



**MVT**  
Music Venue Trust

# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

**Protecting, securing, and improving  
Grassroots Music Venues across the UK**

**Leading the national and international  
movement to sustain and amplify  
the Grassroots Music Venue sector**

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# 1 FOREWORD

## HM Government on Grassroots Music Venues

“The passion and dedication of the people behind grassroots venues across the country and their commitment to give opportunities to artists and bring live music to audiences is one of the UK’s strongest assets.”

“Grassroots venues have intrinsic cultural value. They provide shared social experiences, which contribute to the UK’s music heritage. They offer emerging artists their first opportunities to perform and develop their craft, providing the essential pipeline for tomorrow’s megastars and household names. They also stimulate local economies, generate employment, and support a wide range of jobs across the creative industries, from sound engineers to stage crews. Most importantly, they provide phenomenal enjoyment to many thousands of people, as the opportunity to hear live music up close is an essential part of our cultural life.”

“The government is committed to working closely across the music sector – from the largest commercial players to small venues, not-for-profit organisations, artists, the creative workforce, and music fans – to enable a truly sustainable grassroots music sector. The grassroots music sector is the backbone of the entire music ecosystem, extending far beyond venues to include promoters, artists, the creative workforce, recording studios, rehearsal spaces, and outdoor events and festivals. Grassroots is where experimentation happens, where new genres are born, and where audiences can experience raw, unfiltered performances that are central to the continued cultural evolution of our music scene. It is the driving force that serves as the foundation of the entire music industry, fostering creativity, innovation, and cultural expression.”

*Excerpt from the Government response to the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee’s grassroots music venues report, 7 November 2024*

## A Word from Our Chairs & CEO

2024 remained a tough and challenging climate for Grassroots Music Venues (GMVs), with over 200 venues, 24.9% of the entire sector, needing to reach out to the charity for support to avoid permanent closure. Music Venue Trust (MVT) offered planning, licensing, noise, acoustics, and legal advice to GMVs across the UK, directly responding to a broad range of key issues facing venues and increased our support for the financial challenges that pose the most significant risk to the sustainability and resilience of the grassroots network.

The sector remains significantly underfunded in comparison to other areas of culture. MVT has worked with public funding agencies, trusts, foundations, and philanthropic individuals and organisations to increase the total level of financial support being made available to GMVs, while continuing to press for a radical shift in thinking in the music industry so that financial responsibility for the development of new talent falls more evenly across all stakeholders. MVT has been at the forefront of the campaign to introduce a simple financial contribution from the most successful events since 2018. 2024 was a breakthrough year for that campaign, with the Culture, Media and Sport (CMS) Select Committee’s *grassroots music venues report* and the Government’s response to it providing an urgency to calls for action on investment that the campaign had lacked in previous years. We welcome the significant progress towards adopting this approach.

We engaged with the English, Welsh, and Scottish Governments on challenges including the energy crisis, business rates, VAT on ticketing, investment programmes,

planning reform, and opportunities to enhance the community ownership of venues across the UK. We were pleased to be able to increase our engagement with Northern Ireland stakeholders to develop opportunities with Stormont to recognise the value of GMVs.

Following the launch of Music Venue Properties (MVP) as an independent, community-owned investment vehicle in 2023, we welcome the substantial progress with this radical new model of ownership. MVP has already taken five GMVs out of the commercial sector and into the “National Trust of Music Venues,” providing venue operators with secured tenancy and the ability to establish long-term plans.

Team MVT has taken a lead role across a range of policies and initiatives that are important to our members and to the communities they serve, and this work was recognised in the CMS Select Committee’s *grassroots music venues report*. We are fully engaged with an emerging network of music organisations dedicated to producing information and guidance that supports the push towards carbon neutrality, taking direct action to improve equality, diversity and inclusion, and meeting the challenge of accessibility.

In what continues to be a very challenging and difficult environment for our sector, we are extremely grateful to all our partners, funders, donors, sponsors and corporate supporters. Their generosity has enabled us to create a robust organisation that has been able to achieve real positive change for the GMV sector in 2024. We would also like to thank our patrons, who have been a powerful and effective voice in support of our work.

# 2 ABOUT MUSIC VENUE TRUST

MVT is a UK registered charity<sup>1</sup>, which acts to protect, secure and improve the UK’s GMV circuit. The established and accepted definition of a Grassroots Music Venue, developed by MVT in 2015, is widely used in the UK and internationally.

Created in January 2014, MVT aims to secure the long-term future of GMVs in England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland, whether they are iconic venues, such as Hull Adelphi, Exeter Cavern, The 100 Club, Band on the Wall, King Tut’s, and Clwb Ifor Bach, or lesser-known venues that are equally important to their geographical or musical community. These venues play a crucial role in the development of British music, nurturing local talent, providing a platform for artists to build their careers and develop their music and performance skills.

MVT works to gain recognition of the essential role these venues fulfil, not only for artist development but also for the cultural and music industries, the economy, and local communities. The geographical spread of GMVs provides access to live music, for both performers and audience members, in many locations that do not have alternative cultural venues. The charity gives advice to the Government, the cultural sector, and the music industry on issues impacting GMVs and is the nominated representative that speaks on behalf of the Music Venues Alliance (MVA), an association of venues from across the UK.

Advocacy for the live music ecosystem is an important element of MVT’s work, emphasising the context in which GMVs are a vital part of the fabric connecting artists and audiences across the UK. Illustrating the relationships between venues, promoters, artists, and other industry professionals, and the entry point to cultural engagement and careers provided by venues in communities across the UK, is key to highlighting their value.

Practical support is offered to GMVs on an ongoing basis. Through the Emergency Response Service, MVT provides MVA member venues with access to free legal and expert advice on licensing, planning, development, noise, business resilience, and tenancy issues. Additional services include bespoke resources, training, networking opportunities, and events for MVA members.

When established, MVT’s long-term aim was to acquire the freeholds of as many of these venues as possible. The creation of a community benefit society, Music Venue Properties (MVP), which leads on this work, together with the Own Our Venues Campaign, have seen advances in this ambition. MVT continues to have an active role in a long-term campaign to take control of these freeholds and bring them under a protected status of benevolent ownership, although MVP undertakes the day-to-day work in this area.

The charity employs a core team who work with specialist consultants where further expertise is required. The team is supported by a Board of Trustees, made up of professionals who are passionate about GMVs and their social, cultural, and economic value. The Trustees voluntarily oversee the work of Team MVT, holding a legal responsibility for the charity’s conduct and fulfilment of its mission.

<sup>1</sup> Music Venue Trust is a charity registered with the Charity Commission of England and Wales: Charity Number 1159846  
Music Venue Trust (Scotland) is a charity registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator: Charity Number SC052001

## MVT's WORK IN NUMBERS



## 4 DECADES OF TOURING DECLINE

1994

Average length of tour: 21.9 shows  
Locations on the primary\*/secondary\*\* circuit: 28

2004

Average length of tour: 18.5 shows  
Locations on the primary/secondary circuit: 22

2014

Average length of tour: 12.9 shows  
Locations on the primary/secondary circuit: 15

2024

Average length of tour: 10.9 shows  
Locations on the primary/secondary circuit: 12

\* locations receiving more than 2/3 of national grassroots tours \*\* locations receiving more than 1/3 of national grassroots tours

Towns and cities no longer on the primary/secondary circuit

Bath	Northampton
Bedford	Norwich
Cambridge	Portsmouth
Derby	Reading
Dundee	Stoke
Galashiels	Windsor
Hull	Wolverhampton
Leicester	York
Newport	

**OVER £7 MILLION  
RAISED AND INVESTED  
INTO VENUES, ARTISTS  
AND PROMOTERS  
SINCE JULY 2021**

## THE CHARITY

- Celebrated ten years of MVT with a special Outstanding Contribution Award made to all the venues, artists, promoters, politicians, supporters, and music fans that have supported our work since 2014
- Created devolved nation-specific reports and events to disseminate in-depth data about the sector relevant to Scotland and Wales
- Supported the grassroots music venues report by the Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee inquiry, ensuring the voices of GMV operators were heard directly by the cross-party MPs and that their experiences were responded to with a strong and robust report
- Developed and expanded our team, significantly increasing our advocacy and campaigning work while enhancing our political interactions at all levels of government
- MVT team members spoke on behalf of MVT in panels and presentations at 33 conferences and networking events in the UK, Europe, US, and Australia

## MVT TEAM

17 Staff  
15 Consultants  
47 Gurus  
13 Trustees

## MVT PATRONS

72 Artists  
8 Broadcasters  
19 Industry  
4 Political

## KEY SECTOR STATISTICS



# 4 THE GMV SECTOR

## 4.1 THE FIGURES

The UK GMV sector currently comprises over 800 GMVs across England, Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The precise number of GMVs fluctuates regularly as a result of the dynamic nature of the industry. *The MVT Annual Report* provides a snapshot of the sector on a specific date, created by an in-depth and comprehensive annual survey of the Music Venues Alliance (MVA). The data in this report was provided by a statistically significant number of members.

The GMV sector itself is exceptionally diverse. It is therefore important to interpret average figures for a derived model of the average GMV as valuable illustrations rather than indicative of the economic viability of any specific venue.



