

## Summer Ball 2018

### **1. Introduction**

This report will review the Summer Ball 2017 event. It will cover the following points, acts and entertainment, spaces, security, sales, learning points and 2018 mile stones. The majority of the viewpoints, notes and learning points within this report have been dictated from the previous Social Enterprise Manager, Matthew Bowman.

### **2. Acts and Entertainment**

2.1 This year we had two headline acts, Philip George and Neiked, for the 2017 Summer Ball. The Summer Ball ran in direct conjunction with Glastonbury and securing acts was a difficult process. However, having two slightly less well-known acts, playing at similar times within the Queen's Tower rooms and the Great Hall, elevated some of the capacity issues previously experienced within the Great Hall. Spreading student numbers between the two rooms eased the problems with crowd control and there were fewer issues experienced on the Great Hall staircase.

#### 2.2 Other Professional Acts

In H Bar we also had a silent disco from 11pm. We have done this in the past and again the event was well received. It also has the added benefit of not making any noise to cause issues with H Bar's very close residents.

#### 2.3 Student Acts

Again, this year we had student bands and accapella groups performing in the Queen's Tower Rooms and the H Bar. Student DJ's also performed in the Great Hall, Metric and FiveSixEight. All the technical support for the student acts where again supplied by the Drama Society and the Jazz and Rock Society.

After last year's success, the Wind Band Society returned to play again on the Queen's Lawn. Post event survey suggests that students want more activities to be present on the lawn.

#### 2.4 Entertainments

We provided three major fun fair rides this year from Irvine Leisure; these were The Big Wheel, Dodgems and Meteorite. In the post event survey, it was stated that the queuing times where too long for the funfair. Adding another ride will have a sizable impact on next year's budget. College currently give us the parking spaces for the funfair at no cost, the fair would need even more space for a 4th ride next year and it is uncertain whether the College would give this to the Union for free.

We also provided a fireworks show. Previous reports and this year's Summer Ball highlight the issue with crowd control and management just before the fireworks begin. Serious consideration needs to be taken to make sure students are not standing in the drop zone and within the correct area of the lawn before the fireworks start, as students did run into the drop zone, which placed them at risk. This is not a reflection of security on the night, as SIA were placed and did hold students who either tried to either see the fireworks but were too late or going to the facilities in Sheffield. It is factored in that these students ran past them ignoring warnings, into the drop zone.

The photo booths were very popular with the students. This year we positioned the photo booth company in the library café to alleviate large queues experienced last year with the extra space available. A face painting stand was also situated within the library café which was a bonus for the student experience and was well used during the evening. The Drama Society arranged for the library café to be draped off for a better look and feel which worked well.

### **3. Spaces**

We used the same spaces as the year before with an overall capacity of 1800.

#### **3.1 The Main Entrance**

Wristband collection was great on the day, with no major congestion issues at the front gate, following the same process used in the 2016 operating guide. There were a few students still trying to access others spaces within the College for non-ball activities such as study groups. Rubbish collection outside the main entrance on exhibition road did not happen and is to be included in next year's briefing.

#### **3.2 Queen's Lawn and Imperial College Road**

This space was used for the funfair, a food vendor called Dirty Bones and the fireworks display area. The spaces worked well for the funfair and the fireworks as it has in the past.

We did have some issues during the firework display with students running out into the drop zone. This is a continual problem experienced every year and we will review for next year to put procedures in place to limit the occurrence. Survey results from students suggest that the vendor Dirty Bones was a positive addition to the evening but some feedback requested better vegetarian options.

It was noted during the funfair that the dodgems threw sparks onto some of the students. Matt Bowman did report and feed this information back to the hire company, asking how this could be avoided in the future. Survey feedback also showed an increase of interest in having more rides to lessen the queues. This could be an option for the future but would need the budget to support this as well as an increased donation of car parking spaces from estates.

#### **3.3 The Queen's Tower Room**

Due to having an act of note performing in the space, the room and exits had to be overseen and controlled for capacity rates at a much greater efficiency than in previous years. Only two doors were used for an entrance and exit to the room, whilst the rest were left unlocked for fire safety, all doors were manned by safety stewards. This approach did work well however, it meant the room temperature did get hot. There is little that can be done when this room is busy, other than hire a portable air conditioning unit, however, the budget would not support this. A dance stage was added and built within this space for the Drama Society to use in between bands. This worked well, increasing the student involvement at the Summer Ball and did not cause any issues during the evening other than adding extra expense to the budget.

### 3.4 Sheffield Foyer

Congestion was not an issue this year. By having two acts of moderate popularity performing at the same time, the Great Hall did not reach a capacity, therefore, the one in, one out system, did not need to be facilitated. However, in the future, splitting the staircase with a barrier up to the landing could be used to assist and separate students going up and down the stairwell. This would need at least four security or safety stewards to man this throughout the night.

### 3.5 The Great Hall

There were no issues on the night and the space worked well as the main room, with the bigger of the two headline acts performing alongside the support of student DJ's. The room was rather hot but there were not many possible options to combat this which has not already been taken. We did use the co2 cannons again this year, which did have a great effect but also helped to lower the room temperature as well.

