brecon. The only possibility that was not listed was the option to build on the successful Jazz Club-led Jazz Weekend, which was held in 2016.

In my view the embers of Brecon Jazz are still glowing. This could be revived as a Principality-led event rather than in an International context. The report would seem to prefer to start with ashes

rather than embers. To begin any new concept from ashes with limited interest at present is optimistic in the extreme.

The benefits of the Jazz Weekend should not be lost on the people and businesses of Brecon. This comes from the demographics of jazz fans. Without apology they are generally the over-50s.

The group with enough disposable income to use local accommodation and restaurants, but their memory still good enough to recall the the former excesses of their youth so are now more restrained.

This group via the vehicle of Brecon Jazz has injected considerable amounts of cash into the local economy. To intentionally douse this fire would

substantially harm the local economy. The options listed to replace the Brecon Jazz phenomenon with a nebulous wishlist with no substance is just a smoke and mirrors trick.

For Brecon Jazz weekend to continue and expand the council should be realistic enough to realise the only way ahead is to hang onto the coat tails of Lynn and Roger [Gornall] who run the Jazz Club and be pulled into a better place. This will require all stake holders i.e. the Theatre, town council the parks, the assembly and other sponsors to sing from the same hymn sheet. Last year the harmony was discordant.

Robert Hughes  
Talgarth