## THE GMV SECTOR CLIMATE

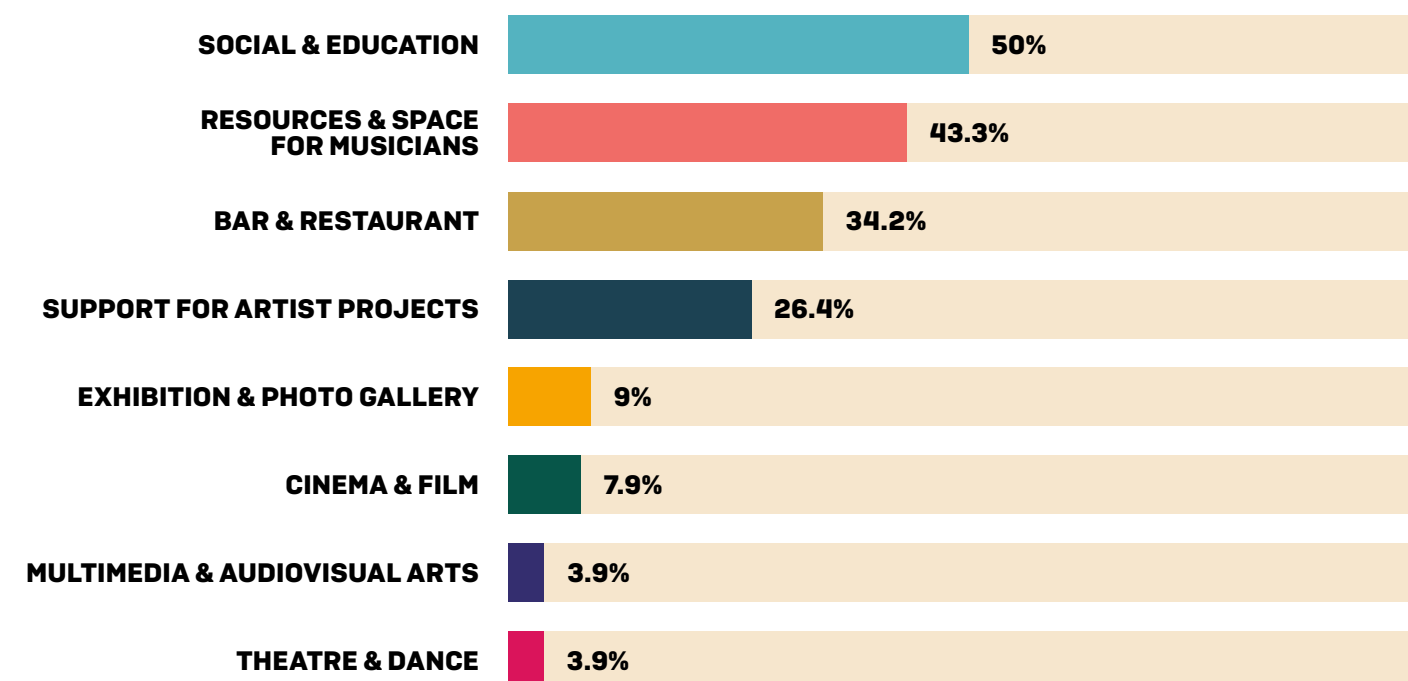
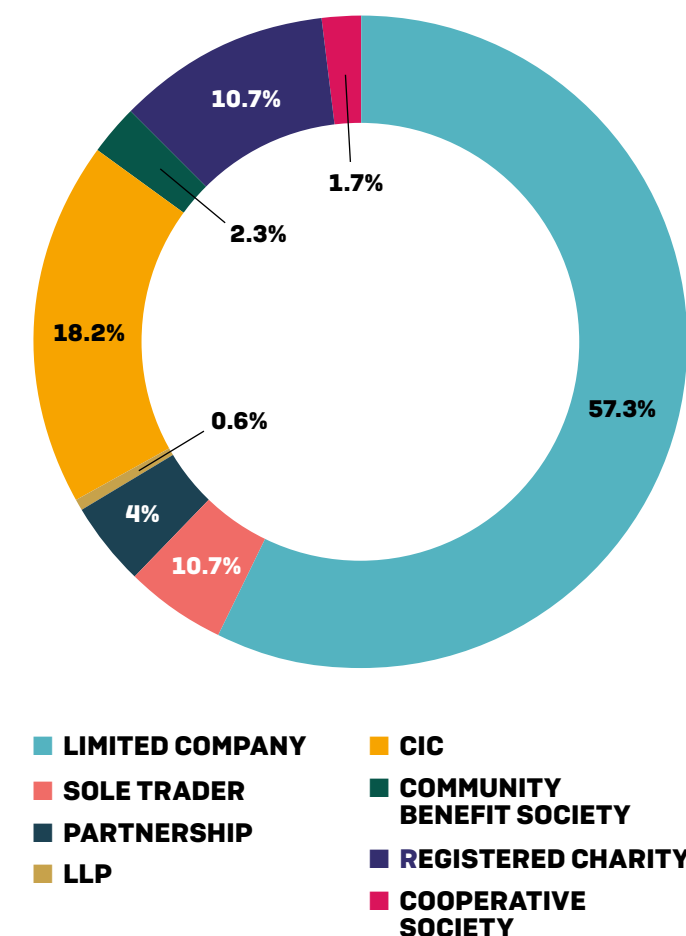
The MVA saw a 3% decline in trading venues from 2023's figure of 835, leaving 810 spaces performing the function of a GMV in 2024.

This is a significant improvement on the rate of decline in trading venues in 2022/2023. Additionally, however, a record number of venues (over 200) sought help through the Emergency Response Service, an increase of 18% on 2023, representing 24.9% of the total membership requiring support to prevent permanent closure.

43.8% of GMVs reported a loss in the last 12 months. 17 venues sought financial support from MVT's Emergency Hardship Relief Grants to avert closure.

Of the 810 MVA members, 33% were registered as not-for-profit entities, a 29% increase in not-for-profit registration since 2023. Since 2014, when MVT was founded, the number of GMVs operating with a not-for-profit structure has increased from 1 in 34 to 1 in 3. The most popular type of not-for-profit registration was a Community Interest Company (CIC); 18.2% of all members of the MVA operate their cultural programme under a CIC model.

While the primary focus of GMVs remains live music, they also play a vital role in their communities, undertaking various functions. The most common reported function in 2024 was engaging in social and educational projects encompassing cultural initiatives, community work, and courses. The second most popular function was the provision of resources and space for musicians, including rehearsal studios, recording studios, and resource centres.



THE EVENTS

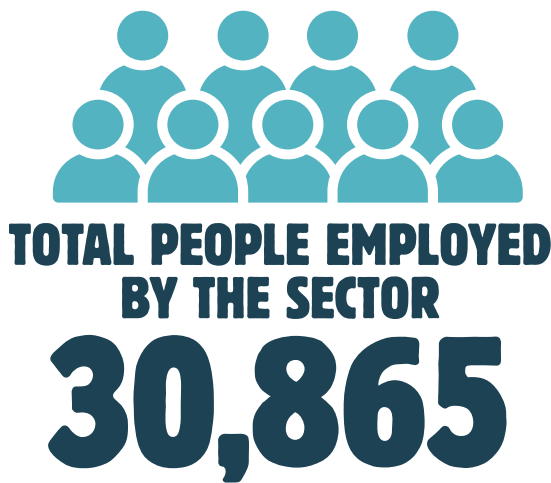
The average venue capacity was 309. There was a slight decrease in capacity utilisation, down 1.4 percentage points from 2023 to 39.6%. Ticketed events saw a capacity utilisation of 38.6%, equating to 122 attendees per event.

An annual average of 23,964 audience visits were made per venue, a decline of 15.4% since 2023. The number of events put on by the average GMV declined sharply to 196, down by 12.5%. The sector delivered 162,092 events in total, 67.5% of these events were live music. The total number of ticketed live music events being put on by the entire GMV sector declined by 8.3% to 91,149. These statistics conceal an additional decrease in income from live music ticket sales, which declined 13.5% in 2024. This additional decline in the value of tickets sold relates to a significant decrease in the number of high value tickets sold for national touring acts that have been replaced by more local and regionalised events with lower per-ticket values.

These statistics suggest that public demand for music remained high but isn't being serviced by national tours. In 2024, the weekly number of events staged by the average GMV declined by 11% to 3.8.

2.6 of these events were live music, 79.6% of such events being ticketed live music. Each live music event saw an average of nine artists perform, earning average total fees per event of £666.72.

Other artform events, such as comedy, theatre, dance, and film, rose significantly in 2024, delivering more than 22% of the total programming in the average GMV. 35.2% of all events at GMVs were free entry. 57,217 free-entry events were enjoyed by over 6 million people in 2024.



GMV AUDIENCE VISITS

**19,410,840**

TOTAL NUMBER OF EVENTS

**162,092**

TOTAL TICKETED LIVE MUSIC EVENTS

**91,149**

TOTAL TICKETED OTHER ART FORM EVENTS

**16,352**

TOTAL FREE-ENTRY LIVE MUSIC EVENTS

**36,272**

TOTAL FREE-ENTRY OTHER ART FORM EVENTS

**20,945**

THE WORKFORCE

The average GMV employed 17.5 PAYE staff, with a full-time equivalent (FTE) of eight PAYE employees; this is a minor variation from 2023.

The average GMV employed a significantly higher number of paid contractors in 2024, an increase of 24% to an average of 20.7 per venue. This continues a trend towards greater contractor/freelancer positions across the workforce.

Volunteers continue to make up a significant part of a venue's workforce with approximately seven volunteers helping out per GMV. While the number of volunteers per venue is significant, the FTE work delivered by volunteers continues to decline, from a high of 3.89 FTE in 2022 to just 1.87 FTE in 2024.

INCOME & EXPENDITURE

In 2024, the average total turnover of a typical GMV was £648,852.

78.4% of income came from food & beverage and other income, and 21.6% was generated through ticket sales, encompassing both live music and non-music events. This is a dramatic change in sources of income, with a marked decrease in ticket income being replaced by increased food & beverage sales. Ticket prices were stagnant in 2024, averaging £11.48, compared to £11.42 in 2023.

Average turnover by venue increased by 8.1%. Total sector turnover saw slower growth as a result of venue closures, up 4.7% to £525,570,734.

The expenditure of the average GMV totalled £645,738, an increase of 8.1%. GMVs spent £253,622 (39%) of their expenditure on staff/freelancers and £340,372.79 (52.7%) on live music provision. An additional £7,702.11 per venue was paid in licence fees to PRS (1.2% of total turnover, 5.4% of ticket income - revenue for PRS for Music exceeds the Copyright Tribunal stipulated rate of 4% as a result of fixed tariffs, such as Tariff P, failing to address declining event numbers).

68.6% of GMVs invested over £3,000 in enhancing their buildings in 2024, with the most popular improvement being related to sound equipment.

This income and expenditure comparison leaves the average GMV with a profit margin of £3,114 or 0.48%. 43.8% of venues reported a loss in the last 12 months. A distinct contrast emerges when examining the profit margins of venues based on their capacity and geographical locations. Venues with a capacity lower than 400 were those most likely to be making a loss in 2024. Those situated in areas with populations under 200k reported an average loss of -1%, while their counterparts in more populated areas exhibited a profit margin of 1.3%. Additionally, venues with a total turnover under £500k were more likely to have a negative profit margin (averaging -2.7%) compared to those with turnovers exceeding £500k (averaging 3.1%).

When specifically considering the expenditure and income related solely to live music provision, the average GMV incurred a yearly loss of £198,956.17.



TOTAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE ECONOMY

**£525,570,734**



TOTAL SECTOR EXPENDITURE

**£523,047,994**



TOTAL SECTOR INCOME FROM LIVE MUSIC

**£113,634,865**



TOTAL SECTOR EXPENDITURE ON LIVE MUSIC

**£275,701,960**



TOTAL GMV SUBSIDY TO LIVE MUSIC

**£162,067,095**



## 4.2 MUSIC VENUES ALLIANCE: THE MEMBERSHIP

Founded in January 2015, the Music Venues Alliance (MVA) is the UK's largest network of GMVs. It is a representative body on whose behalf MVT advocates and campaigns and through which the charity provides direct support to owners and operators. The MVA enables MVT to work on behalf of member venues and speak to governments, the cultural sector, and the music industry about the challenges GMVs face.

