

Officer responsible Environmental Services Manager	Author Klaus Prusas
Corporate Plan Output: Information and advice for Council	

The purpose of this report is to advise upon whether this Council should provide a letter of support in order that the Canterbury Music Trust may progress funding initiatives to provide a youth friendly, participation and performance venue.

The reason why the letter of support is sought now is to enable the Trust the ability to seek funding from the Community Trust during the next round of fund allocation.

Attached to this report is the project Business Plan prepared by the Trust. The project would be called “The OctopOd”. Chris Martin, a trustee will be available to elaborate on the project.

I think it important at the outset to emphasis:

- (i) That the Trust is not seeking financial support. It is merely seeking a “letter of support” from the Council.

The Trust has advised that it has confirmed “pledges” in excess of \$120,000 contingent upon the trust proceeding with the present identified venue (The Palladium Nightclub). The pledges have been received from the Pub Charity Organisation.

- (ii) That the letter of support need not necessarily be taken as tied to any one venue.
- (iii) This is an initiative by and for youth.

My involvement in this issue comes from responsibility for sale of liquor matters in Christchurch (as the Christchurch City Council District Licensing Agency). I am aware youth entertainment/affairs in its widest sense has been and is the subject of debate, and this will no doubt continue into future years, as times and situations change. An opportunity presently exists based on the initiative of the Canterbury Music Trust to provide a safe, friendly, “real adult commercial” entertainment venue for participation, performance and visual arts.

INTRODUCTION

The background to the project is described in the introductory section of the Trust’s Business Plan.

The Canterbury Music Trust (CMT) is a body set up to promote local music for youth and by youth. It has four trustees and a number of advisers from the youth and entertainment sector.

4YP is a Council project to facilitate and operate events for 15-20 year olds with also a component of community development (supporting and initiating youth activities in partnership with youth organisations).

It is considered 4YP would use the CMT venue.

The Trust was formed because of the need for a development of stronger regional infrastructures. The running of quality, safe and affordable entertainment events has been demonstrated with attendances greater than 12,000 pa. The Fire House Nightclub – Sydenham (until demolished for commercial development) was used since 1995. Since that time search for an alternative venue has continued.

The Fire House operation from a sale of liquor perspective was well operated and supported. It provided an outlet for the city's youth.

THE PROPOSAL

Management Structure

The venue would be operated by the Trust but with a body acting as a monitoring group. This group is envisaged as including agencies such as the NZ Police, Crown Public Health and the Council.

Whilst operating as a “commercial” entity the proposal would be essentially a non profit organisation with “profits going to further promote youth entertainment. The group would ensure that the objectives and integrity of the project are maintained. The venue would nevertheless need an operating paid manager. These funds would come out of revenue.

The Venue

The proposed venue – the Palladium Night Club – Gloucester Street, is an excellent location and facility. It already has a profile for entertainment. The Trust proposes to purchase the business including its chattels (which include the lighting and sound system – a major advantage).

The target audience will be young adults – not a youth centre or youth venue. The image is important.

Operation

The premises are well served with distinct and established areas on the ground and first floor. It is planned to operate as a liquor licensed, all aged venue, which will be well managed and supervised. The distinct areas are intended to play an important part in the operation. It is expected that Councillors may wish to discuss this aspect.

Listed below are matters for consideration on the opportunities which could accrue from the creation of such an establishment.

- The Palladium Night Club is an excellent location and recognised by young adults.
- Youth would feel part of the “scene” – adult looking.
- The operation of the establishment would be well managed given previous experience of the involved personnel and organisation.
- The NZ Police, Crown Public Health and the District Licensing Agency Sale of Liquor Inspectors have expressed support for the project. The NZ Police Licensing Sergeant, Peter Shaw has also verbally advised he has no concerns with the intended operation.
- Whilst liquor availability may be a concern, this should be viewed in the context of its intended availability and the level and type of management that will be employed.

It is advised liquor would not be available at all times. On the occasions it was available it would be served in a designated area only, and would not be able to be taken from that area. The area would be separate from the main entertaining area. The operation would be well supervised. Experience from other venues operated by the involved parties to this project, have indicated the prevention of alcohol use/abuse is well managed.

Further, the Sale of Liquor Amendment Bill (NZ) proposes a number of changes particularly that relating to age making this type of proposed format possibly more “acceptable”.

- The type of liquor licence granted (On or Special) and their conditions would also play a major part in the operation.
- Would relieve some of the underage access difficulties experienced by other licensed premises.
- Would provide a diverse range of entertainment.
- Provide local, national and “lessor” international acts to play and come to Christchurch.
- Provide a learning/teaching venue, enabling our local youth a chance to develop.
- Promote and develop employment opportunities.
- A self-funding operation.
- Would, in the long-term, promote and enhance good citizenship, enhancing greater youth self-accountability and responsibility. This project in itself clearly would not solve all our “social youth” problems, but would go a small way towards this end.

A further matter may be consideration over what is lost should the project fail sometime in the future. The entertainment scene may be fickle with trends/music changes, but the underlying need remains, that of providing an outlet for “young adults”. The Council would lose nothing financially, but it will have been proactive in attempting to assist in youth-related issues.

Recommendation: It is recommended that a letter of support be forwarded to Canterbury Music Trust for the project as outlined in the “Proposed Business Plan” for OctopOd – Entertainment with Attitude”.

Chairman’s

Recommendation: That the Council's Youth Advocate prepare a report for the February meeting of this Committee on appropriate ways of filling gaps in major entertainment venues for young people in Central Christchurch, including the issue of provision of alcohol.