

The Good Ship is an event driven venue, which means we literally only open for events, mostly live music but also comedy and we are a nightclub on Friday and Saturday nights. The place was pretty much only a nightclub when I took control of what was the Zd Bar in September 2005. The idea was always that the venue was going to be event driven but it was quickly obvious to me that if it were merely a late bar for the locals it would be attracting the kind of audience that many of the other bars in Kilburn have, which with all due respect is not what we wanted. We have a very diverse programme at The Good Ship but 70% or so of the local clientele only visit The Good Ship for the DJs that play on a Friday and Saturday night. We appreciate that live music and comedy are a bit of a niche market and without a doubt they are a better behaved and more respectful crowd generally but we find that the best of the weekend crowd rub off with these people really well and that is why typically on a Friday or Saturday night the atmosphere is excellent and very friendly with a combination of these two crowds.

When we opened we were one of 3 venues in Kilburn that put on live music, which brought much needed revenue and kudos to the area (lots of people over the years who I have spoken to said they moved locally because of how much was going on in Kilburn) but sadly we are now the only one. Moreover, with the demise of the Corrib Rest in Queens Park we are now the only option for anyone wanting to privately hire a space for more than 120 people for weddings, christenings, significant birthdays and the like. Plus we tend to make all our hires free, valuable to not only those people but to countless charities, voluntary and community groups down the years.

As an example we have a monthly film afternoon where we show a film of their choice to a group of local senior citizens and give them free tea and coffee. That costs us probably all of £40 to put together but it is worth much more to see the happiness it brings to a neglected section of our community.

We have a tolerant, non sexist, non homophobic and non racist policy and have provided space for sections of the community that would not necessarily be as welcomed elsewhere. That said, we are selective within that and will not hire to anyone that we think will be troublesome in any way. Plus when we employ staff they tend to be music or drama students and the vast majority actively do volunteering in their community too.

The difficulties of being a grassroots music venue are well documented and the rate of closures is higher than that for average pubs, which in themselves have been high the last few years. The Good Ship gives a platform for touring and international acts, bringing some of the best up and coming contemporary musicians in the world to Kilburn; for example Adele played here the night she got signed and the xx played their first ever gig here. Perhaps more importantly though we provide a platform for relatively unknown bands, many of whom are fairly local. There cannot be many bands at all in Brent who have not played at The Good Ship and Kilburn would be a much less attractive location for one of the few local growing companies of a significant size; the Institute for Contemporary Music Performance.

The Good Ship is well known for paying new bands better than the average venue, pays all staff better than the average rate locally and has reasonably priced drinks. Our whole ethos is built around friendship, community and peace and obviously we

will not tolerate any aggression from potential customers but neither will we tolerate any rudeness or bad manners. Everything we do is designed to keep the wrong sort away subtly, or otherwise. Plus once inside there is an air of friendliness and respect, from a friendly hello at the door, through our entry stamps (PEACE or LOVE depending on the day) and our music policy. We do not open for any football matches at Wembley, we do not upsell any alcohol, advertise shots or do any deals on larger drinks. All in all it is a happy, peaceful place bringing a much needed dash of colour to a largely down at heel High Road.

A BRIEF BIT ABOUT ME

I am 49 and I devised and have been running The Good Ship for 11 and a bit years. I am from Kilburn and although I live in Brighton now I still come here every week and am well known in the community. I speak occasionally to BRAT and Eleven Streets local neighbourhood forums and am on the former's email list. I have mobilised numerous people on lots of occasions to sign petitions against gambling shops and money lenders on Kilburn High Road. I volunteered for a number of school holidays at Salusbury School Refugee After School Club and when I am in London I pretty much spend all my time and money in Kilburn, I am very well known in Spicy Basil and Anjanas Indian restaurant on Willesden Lane and run The Good Ship's Twitter page which is the second largest community in Kilburn after The Tricycle and helps publicise other small businesses in the area.