To become a member of the MVA, each venue must be able to demonstrate fulfilment of a detailed set of organisational criteria, covering their cultural and social role, economic activity, and infrastructural specifications. Applications are assessed using MVT's definition of a GMV. In areas where there are no GMVs, Grassroots Music & Arts Spaces (GMAS) and Grassroots Music Pubs (GMPs) might fulfil the role of a GMV within the local community.

In March 2022, MVT introduced a subscription-based membership model to the MVA, so that this part of the charity's work could become self-funded, with essential functions upheld by the financial commitment of member venues. Structured by various levels of membership at incremental monthly costs, the subscription model is designed to allow venues in a more financially secure position to contribute a greater amount, enabling cheaper fees for venues experiencing financial precarity. A free bursary option is also available, upon application, for venues that are unable to afford the membership fee.

MVA members receive regular information from MVT and are provided access to resources, events, workshops, and opportunities throughout the year. Their first line of contact is the Venue Support Team, which includes dedicated coordinators in England, Scotland, and Wales; a dedicated steering group each for Northern Ireland, Wales, and Scotland; and a newly recruited rights management advisor. Further support is also provided by MVT gurus – specialist experts in fields such as planning, licensing, acoustics, legal, and finance – in accordance with the specific needs of each venue.

Throughout the year, MVT has continued to develop its online members portal, which hosts a comprehensive library of resources and information that are vital to the effective functioning of a GMV, including legislation, policy, best practice guidance, and templates and tools for use in assessments, applications, and organisational development. Online meetings and drop-in sessions are offered throughout the year so that members can discuss prevalent issues with team members or consultants.

## 4.3 THE MEMBERSHIP REVIEW

Each year, MVT conducts a review of the MVA membership to ascertain whether existing venues have reduced or ceased their live music provision and to identify any GMVs that have permanently closed without having come through the Emergency Response Service. This review ensures that MVA represents suitable, operational venues that fulfil the definition of a GMV whilst allowing MVT to maintain accurate figures and an informed understanding of how the grassroots live music sector is changing.

The review process involved conducting research into each venue's live music activity, broader cultural offering, and community interactions, drawing on publicly available information across venue websites, social media, and online listings, in addition to existing knowledge obtained through engagement with Team MVT, such as venue support, live projects, and the annual survey. Consideration was given to the local context of each venue, such as whether a venue is situated in a major music city, on a touring route, or in an underserved area.

Where the available information on a venue was insufficient or it appeared a venue had substantially reduced its live music programme, MVT sought further information from venue operators, inviting more detailed insight into the provision and circumstances at their venues.

### FINDINGS

In 2023, MVT reported the loss of 125 trading GMVs, due to permanent closure or venues no longer fulfilling the definitional criteria of a GMV, citing factors across financial, operational, legal, and personal domains. In 2024, this trend has continued but at a lesser rate, due in part to extensive support delivered by MVT's Emergency Response Service, which has received more cases than ever before in the charity's history.

- 835 GMVs were operational as of 25 July 2023
- 810 GMVs remained operational as of 26 July 2024
- 46 venues were identified during this period as having permanently closed
- 40 venues were identified during this period as no longer operating as GMVs
- 61 venues were newly recognised as GMVs during this period

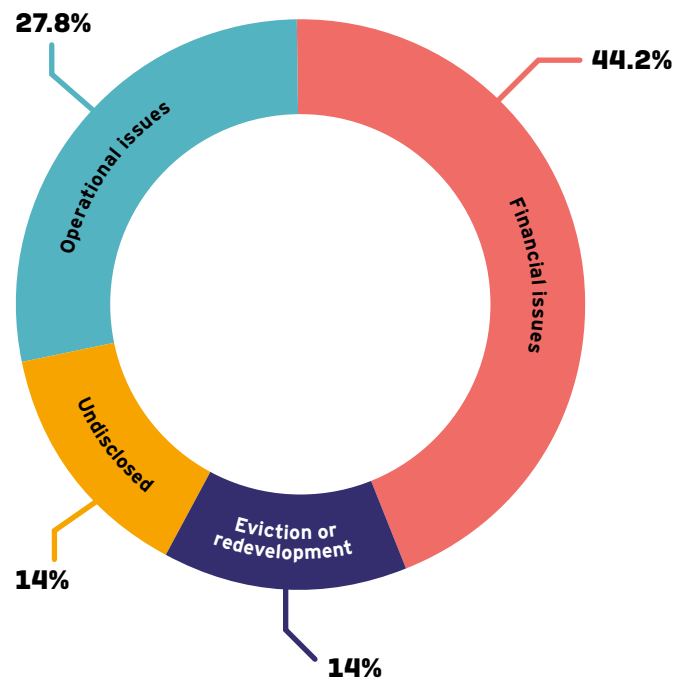
REASONS FOR CLOSURE

The following causes were identified as contributing to permanent closure of the venues:

- Financial inviability resulting from increased rents, energy prices, business rates, supply costs, and PRS licence fee discrepancies
- Insufficient monthly turnover due to reduction in average customer spend amidst cost-of-living crisis
- Inability to recover from financial impact and debt sustained during Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns
- Noise abatement orders, neighbour disputes, and local council intervention related to venue activity
- Revocation of the venue’s premises licence, termination of lease, or unachievable licence/lease renewal terms
- Venue building sold by freeholder with view for redevelopment, repurposing, or demolition

The following causes were identified as contributing to the reduction or termination of live music provision:

- Reduction in regional touring opportunities, i.e. fewer artists touring, fewer tour stops
- Increase in letting venue space for private hire and corporate events to enhance revenue
- Prioritisation of club nights and themed/novelty events to drive an increase in footfall
- Reorientation of programming toward live comedy, sports screenings, and pub quizzes
- Diversification of activities offered, such as crafts, exercise, exhibitions, and groups
- Limited availability or access to suitable space and facilities for hosting live music



VENUE CLOSURE CASE STUDIES

CHAMBERS, FOLKESTONE

Chambers, a 200-capacity venue in Folkestone, had been run by husband-and-wife team Chris and Liz for 26 years before they made the decision to close the doors in December 2024. In the basement of a converted bank, it was a unique space that brought in international talent alongside touring UK musicians and local grassroots acts. The passion and drive of Chris and Liz is emblematic of the sector. Chris’s weekly videos on social media saw him chatting to viewers as he walked through the venue, pointing out new gig posters, and talking about his excitement for booking the acts, and Liz cooking dinners for the bands and running the bar and community café, helping direct vital revenue to the GMV. Everything was run with passion, care, attention, and smart business diligence.

Over the course of the year, they had fought to keep the venue running as they faced enormous challenges with their energy company who had charged them out-of-tariff rates around 180% higher than the market rate and, in an experience mirrored by much of the sector, further increases in other core costs and a downturn in per-head spend.

The loss of a long-standing GMV such as Chambers will be felt acutely by the community in Folkestone and the wider region and underpins the importance of supporting access to local live music culture.

THE MOON, CARDIFF

The Moon on Womanby Street in Cardiff announced its closure in November 2024 with a statement that reflected on the hardships they faced, not unique to their venue, but felt across the sector. They wrote: “The burden of a cost-of-living crisis and the mounting costs of running a business where survival always runs on a knife edge have proven too difficult for us to continue.”

The Welsh Government cut business rates relief for hospitality in 2024 down to 40% from 75% in April 2024, which MVT warned would have severe consequences for the nation’s GMVs already trading on minimal to no margins. The Moon team wrote: “Every time we think we’ve overcome a hurdle, another five appear,” which resonates with the experience of the wider MVA membership. Any number of factors, predictable like a rent review or energy tariff renewal or unpredictable like a flood or series of event cancellations, have the very real ability to knock a venue off its delicate balancing act of trading month to month.

THE JAZZ BAR, EDINBURGH

When The Jazz Bar announced its closure in April 2024, the news was met with an outpouring of sadness from the Scottish music community, as the venue had been a stalwart stage for developing Scottish grassroots talent particularly in the jazz and blues scenes. Over two decades, the venue had amassed an audience who had come to rely on the venue for access to new talent and a like-minded community. After the announcement of closure, MVT helped guide and support Nick and Justyna, two passionate individuals who had been part of the venue story as employees and gig-goers for years into creating a new CIC, and to find a way forward using the charity’s resources and expertise on not-for-profit ownership structures. MVT connected Nick and Justyna to support from Crowdfunder who guided them through establishing a campaign to raise enough money to fund the purchase of key venue assets, essential maintenance and setup costs. The campaign raised 50% of its target in just 12 hours, going on in the coming days to surpass expectations, giving the venue team the platform they needed to build from. As a result, the venue has reopened and is going from strength to strength.





**There were several notable trends throughout 2024 that significantly impacted on the GMV sector and the MVA membership. It is important to highlight how these trends formed over 2024, the impact they had on GMVs and their operating environment, and how these statistics will shape the sector going into 2025.**



## BUSINESS RATES

MVT has worked across the UK nations to understand the impact of various approaches towards business rates relief. Business rates have proved to be one of the biggest financial concerns to venues in 2024 and one that has substantially increased due to further policy changes.

Business rates without any relief still existed for Scotland throughout 2024, resulting in an additional £780,000 in pre-profit taxation for Scottish MVA members in excess of their English counterparts. Venues in Wales saw their rate relief cut from 75% to 40% in April, resulting in additional costs for Welsh MVA members of £127,000.

England is due to follow suit in April 2025 and cut rate relief to 40% from its current level of 75%; business rates in England will go up by 140% for GMVs as a result of this cut in rate relief, creating an additional £7 million in pre-profit taxation.

These additional sums in taxes made prior to any profit should be considered in comparison to the overall economic performance of the sector, which returned an entire gross profit across all 810 such venues in the UK of just £2.5 million.



## TOURING

2024 has seen a further decrease in the number of places on the touring circuit. An average tour in 1994 would have included 22 dates. An average tour in 2024 included only 11 dates. Worse, tours in 1994 were spread across a range of 28 different locations across the country, meaning these towns and cities, primary and secondary touring circuit locations, were regularly accessing exciting new and original live music. In 2024, just 12 locations, all of them major cities, remained as primary and secondary touring circuit stops, acting as regular hosts to grassroots tours.