### 3.6 H Bar

New stage layout was used for the 2017 event which did work well despite concerns about the flow of the space. The Jazz and Rock Society put a lot of work into the technical side to put this together. Student bands played up until 11pm and then a silent disco from 11pm onwards.

## 4. Security

The new team of safety stewards used on the night worked well as they were prompt and very professional. Similar issues to last year, as not all of the SIA staff requested turned up on time or at all. Feedback from this year gives two options for the upcoming Summer Ball, which involves either over ordering on SIA for the event, knowing that there will be a percentage that fail to show up for the shift or use the steward company (CSP) to provide the SIA for the ball and use our existing SIA company to only work the after party.

## 5. Sales

The total sales of the event were 1697. The breakdown of the sales is:

Flash sale = 96

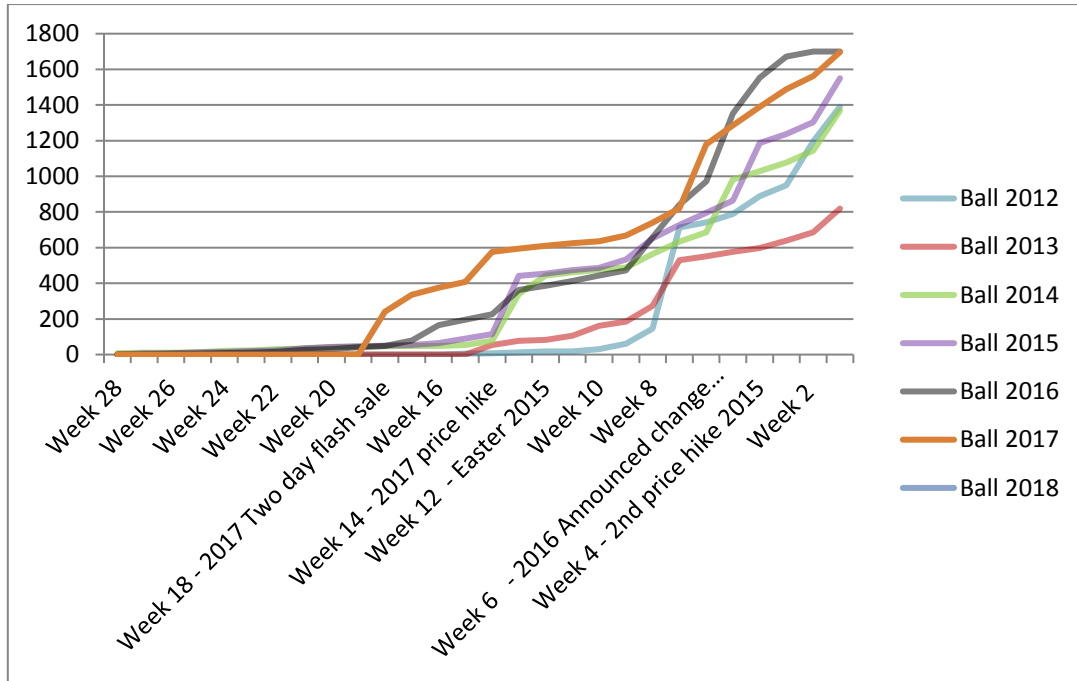
Early bird = 480

Tier 2 = 604

Tier 3 = 517

Summer Ball advance sales date.

NB: 2012 – 2014 capacity was 1500, 2015 was 1650 and 2016 was 1800.

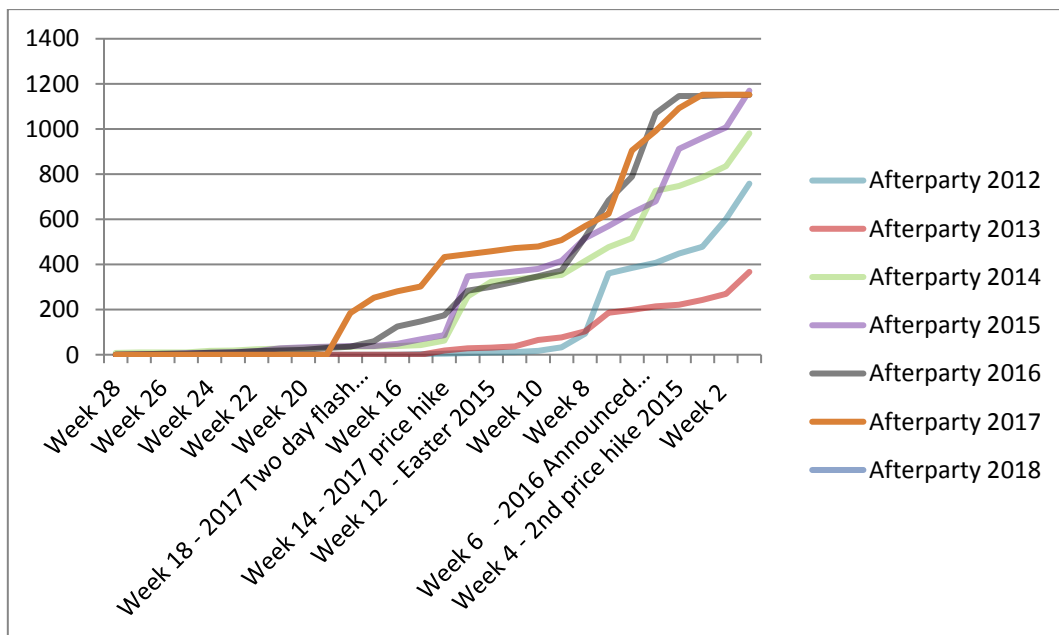


This was a total net income of summer ball tickets was £52,852.50. The total net income for 2016 was £58,778.33.