Cities and towns with fantastic venues that used to be staples on tours – such as Leicester, Edinburgh, Bath, Hull, Windsor, and Stoke – have dropped off the primary route over the last few years. For some areas, like Scotland and Wales, this means swathes of the country are cut out altogether, resulting in people having to travel further or simply being unable to access live music at all. The result, demonstrated in this report, is a decrease in the total number of live music shows (down 8.3% since 2023) accompanied by an even steeper decline in ticket revenues (down 13.5% since 2023). GMVs are being forced by this decline in touring to decrease their live music offer, running fewer shows at a higher cost.



## TRANSPORT

A lot of GMVs are in areas that are supported by increasingly dwindling and insufficient public transport infrastructure, including rural towns, as well as larger cities with poor interconnecting services. Audiences are limited to attending grassroots music and cultural events in close proximity to them, and as such, broader audiences are being hindered from attending venues that they otherwise would be active supporters of.

Some venues frequently try to accommodate transport concerns when setting stage times for bands, but this is to the detriment of the financial viability of GMVs, who are heavily reliant on food and beverage spend to support their economic model.

Scottish cities like Glasgow are known as centres of nightlife and entertainment, but for many GMVs across Scotland, the last departure of public transport within accessible distance from their venue is 11pm. For some, it is as early as 5pm, depending on the direction. With many venues licensed until the early hours (such as 3am), these early transport cut-offs are preventing small businesses from thriving. For late-night culture and the night-time economy to succeed and grow, people attending need to be assured of a safe, late-night transport network, especially in major cities like Cardiff and Glasgow.



## PLANNING

In 2024, MVT had a 97.6% success record on having planning applications near venues rejected. This is good news for GMVs but demonstrates that there is much more room for improvement in the way developers survey cultural noise as a material consideration in their plans.

The adoption of the Agent of Change principle as guidance in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and the use of section 106 agreements between local councils and developers have been vital tools to protect GMVs from threats from redevelopment. The Agent of Change principle states that the responsibility for mitigation of the impact of a planning application falls to the Agent of Change and not to existing businesses to modify their practices.

In 65% of ERS cases analysed, Agent of Change is not mentioned in the planning application by the developer. In 37% of the cases, the venue doesn't appear in the noise impact assessment and is not named or referenced.

## 6.1 VENUE SUPPORT SERVICES

### EMERGENCY RESPONSE SERVICE

MVT's Emergency Response Service is a support line open to all MVA members to help them through crises. Through the experience of our national coordinators and the expertise of our gurus, MVT provides venues with urgent advice and guidance that will, where possible, stop venues closing down due to challenges that otherwise could have been prevented.

The Emergency Response Service holds a mirror up to the challenges faced by the sector, highlighting the most common issues faced by GMVs and the volume of need and scale of the challenge. In 2023, MVT reported, with 164 cases handled, that the service was running at the highest capacity since it was created in 2017. As we reached the end of 2024, the Venue Support Team (VST) had surpassed 200 individual cases.

#### The year in venue support

MVT opened 2024 with venues up and down the country looking back on an immensely difficult 2023 and wondering how to get through January.

Sound Lounge in Sutton was the first to share with its community how near to closure the venue was and opened a crowdfunder to ask for support. They not only hit their target but did so within 36 hours. They were the first of many, as venues found themselves with no other option than to ask for help from their communities.

In the weeks and months that followed, the VST responded to a number of cases with operators on the brink of closure for not being able to pay key overheads: rent, electricity, stock, etc. So, for the first time since Covid, MVT issued emergency support through targeted, assessed grants with the support of our independent gurus.

Supporting venues with financial strategy and guidance has been the prevailing theme of 2024. Over 50% of the cases have entered the service because of threats stemming from financial issues.

Once again, the Emergency Response Service was reflecting the climate the venues operate within, and the stats gathered in 2024 show the profitability dropping out of live music.

The second most common reason for a venue to come into the Emergency Response Service wasn't in the top three trends last year, and that was landlord and lease issues. Whether landlords were themselves feeling the pinch and making hard decisions and divesting themselves of property, or venues were simply finding themselves in increasingly vulnerable positions and that was affecting their leases, the VST has taken on 40 such cases and welcomed new gurus into our extended team to help meet this demand.

Responding to planned residential developments, neighbouring MVA members have kept the VST extremely busy. The team has almost doubled the number of objections placed last year and is currently sitting on a 97.6% success rate on getting applications refused and appeals overturned. Building on the success of the *Planning Best Practice Guide* in Greater Manchester, the VST worked with Brighton and Hove City Council on an Agent of Change workshop and *Best Practice Guide* responding to the rapidly growing neighbourhoods of the city.

Alphabet in Brighton has the unfortunate accolade of highest number of applications responded to, as the team has supported them in objecting to six, in 2024 alone. With the support of the council, MVT has ensured that poor plans, which did not accurately survey the GMVs, have been rejected. In London, when the news broke of a block of flats overlooking MOTH Club in Hackney, where the proposal hadn't even surveyed the venue, MVT sprang into action and objected. The community response has been enormously positive with the council receiving thousands of objections from supporters of the venue, and the case was covered across public and industry press.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSE CASE STUDIES

### EPIC STUDIOS, NORWICH

Epic Studios is an 850-capacity GMV with a multidisciplinary approach to programming and creative industry. The space also functions as a television studio, and they run a range of training schemes with their academy to bring new generations into technical roles. Laura, the general manager, was part of the group of MVA members who travelled to the Houses of Parliament to give evidence to the CMS Select Committee inquiry on GMVs.

The venue received noise complaints from new neighbours in early 2023, which persisted into 2024. In 2024, when Epic Studios were looking at potential restrictions on their licence, which could have had impacted on their ability to continue to trade, MVT connected the operators to our acoustic and licensing gurus. The charity's acoustic expert was able to support them to conduct thorough sound testing and pinpoint viable changes to bring down the level of noise and vibration without compromising the output of the venue. Together with the licensing guru, the venue was supported to agree levels with the council's licensing and environmental health departments.

*"Music Venue Trust has been an invaluable partner in navigating the complexities of licensing, capacity, and sound issues at Epic Studios. Their expert guidance and unwavering support have been instrumental in overcoming the challenges and keeping things running smoothly. We're deeply grateful for their dedication to protecting and empowering GMVs."*

**Laura Rycroft, General Manager**

### CHURCH, DUNDEE

Church is a 385-capacity venue in a converted church building and, in a time when touring opportunities are increasingly shrinking to only service the major cities, Church plays a vital role in bringing touring artists further afield than the Scottish central belt and developing local grassroots talent, as well as being a key part of Dundee's LGBTQ scene.

Church entered the Emergency Response Service in February 2024, facing, like many venues at the time, serious financial challenges and was unsure how to move forward. Arrears to their electricity company had left them at risk of being disconnected from their supply and would have ended their ability to trade. VST connected the operator to support from the charity's financial guru and, using expert guidance and strategy advice, the venue began to find a path through the coming weeks and months.

The venue used MVT resources to create a financial strategy and forecasting and with those tools was able to gain crucial insight on the business and build understanding on how to be as efficient and profitable as possible. MVT supported the venue with an emergency grant to help them meet their arrears to the energy company, which in combination with the hard work and determination of the operator, removed the immediate threat to the venue and cleared the way for them to not just recover but proactively plan a diverse and strong programme. Now the venue operator is looking back on a full diary across the last quarter of 2024 and preparing for an equally busy 2025.

*"The past year at Church has been incredibly challenging, much like it has been for many venues. At times, we feared we might lose everything. Rising costs, lower attendance, and multiple event cancellations put us in a position we never wanted to be in. Seeking help, we reached out to MVT, whose Emergency Response Service provided critical support when we needed it most. Their guidance proved invaluable, helping us reassess our costs and navigate key areas like energy, insurance, and overall finances. Through their network of experts, we gained the tools to step back, reevaluate, and rebuild."*

*"With their help, we've been able to plan more effectively, and we're thrilled to have our calendar filling up through to the end of 2025, with plans already extending into 2026. We owe immense gratitude to MVT and their Emergency Response Service for their ongoing support. Their assistance has been nothing short of transformative, helping us secure a more stable future for Church."*

**Jeff Chan, Owner/Operator**

# EMERGENCY RESPONSE CASE STUDIES

## STAR & GARTER, MANCHESTER

The Star & Garter is an integral Mancunian city-centre community pub dating back to 1803, where it sat in its original location, just 50 yards from the current site. Grassroots live music became a key component in the 1990s, but the venue truly blossomed in 1997 when licensee Andy Martin took over.

Andy was devoted to the Star & Garter and the venue community he assembled, and his vision and determination were unshakable for 27 years, even through wildly challenging times. Andy very sadly passed away in March 2024, which was devastating not only for his family and friends but for the venue community. His passing left a void, not only at the heart of the Star & Garter but within the Greater Manchester music scene.

Andy's widow, Helen, was supported by the VST in 2024 as she and her family make plans for their future while preserving the Star & Garter and Andy's legacy. Their support included an introduction to an MVT business energy guru who provided guidance around transferring the venue energy account and appropriate billing and an MVT tax guru who was able to support them to understand Capital Gains Tax implications. The VST liaised with outside agencies, including the Greater Manchester Business Growth Hub, to support with lease assignment, probate, and business valuation. The VST also contributed to outreach to identify a new venue operator to be at the helm of the Star & Garter for its next chapter.

*"After Andy died, I was completely lost. I knew I would need to keep the venue open whilst looking for a buyer who would love the place and keep Andy's legacy going. I'm not particularly business-minded, and I would never have been able to do any of this without the help of Jay [Taylor], MVT, all its gurus, and the business adviser assigned by MVT to help me through this. I've had endless free advice, coaching, and even pep talks! I've now sold the business, and I owe that entirely to Music Venue Trust."*  
**Helen Kitchen, Owner/Operator**

## THE JAM JAR, BRISTOL

The Jam Jar has developed a hub of community, grassroots, and international music at their 220-capacity venue, in what was a predominantly industrial neighbourhood. Across 2023 and throughout 2024, the venue has been supported by MVT to place objections to planning applications, which have sprung up around them. When a decision on a planning application to demolish a nearby building and build 68 residential apartments in its place was decided on in 2024, the planning officer directly referenced the representations placed by the charity and the venue. The application was approved but with conditions for pre-occupancy noise assessments and information to be provided to prospective purchasers and occupants to highlight the position of Jam Jar.

In December 2024, the venue operator and MVT were notified of another application, which has been objected to, and the venue awaits the decision. In an area of such potential change like the neighbourhood around Jam Jar, MVT and the venue operators have to remain vigilant to the shifting landscape. And building proactive relationships with local authorities can enormously advance MVT's ability to get GMVs properly mapped, understood, and protected in their neighbourhoods.

*"At The Jam Jar, we are incredibly grateful for the ongoing support of MVT and the Emergency Response Service. Going up against developers with multimillion-pound budgets, councils with complex agendas, and funding bodies with stringent application criteria has always been intimidating for small venues with limited budgets. However, with the backing of MVT and a team of experts, we have been able to have a degree of success across all of these fronts."*  
  
*"The work of the charity doesn't stop at one-to-one support for venues; in the background, they are advocating to the government on behalf of grassroots culture. In March, I was invited to join the team in Westminster to discuss the challenges we face keeping the grassroots alive. Recently, the government announced a plan for real change in the form of a live music levy on large shows to support artists in their humble beginnings. This work is so important to our future, and I'm pleased that we are in such great hands."*  
**Hadie Abido, Director**

# 6.2 NATIONS DEVELOPMENT

MVT has continued to develop its work beyond England, ensuring that our 140+ MVA members across Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland are adequately represented and supported in our policy and fundraising work.

MVT has monitored developing issues in each country, including across business rates, transport, licensing, the grassroots contribution, and planning, to ensure that venues receive the correct guidance and support that they require. MVT continues to advocate with specific political stakeholders in each country to raise the profile of the cultural and economic importance of GMVs and the political changes that can be made to better support them in each country.

MVT's work across the nations includes speaking directly to political representatives of all devolved governments and specific local authorities within nations also. MVT continues to raise best practice cases from each country – and even cities – to encourage other governments and local authorities to follow suit wherever possible.

MVT is a charity registered in England and Wales. MVT Scotland is a registered charity in Scotland. Operationally, MVT is committed to developing its work in every nation in the ways detailed below.

## Coordinators

MVT's work with venues is led by the Venue Support Team (VST). In 2024, the team comprised two full-time England coordinators, one part-time Scotland coordinator, one part-time Welsh coordinator, and a VST manager.

The coordinators are the first line of contact for venues within their nation and develop strategic relationships and opportunities with stakeholders and industry groups, working closely with the wider team.

## Steering Groups

MVT holds regular online meetings with a volunteer steering group of venue representatives from Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales. These take place roughly every six weeks, facilitating discussion of issues of particular concern in each country, providing valuable insight from venues.

## Events

In 2024, MVT partnered with key conference and networking events in Scotland (Wide Days, Edinburgh), Wales (FOCUS Wales, Wrexham), and England (Un-Convention and the International Live Music Conference). MVT team members also spoke at numerous conferences and panels around the UK, including Resonate (Glasgow), Democratic Business Summit (Cardiff), Output (Belfast), and Sound City (Liverpool).

MVT's national networking event, Venues Day 2024, ensured that speakers from all four nations were featured, and travel bursaries were provided so that venue delegates and speakers could attend, regardless of their distance from London. *MVT Annual Report* presentation events took place in Scottish and Welsh parliaments in addition to UK Parliament. For these events, MVT created key statistics for Scotland and Wales, which enabled us to focus on the sector's position and need in each nation, at the events and beyond.



# NATIONS DEVELOPMENT

## NORTHERN IRELAND

MVT has developed its footprint in Northern Ireland. The team responded to the call for evidence for the Licensing Review, which will consider policy recommendations around how licences are procured and monitored.

MVT also established relationships with the Department for Communities, the Department for the Economy, and the Belfast City Growth and Regeneration Committee to initiate what we hope will be an ongoing programme of work on supporting GMVs in Northern Ireland. Funding from Belfast City Council has been secured for network and skills development with GMVs in Northern Ireland, working towards gathering more robust data about the sector moving forward.

## SCOTLAND

In 2024, MVT's work in Scotland focussed on the key issues of business rates and transport, especially in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and areas poorly served by local transport networks.

Patrick Harvie MSP, co-leader of the Greens, asked the first question in Scottish Parliament on the grassroots contribution, and the team discussed this in greater depth at an industry roundtable in September arranged by Michelle Thomson MSP. MVT also developed ongoing work in Glasgow, joining the City Centre Night-Time Economy Sub-Committee to campaign locally on improving the operating environment for GMVs, and in Edinburgh, by meeting with several local councillors to discuss licensing and planning.

## WALES

In Wales, MVT has consistently raised the cut in business rate relief, attending the Welsh Government's Draft Budget Stakeholder event in July and supporting many Members of the Senedd (MSs) to speak on this issue.

The team met with various members of the Welsh Government, including Jack Sargeant MS, Minister for Skills, Culture and Social Partnership, and Sarah Murphy MS, the then Minister for Social Partnership. MVT also developed and circulated a survey for Welsh GMVs to support our strategic work on transport in Wales. This local evidence and data will be crucial in developing future policy asks for improving transport connections for GMVs in Wales.

# 6.3 CAMPAIGNING & ADVOCACY

MVT continued to work across all levels of government - local, regional, and national - to educate and advocate with decision-makers about the challenges facing the GMV sector and the policies needed to overcome these. MVT has been heavily engaged with the music industry through multiple committees, lectures, panels, working groups, and presentations. The team has used our campaigns to create press opportunities with print, radio, digital, and social media to highlight the variety of work undertaken in 2024.

MVT has worked to ensure that MVA members are kept informed and aware of political and industry changes and supported with guidance where action is required. MVT has utilised further channels and steering groups to increase opportunities for venues to learn about new initiatives for funding, investment, local campaigns, and long-term security.

Alongside day-to-day public relations and campaign activity - which covers general press releases, statements, comment, rebuttals, opinion pieces, and organisation profiles - the core focus for Velocity Communications (music industry trade media) and Republic Media (consumer media) in 2024 has centred around several key campaigns.



This range of campaigns and initiatives has allowed both agencies to achieve high volume and diverse coverage across digital, print, TV, and radio, with MVT remaining at the centre of all conversations surrounding the grassroots live music sector across both consumer-facing and music industry trade media. The communications focus over the last 12 months has been on consolidating MVT as the key voice on all issues affecting the grassroots live music sector while ensuring a presence in both proactive and reactive news and feature coverage. This has also resulted in more in-depth coverage across the mainstream UK media, with senior members of the MVT executive team regularly appearing on and featuring in national digital, press, radio, and TV news bulletins, and in feature specials.

A number of ongoing media partnerships continued during the latest period including:

- *The Independent* - 'Music Stage': a year-long, monthly series focusing on one venue in each of 12 regions of the UK. The venue receives editorial and marketing support
- *Music Week* - 'Centre Stage': a monthly column discussing issues affecting GMVs from Mark Davyd, CEO of MVT
- *Big Issue* - 'Venue Watch': a weekly series focusing on individual GMVs, which ran from January to July 2024

There was also a significant increase in the international coverage of MVT's work, with news stories and features in consumer-facing and music industry trade media publications from around the world.

## THE FIVE KEY PR CAMPAIGNS

1 GRASSROOTS CONTRIBUTION

2 LIVELINE FUND FEATURING COLDPLAY, SAM FENDER & KATY PERRY DONATIONS

3 MVT MANIFESTO

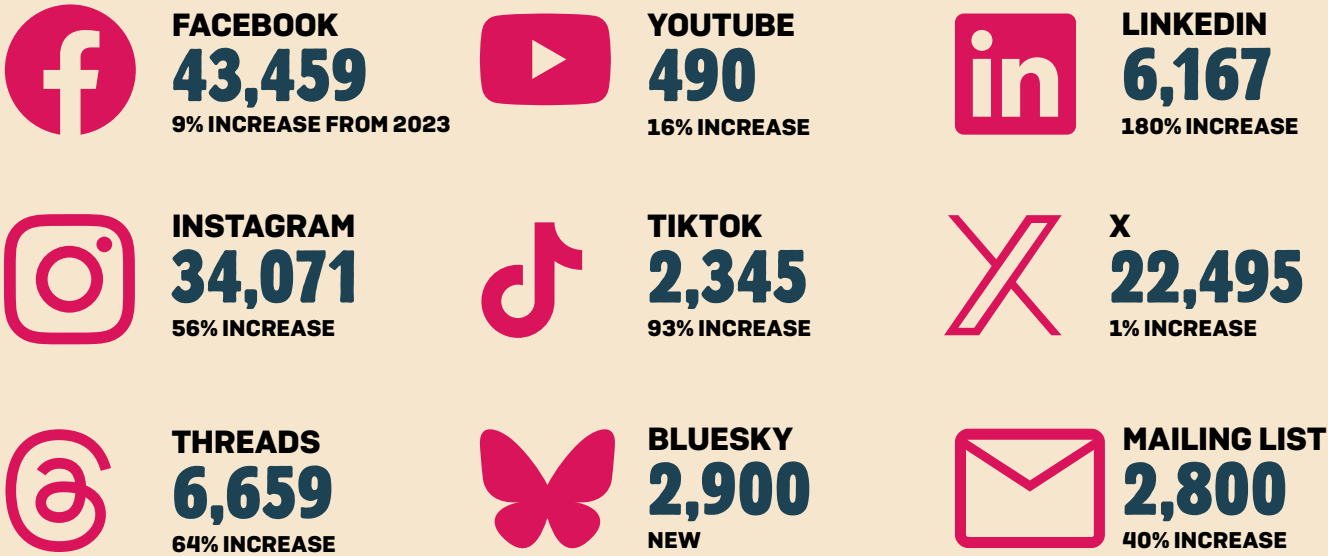
4 MUSIC VENUE PROPERTIES

5 MVT COHORTS

TOTAL AUDIENCE REACH IN EXCESS OF 2 BILLION

CAMPAIGNING & ADVOCACY

REACH GROWTH



GRASSROOTS CONTRIBUTION

One of MVT's major campaigns in 2024 was for a grassroots contribution or ticket levy of £1 to be donated from all stadium and arena tickets and reinvested into grassroots venues, artists, and promoters.

MVT supported the CMS Select Committee in their inquiry into GMVs, resulting in a cross-party report (May 2024) and set of recommendations on what must be done to protect live music in our communities. One of these recommendations was for a grassroots contribution to be voluntarily instituted by industry by September 2024.

In November 2024, the Government responded to the CMS Select Committee report. It is now UK Government policy that every ticket sold at an arena or stadium should contain a financial contribution that supports grassroots venues, artists, and promoters.

Following this, MVT and Save Our Scene (SOS) joined forces to create the Liveline Fund, which will primarily focus on strengthening the future viability of the UK grassroots music ecosystem.

Artists including Enter Shikari, Coldplay, Sam Fender, Katy Perry, Mr Scruff and Frank Turner have already donated or committed £1 of every ticket (or equivalent) from their upcoming tours to MVT.