The after party sold 1150 tickets in advance, 16 tickets on the door, equating to 1166 tickets overall. The after party in 2016 sold 1151 tickets.

The after party was a total net income of £6,360.00.

Total net income for Summer Ball and After Party tickets was £59,212.50.



The bar sales for the temporary bars, the H Bar and the after party at Beit Bars took a total of £21,688.86, roughly the same as the year before.

The total profit of the ball this year was net £10,479.66, this includes £6,000.00 net listing fee from Greene King. Without this listing fee, net profit would be £4479.66.

## **6. Learning points**

6.1 The 2018 Summer Ball will be planned and managed by a new Event and Conferences Manager. This will be kept in mind for the planning of the next upcoming ball and the team should plan and prepare in more detail as early as possible to enable a smooth running event.

6.2 The Marketing for the Flash Sale was a success. The 100 tickets which were put up for sale over a 48 hour period sold out within a couple of hours. It could be used again with a higher amount on sale but this would affect the bottom line surplus for the event. The flash sale did drive FOMO.

6.3 Successful social media posts related to sales spikes. Marketing did lot of price raising prompts and also the ticket count down posts worked well.

6.4 The profile of the acts did impact sales, as did the late announcement of the acts, which were delayed by a month.

6.5 Glastonbury coinciding with the ball meant it was a struggle to book an act with a high enough profile for the ball. Booking two smaller acts meant a decrease in costs to the budget. However, we incurred more costs with increased security and barriers. The date clash also meant that there were less Drama Society alumni who were available to volunteer and support the event. Therefore, we hired in professional stage crew to help with the load in and out. Next year will be a fallow year for Glastonbury and we will not have to consider the issues experienced this year until 2019.

6.6 When using fabric wrist bands for next year use different colours for ball only and ball including after party wristbands, as they looked very similar this year.

6.7 The signal booster for radios did seem to work but there are still issues communication and reaching the front gate. This is due to the amount of buildings in the line of sight of the signal. Another booster could be positioned in the Sheffield building to connect with the booster positioned in the Facilities building.

6.8 After party BBQ sold out. More stock can be ordered in for next year's event.

6.9 16 after party tickets were sold on the night, however, this utilised the time of a member of bar staff which could have been better used on the bars. There is a suggestion to oversell the after party tickets next year, as it often sells out and it has been seen and noted that there are a percentage of students who don't make it to the event after the Summer Ball.

6.10 The event next year will most likely to be no smoking. A form of provision will need to be taken into consideration for the small group of students who do smoke.

6.11 Further catering options for vegetarians and vegans on the night.

6.12 Bins need to be cleared up on Exhibition road.

6.13 Crowd management procedure for fireworks should be deliberated and decided on prior to the event.

6.14 Ask College Security for a more active role overseeing external security groups listed to cover certain areas of the ball.

6.15 With the increase in students numbers and exams taking place over the summer, looking at the overall student experience and reflecting upon the 2016/2017 Summer Ball budget and profits, it is time to review the other possible options and venues to hold the 2019 Summer Ball.

## **7. Milestones**

Summer Ball theme options agreed and put out to vote	Oct 2017
Draft budget to F&R	Nov 2017
Theme voting closed	Dec 2017
Engage with booking contractors	Dec 2017
Fortnightly working group meetings	Jan 2018
Fireworks & funfair rides booked	Feb 2018
Flash sale of tickets	Feb 2018
Early bird tickets on sale	Mar 2018
Risk assessment updated	Mar 2018
Proposal for 2019 Summer Ball submitted	Mar 2018
Headline act booked and announced	April 2018
Tier 2 tickets on sale	April 2018
Weekly working group meetings	May 2018
Decision on Summer Ball 2019	May 2018
Tier 3 tickets on sale	May 2018
Stock ordered	Jun 2018
Event day	Jun 2018

## **8. Upcoming 2018 / 2019 Summer Balls Action Points**

The Summer Ball feedback surveys from 2016 and 2017 are to be reviewed.

Currently the ball is dependent on the good will and charity from staff members within the Union volunteering on the night to help. The ball could not take place without their time and experience. Is there a way to decrease staff's time and resources used when planning and executing of the Summer Ball? There is a suggestion to open a survey to staff to reflect upon their feedback.

A working group should be formed to deliberate and conceive a plan for the next three Summer Balls. It should be the intention of the working group to look into whether the Summer Ball, in its current structure and design, fulfils the standards and expectations of the Imperial student experience. Current suggestions to be included in these discussions are venue practicality and utilising external help to plan and run the ball.