# CAMPAIGNING & ADVOCACY

## POLITICAL ENGAGEMENT

Highlights of our political briefings, evidence, and consultation responses:

- Culture, Media and Sport Select Committee: inquiry into Grassroots Music Venues
- DCMS Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill Briefing
- HM Treasury Business Rates Reform Consultation
- HM Treasury Budget Briefing
- HM Treasury Response to Budget Letter
- MP Briefing Note on Cohorts Tour Initiative
- DCMS/MHCLG Briefing on Agent of Change / Statutory Consultee
- Welsh Government Draft Budget 2025/26 Consultation
- Welsh Government Impact of Funding Reductions for Culture and Sport Consultation
- Northern Ireland Licensing Review Consultation
- Scottish Government Constitution, Europe, External Affairs and Culture Committee Pre-Budget Scrutiny 2025-26

### 37 MP meetings

Lisa Nandy, Chris Bryant, Dame Caroline Dinenage, Alex Sobel, Wera Hobhouse, Pete Wishart, Liz Twist, Holly Lynch, Stuart Andrew, James Frith, Jayne Kirkham, Julia Buckley, Dr Simon Opher, Thangam Debbonaire, Fay Jones, Kate Osborne, Alan Gemmell, Jess Brown-Fuller, Anna Sabine, Vikki Slade, Marie Goldman, Chris Webb, Samantha Dixon, Mark Tami, Steve Yemm, Lewis Atkinson, Chris Murray, Vicky Foxcroft, Kate Dearden, Bambos Charalambous, Zöe Franklin, Siân Berry, Max Wilkinson, Nia Griffith, Steve Race, Catherine Atkinson, Darren Paffey

### 9 MSP meetings/venue visits

Angus Robertson, Patrick Harvie, Mark Ruskell, Pam Duncan-Glancy, Michelle Thomson, Claire Baker, Murdo Fraser, Daniel Johnson, Neil Bibby

### 7 MS meetings/venue visits

John Griffiths, Andrew RT Davies, Luke Fletcher, Rhianon Passmore, Heledd Fychan, Hannah Blythyn, Jack Sargeant



### Other political & industry stakeholder meetings

DLUHC, DCMS, DBT, Cross-Party Group for Music (Wales), Founding member of LIVE (Live music Industry Venues & Entertainment), Cross-Party Group on Music (Scotland), Venues Working Group (LIVE), Valuation Office Authority, Greater London Authority, Edinburgh City Council, Green Working Group (LIVE), Sunderland City Council, Leeds City Council, Milton Keynes City Council, Belfast City Council, Department for the Economy (Northern Ireland), Liverpool Music Board, Department for Communities (Northern Ireland), Greater Manchester Music Commission, Kent County Council, APPJG, Transport for Wales, Creative UK, Local Government Association, LGA (Culture, Tourism & Sport Board), Kingston Council, Bristol City Council, Camden Borough Council, Manchester City Council, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Sheffield City Council, Burnley Borough Council, Glasgow City Council, maintaining international relationships through networking activity

# 6.4 LIVE PROJECTS



Since July 2021, MVT has been taking direct action to combat the decline in national touring. We have commissioned and funded more than 100 additional tours during this period, creating work for over 300 artists and delivering music to hundreds of venues that find themselves no longer part of the primary or secondary touring markets.

In 2024, MVT created a new project called MVT Cohorts to explore new ways to directly tackle the touring challenges, commissioning three tours to visit new towns and cities using venues organised into cohorts by capacity, facility, or genre. The third Cohorts tour will take place in January 2025, and MVT will evaluate the programme so far to consider how to expand and develop it.

Alongside this developing work, MVT continued to partner with key events in the music industry calendar to provide showcasing opportunities for artists breaking through from the grassroots sector.

During the International Live Music Conference, MVT took over the 100 Club to feature four new artists ready for international buyers, and the team was also pleased to partner with FOCUS Wales and Wide Days to support artist opportunities in Wales and Scotland and to bring together special events in Westminster, Brighton, Edinburgh, and Cardiff, which featured music from grassroots artists.



# 6.5 INVESTING IN THE GRASSROOTS

MVT has created a number of projects and funds that invest into the grassroots music ecosystem, supporting GMVs, artists, and promoters. Funds include:

- **Pipeline Investment Fund** - supporting infrastructure and training for venues
- **Live Projects** (such as Revive Live, United by Music, Showcases, MVT Cohorts) - direct financial support to artists and promoters to support touring
- **Emergency Hardship Relief Fund** - financial interventions to directly prevent venue closures
- **Own Our Venues** - creation of Music Venue Properties to acquire freehold ownership of venues and place them into a protected trust

Since July 2021, the total value of these investments is over £7 million.

In November 2024, the charity decided to unify all these initiatives. From January 2025, MVT will raise and distribute all these funds under the public facing title of Liveline.

### Direct Grants to Venues

Since July 2021, MVT has distributed £572,423 in 143 grants to 134 different venues to support infrastructure, training, and financial hardship.

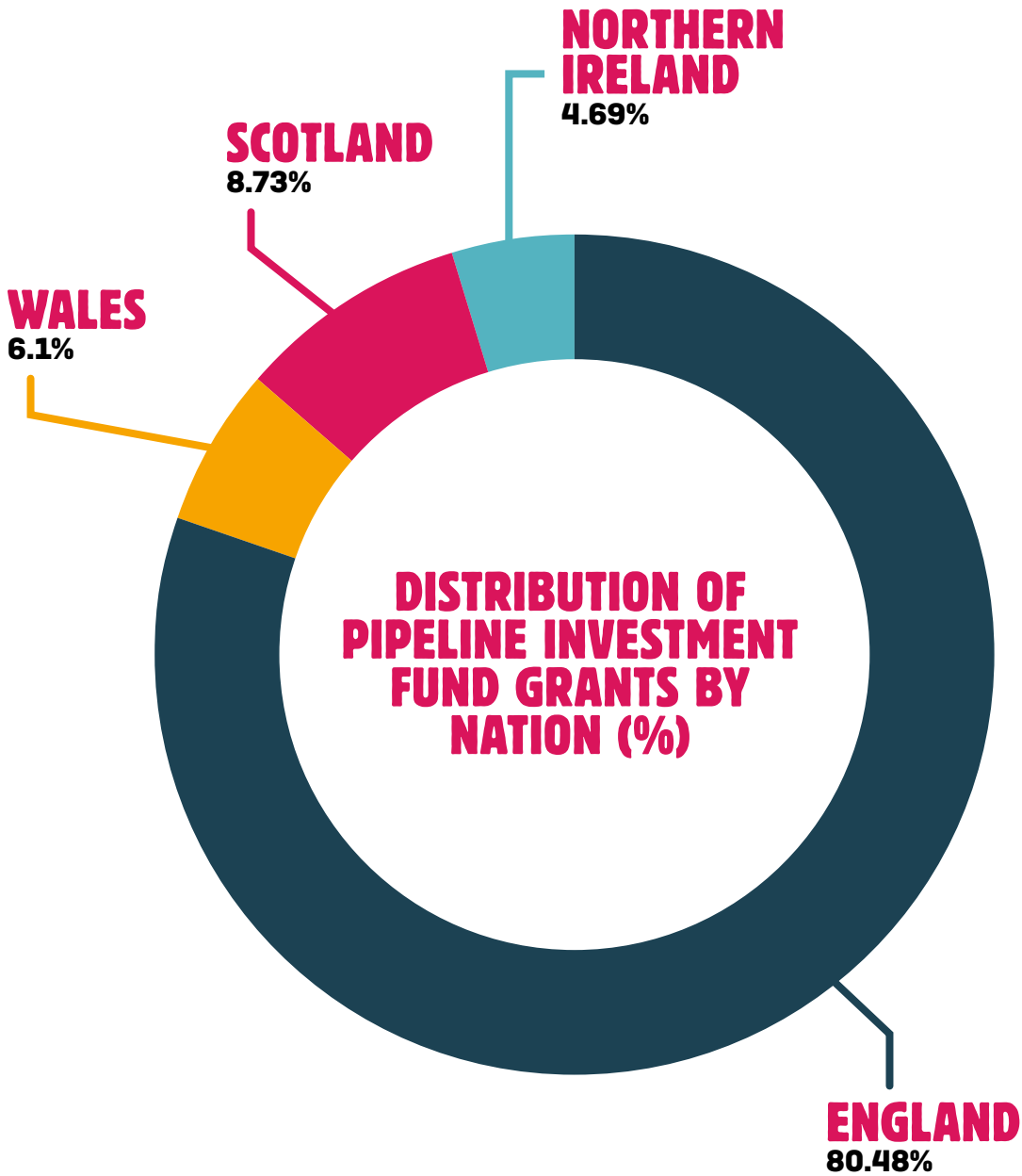
### Support for Live Touring

Since July 2021, MVT has distributed in excess of £4 million to deliver over 100 tours featuring more than 330 artists at over 300 venues in support of the touring sector.

### Tackling Ownership

MVP has created a fund of £2.6 million to acquire the freeholds of venues and place them into protected ownership. Supported by Arts Council England, the Community Ownership Fund, and Figurative, MVP has so far bought five GMVs: The Snug (Atherton), The Ferret (Preston), Bunkhouse (Swansea), Booking Hall (Dover), and Le Pub (Newport) - see section 7 for further details.

## FUNDING RECIPIENTS



## 6.6 NETWORKING ACTIVITY



MVT's profile has continued to grow during 2024, and with it, the need for representation at a range of events and conferences, nationally and internationally. For the first time, MVT had a presence at the Local Government Association (LGA) Conference and the major party conferences, providing opportunities for meetings and advocacy with new stakeholders. It is not possible to be at every event, but MVT designs an organisational calendar to represent the GMV sector and advocate for UK GMVs with music industry colleagues, other parts of the cultural sector, all layers of government, suppliers, academics, artists, students, and music fans.

In addition to MVT's own team speaking at events, the charity has seen a recent rise in trustees, patrons, and MVA members representing the sector at events across the UK, utilising statistics from the *MVT Annual Report* and key messaging from MVT combined to great effect with their own experiences.

Peer-to-peer dialogue and information-sharing between venues remains powerful, enabled through meetings, online groups, and sharing information about opportunities for in-person meet-ups. MVT's own national networking event, Venues Day, provides an annual focus for this activity.



### VENUES DAY 2024

The tenth-anniversary edition of Venues Day was held on Tuesday, 8 October at Woolwich Works, London, and celebrated the GMV movement built since 2014. It offered an opportunity to reflect on progress made in the UK and challenges still to face, while focusing on the importance of artists at the centre of the sector to acknowledge that everything GMVs do is ultimately for artists: to inspire them, nurture them, connect them with audiences, and offer a safe space for experimentation and new work. A series of panels exploring the common goals of artists and venues was particularly well attended.

Facilitated networking took place between venue reps and agents, promoters, funders, MVT's expert gurus, suppliers, and non-profit organisations who work in the sector. The latest statistics were shared, challenges discussed, and potential solutions presented. Workshops to introduce MVT's Ethical Venues Project took place and a session dedicated to ten years of MVT rounded off the day.

MVA members from all four nations attended, with free/discounted tickets and travel bursaries enabling venue reps from Orkney to St Peter Port in Guernsey to participate. Despite an acknowledgement of the financial issues inherent in the grassroots music sector, feedback from the day praised the general feeling of optimism for the sector and the sense of community celebrated by the event and ten years of building a movement.

Venues Day remains a valuable opportunity to meet people in person and be assured that GMV operators no longer need to face problems alone.



### TEAM MVT OUT & ABOUT

MVT's main office is in London, but team members are also based in the Scottish Borders, Greater Manchester, Wrexham, Yorkshire, Bristol, Somerset, Leicestershire, and East Sussex. Attending events across the country is important as it demonstrates that MVT is a UK-wide charity.

In 2024, members of Team MVT partnered with and played a role in the following key music industry events:

- *International Live Music Conference (ILMC)*, London  
Panel & MVT showcase - 28 February
- *Wide Days*, Edinburgh  
MVT reception, presentation & showcase - 2-3 May
- *FOCUS Wales*, Wrexham  
MVT brunch & showcases - 9-11 May
- *Un-Convention*, Manchester  
Panels & roundtables - 21-22 November
- We also hosted Brighton Brunch in May, which coincided with many people attending The Great Escape

Team members presented MVT's work on panels and presentations at:

- I Know a Place: Leeds
- Night-Time Economy Summit, Manchester
- FastForward, London
- Arts & Business NI Trusts & Foundations Symposium, Queen's University Belfast
- The Ticketing Business Forum, Manchester
- Bradford Music Scene Industry Panel, Bradford
- Sound City, Liverpool
- Music Week Awards, London
- Primavera Pro, Barcelona
- Crank the Bank, Falmouth
- SoundBytes, Blackpool
- Wireless Festival, London
- ABCs of the New Economy, Bristol
- Reinvigorating the UK's Night-Time Economy, London
- Heritage plaque unveiling, The Jacaranda, Liverpool
- Big Sound, Brisbane
- International Broadcasting Convention, Amsterdam
- Reeperbahn, Hamburg
- Lancashire Music Summit, Preston
- Generator Live, Newcastle
- Blue Plaque unveiling, The Duchess of York site, Leeds
- MIL, Lisbon
- Jazz Promotion Network (JPN) Conference, Bristol
- Output, Belfast
- After Dark, Vienna
- BEYOND, MediaCity, Salford
- Rochdale Music Summit, Rochdale
- Resonate, Glasgow

### Venue Visits

Members of Team MVT are avid gig-goers themselves. During 2024, between meetings with venue staff and attending events and gigs, members of the charity's core team visited:

**140** venues in England

**9** venues in Scotland

**19** venues in Wales

**4** venues in Northern Ireland

**52** towns & cities



## 6.7 MUSIC VENUE PROPERTIES (MVP)

Ten years ago, in the *Understanding Small Music Venues* report, Mark Davyd, MVT's Founder and CEO, wrote, "We have a long-term plan to protect that live music network, which includes, where necessary, taking into charitable ownership freehold properties so they can be removed from commercial pressures and leased back to passionate music professionals to continue their operation."

Over the past three years, MVT has seen this long-term plan start to become a reality. In 2022, MVT established Music Venue Properties (MVP), a Community Benefit Society with charitable status, and launched the Own Our Venues community share offer as the means to achieve this objective. In 2023, MVT and MVP celebrated the success of raising £2.3 million through this share offer, followed by the purchase of The Snug in Atherton later that year. In 2024, MVP established proof of concept and now owns five GMVs across England and Wales.

Over the course of 2024, MVP was able to finalise the purchases of The Ferret in Preston, The Bunkhouse in Swansea, The Booking Hall in Dover, and Le Pub in Newport, moving all four venues into community ownership alongside The Snug. Of these four venues, two were listed on the open market for sale as "development opportunities", one vendor was exploring options to develop the property themselves and the other gave the operator a deadline to find an option for purchase ahead of listing the property for sale publicly.

Alongside the property purchases, 2024 saw MVP create the "cultural lease" and put it in place with all five operators. This lease not only gives tenants assurance of tenure but it addresses the power dynamic of a standard commercial lease. From MVP's perspective, its operators agree to deliver a minimum amount of cultural activity alongside a commitment to best practice. Most importantly, the cultural lease really allows operators to plan for the future, to invest

### MUSIC VENUE PROPERTIES

in their venues alongside MVP, safe in the knowledge that a commercial landlord will not benefit from their hard work in years to come. At the point of signing their new 25-year leases, the average MVP operator had just 15 months left on their current lease, and three of the venue leases had already expired.

2024 saw MVP achieve success with a Community Ownership Fund bid, receiving £250k towards the purchase of Le Pub. MVP also received a favourable loan from Swansea City Council to help with the purchase of The Bunkhouse. Further finance was raised through community shares investment. MVP now has over 1,300 members, and donations raised around the campaign were used to buy The Booking Hall.

At the start of this journey, both MVT and MVP agreed that once proof of concept had been achieved, MVP would amend its society rules to remove MVT's parental control over the society and become its own standalone organisation. Having established proof of concept, MVP made these changes following the first Annual General Meeting with its new membership. Moving forward, MVT will continue to work closely with and offer support wherever possible to help MVP to achieve those 2014 goals.



**"The last few years have been a rollercoaster for The Bunkhouse and the music community in South West Wales. When the building went on the market, the threat of closure was very real, and it wasn't just about potentially losing my business, it was about losing a home for the musicians, the artists, and the fans who have found their voice here. The Bunkhouse has played a pivotal role in shaping the music scene in Wales, and the thought of it disappearing was heartbreaking for everyone. Now, with Music Venue Properties stepping in as our landlord, those fears have been laid to rest. The future looks bright. We can finally focus on continuing to develop the next generation of talent, knowing that The Bunkhouse is secure and will remain a cornerstone of Swansea's music scene long after I'm gone!"**

Jordan McGuire, Operations Director, The Bunkhouse



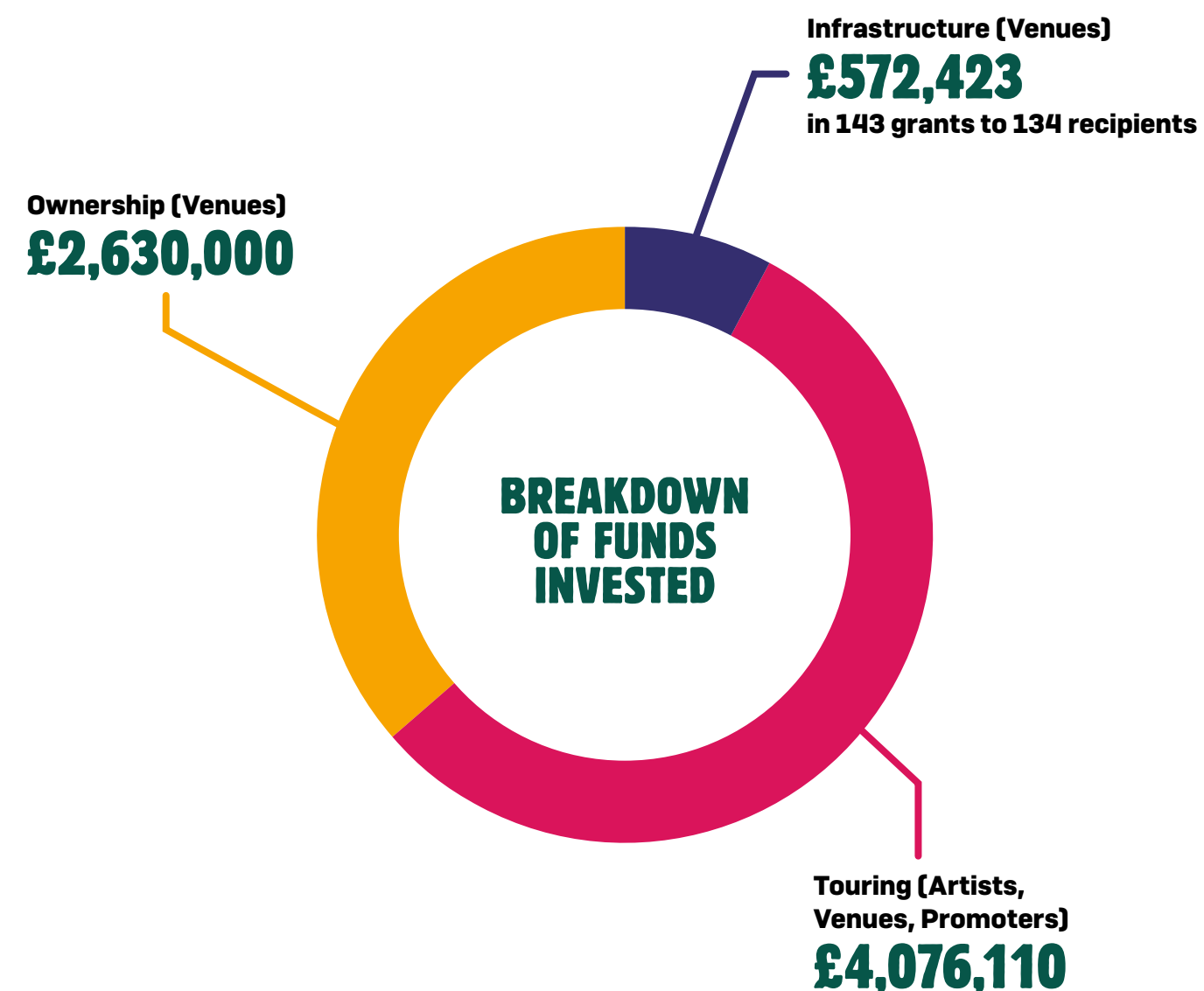
- Income for MVT for FY 2023 was £2,413,289 against a predicted income of £1,350,000.
- The charity is performing strongly from brand and corporate partnerships and has an emerging individual giving income source. Grant income resulting from applications to public funding sources, trust, and foundations accounts for less than 1% of total income. MVT has adopted a policy of not applying for public funding, preferring to support its members with information, advice, and guidance to make successful applications.
- The charity continued its policy of investing Unrestricted Reserves into strategic interventions into the GMV sector.

	Unrestricted Funds 2023	Restricted Funds 2023	Total 2023	Unrestricted Funds 2022	Restricted Funds 2022	Total 2022
Income from	£	£	£	£	£	£
Charitable activities	2,218,206	164,295	2,413,289	2,077,298	291,717	2,369,015
Expenditure on						
Charitable activities	2,139,172	159,984	2,299,156	2,525,121	292,891	2,818,012
Grants / bursaries	152,720	32,644	185,264	107,107	104,283	211,390
Total resources expended	2,291,892	192,628	2,484,520	2,632,228	397,174	3,029,402
Net income for the year / net movement in funds	-71,231	-	-71,231	-554,930	-105,457	-660,387
Opening fund balances at 01 January FY	803,612	-	803,612	1,358,542	105,457	1,463,999
Closing balance at 31 December FY	732,381	-	732,381	803,612	-	803,612

## WHAT MVT FUNDS

Since July 2021, MVT has distributed £7,278,533 to grassroots venues, artists, and promoters.

Income to support these initiatives has come from brand partnerships, donations, ticket contributions, individuals, and legacies.



# 8 THANK YOUS

**MVT's ongoing work depends on the generosity of many people. The charity is grateful for every donation made, every sponsored activity organised, every article written, and each share on social media that helps raise awareness of the GMV sector and the work that MVT does to protect, secure, and improve these vital venues.**

**The following companies, organisations, and individuals deserve a special mention (listed alphabetically in each category). With thanks also to those who wish to remain anonymous.**

## FINANCIAL SUPPORT

### Major Supporters – Project Funding

Fred Perry  
FREENOW  
Marshall Group AB  
Ticketmaster

### Significant Donations in 2024

AEG Facilities (UK) Ltd  
AEG Presents  
Amazon Digital UK Limited  
Biffy Clyro  
BSI Merch  
Equinox Charter Limited  
Equinox Travel  
Estate of Ruth Jakober  
Frank Turner  
Fred Perry  
Frederick & Alison Lohr  
Gigantic Tickets  
Ian Hill-Smith  
INFL Ltd  
Jack McDougall  
Richer Sounds Foundation  
Save Our Scene UK  
Skiddle Limited  
Swansea Arena  
The Blavatnik Family Foundation  
The Forum Music Studios Ltd  
VICE UK Ltd  
Warner Music UK

### Regular Donors

Charities Trust  
Fightback Lager  
Gigtix  
Good Show Ltd  
Juicebox Live Promotions Ltd  
Strings & Things  
TicketPort  
WeGotTickets

### Music Venues Alliance Members

To the **484** venues who are subscribed members of the MVA and therefore contribute to the core funding of MVT's Venue Support Team

## TRUSTEES

**Team MVT is guided by a voluntary board of trustees:**

Adrian Norman (treasurer from July), Arusa Qureshi, Bonita McKinney (Co-chair), Chris Prosser, Emma Bownes, Helen McGee (from October), Jane Beese, Jason Dormon, Jeremy Pritchard, Phyllis Belezos (Co-chair), Rhoda Dakar, Sarah Thirtle, Scott Taylforth (treasurer to June), Simon Hilton



## MVT PATRONS

**Patrons are powerful advocates for the value of GMVs who bring attention to the charity's work.**

### Artist Patrons

Adwaith, Andy Dunlop (Travis), Be Charlotte, Bernard Butler, Billy Bragg, Bob Vylan, Bradley Zero, Bright Light Bright Light, Catherine Anne Davies (The anchoress), Charlotte Hatherley, CHROMA, Coldplay, Colin Newman (Wire), Daniel Avery, David Gedge (The Wedding Present), Ed Harcourt, Elbow, Ellie Rowsell (Wolf Alice), Enter Shikari, Ferris & Sylvester, Frank Carter & The Rattlesnakes, Frank Turner, Glass Animals, HAAi, Hamish Hawk, Hannah White, Holding Absence, Honeyblood, James and the Cold Gun, James Bay, Jamie Webster, Jeff Automatic, Jeremy Pritchard (Everything Everything), Joe Talbot (IDLES), John Robb (The Membranes, Louder Than War), Kapil Seshasayee, Kate Nash, Kathryn Williams, Kawala, Kerri Watt, KT Tunstall, Lady Nade, Luke La Volpe, Madness, Michele Stodart, Moxie, Mr Scruff, Neil Hannon (The Divine Comedy), NIMMO, Nova Twins, Oh Wonder, Public Service Broadcasting, Ren Harvieu, Reverend & the Makers, Rews, Rhoda Dakar, Roachford, Sam Duckworth, Savages, Shao Dow, Sir Paul McCartney, Skindred, Soft Play, Sound of The Sirens, Steven Wilson, The Jellyman's Daughter, The Libertines, The Meffs, The Pearl Harts, The Wombats, Tim Burgess, Tom Grennan

### Broadcast Patrons

Abbie McCarthy (BBC Introducing Kent), Bethan Elfyn (BBC Radio Wales), Eddy Temple-Morris (Virgin Radio), Gemma Bradley (BBC Radio 1), Phil Taggart (BBC Radio Ulster), Sarah Gosling (RadioX / BBC Introducing), Steve Lamacq (BBC Radio 6Music), Vic Galloway (BBC Radio Scotland / 6Music)

### Industry Patrons

Ace Trump (Siren Artist Management), Alex Bruford (ATC Live), Angus Baskerville (Pure Represents), Barry Dickins (ITB), Bengi Unsal (Institute of Contemporary Art), Emma Davis (One Fiinix Live), Geoff Meall (Wasserman Music), George Akins (DHP), Jane Beese (Southbank Centre), Jason Iley (Sony Music), Natasha Gregory (Mother Artists), Neal Thompson (FOCUS Wales), Paul Buck (Wasserman Music), Robert Kilpatrick (SMIA), Ross Warnock (United Talent), Scott Thomas (X-ray Touring), Steve Zapp (ITB), Summer Marshall (CAA), Tre Stead (Tour Manager)

### Political Patrons

Amelia Womack (Green Party), Sir John Whittingdale (Conservative MP for Maldon), Kerry McCarthy (Labour MP for Bristol East), Lord Tim Clement-Jones CBE (Lib Dem Peer)

# THANK YOUS

## CONSULTANTS

Team MVT is enhanced by the expertise of professionals who work on specific areas or projects to support the team:

Andy Saunders (PR: Music Industry & Strategy), Carla Pannett (Fundraising), Charlie Bungay (Campaigns & Communications), Chris Prosser (Music Industry Partnerships), Denzil Thomas (Commercial Partnerships), Jeremy Mills (Legal), Lucy Stone (Fundraising), Luke Hinton (Live Projects), Niall Forde (Licensing), Sam Duckworth (Audience Engagement & Strategy), Sam Gannon (Website & Multimedia), Simon Bray (Research & Data), Simon Hilton (Website & Multimedia), Steve Trigg (Finance & Operations), Sue Harris (PR: Consumer Media & Strategy), Sytske Kamstra (Event Production & Data Analysis)

## GURUS

MVT’s Venue Support Team is grateful for the pro bono support of experts who offer their services as gurus on specialist professional subjects:

Adam C. Pearson (Business Energy Specialist), Alistair Duncan (Tax Specialist), Ben Dymock (Acoustics), Benjamin Thomas (Charity Law & Legal Structuring), Brendan Fisher (Landlord & Tenancy Guru), Charlotte O'Mara (Music & Entertainment Law), Chris Brown (Music & Entertainment Law), Chris Hoskin (Corporate & Insolvency Lawyer), Craig Page (Architecture), Dan Ailion (Landlord & Tenant/Real Estate Law to May), Dan Potter (Energy & Utilities Specialist), Dave Campbell (Employment Law), David Butler (Business Advisory & Turnaround), Ed Holloway (Architecture & Licensing), Ed Jolleys (Catering), Ella van der Klugt (Planning), Emily Berry (Energy Broker), Gideon Feldman (Inclusive Design & Access), Hamish Walke (Town Planning/Planning Applications), Jon Fox (Planning & Noise), Josh Finesilver (Safety & Production), Kris Mitra (Planning), Lee Peters (Insurance), Louise Aikman (Music & Entertainment Law), Martin Court (Noise Planning & Licensing), Martin Friend (Local Government & Planning), Matt Barnwell (Profitability), Matthew Dawson (Energy Broker), Niall Forde (Licensing), Nick Wright (Business Rates), Nicolas McBride (Licensing/Property [Scotland & Northern Ireland]), Pete Singfield (Legal), Peter Conisbee (Energy Broker & Police Licensing), Peter Laphorn (Business Analysis), Peter Pegasiou (Music, Media & Entertainment Law), Richard Vivian (Acoustics), Sam Dabb (Operational Efficiency & Profitability), Sarah Louise Taylor (Licensing), Sean Keenan (Music & Technology Lawyer), Simon Ricketts (Planning Law), Steve Trigg (Finance Strategy), Steven Swift (Insurance), Stevie Kempner (Entertainment Law), Stuart Langer (Planning), Tim Taylor (Planning), Toby Lewis (Noise Planning & Licensing), Tony Trup (Acoustics), William Campbell (Energy Broker)



## TEAM

Aled Owens (MVT Wales Coordinator), Bethan McConnell (Admin Support from June), Beverley Whitrick (COO), Chris Sherrington (Policy & Strategy Support), Clara Cullen (Venue Support Manager to March), Ebz Perkins (Admin Assistant to March), Gareth Kelly (Rights Management from July), Jay Taylor (MVT England Coordinator), Katie Frost (Administration & Accounts), Kimberley Goddard (Philanthropy & Donor Relations from April to November), Lloyd Bent (MVT England Coordinator from June), Mark Davyd (CEO), Matt Otridge (Ownership Coordinator), Menna Grasser (Partnerships & Projects to May), Mike Pickering (Membership Coordinator), Oliver Melling (MVT Scotland Coordinator to June), Rebecca Walker (Live Projects Coordinator [Maternity Leave]), Sophie Asquith (MVT England Coordinator to February / Venue Support Team Manager from March), Sophie Brownlee (External Affairs Manager from April), Stina Tweeddale (MVT Scotland Coordinator from September), Tom Maddicott (Project Support/Live Projects), Toni Coe-Brooker (Campaigns & Communications)

## ANNUAL REPORT PHOTOGRAPHERS

Georgia Penny Photo, Olivia Brytz, Katie Frost, Michael Porter Photography, Jannica Honey, Chris Sherrington, Diya K, Gary Cooper, Studio Resolute



# ANNUAL REPORT 2024

Music Venue Trust is a UK registered charity, which acts to protect, secure, and improve the UK's Grassroots Music Venue sector for the benefit of venues, communities, and upcoming artists.

[musicvenuetrust.com](https://musicvenuetrust.com)

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