Welcome Week 2018 Debrief

1. Show Your Colours

Saturday 29th September:

One the first day of Welcome Week systems were not ready to use, no one had experience with the systems / processes, so we weren’t sure how to set this up. This is turn affected sales quite a bit – including entry and tills. It was noted by Griffin that tills crashed every 20 minutes. Bars believe someone from systems was supposed to there for the first night of Welcome Week but this hasn’t been confirmed.

As the queuing process was incorrect and halted due to system failure, students waited an hour and a half to get in and the line went back to the Royal Albert Hall. Luckily we did not receive any complaints from RAH. As the queue was so long, we needed traffic wardens to stop students wandering into the road. Utilised staff and SIA to do this. As the systems ticketing process was down, staff ended up going into the queue and manually checking email tickets and IDs.

No bands from J&R, the CSP only told Kristie five minute before they were supposed to go on stage. This meant Kristie had to call in an emergency DJ to cover the slot.

Overall, the Saturday mingle was more well attended than the Sunday (and historically we’ve seen this trend every year). We completely sold out of on the door tickets and many ticket holders for the Sunday turned up for the Saturday instead. Would be worth considering placing Beit and Woodwood on the second night instead.

Passes (golden tickets) really confused the ticket checking process, as halls and constitute unions had either sold on their tickets and put them as a package pass, or promised students access when they did not qualify. This meant students thought they had entry when they didn’t.

As the bar was understaff due to rota issues, welfare stewards ended up being bar staff on the night.

We didn’t open up on time for the first night. The fencing structures were incorrectly placed on the Saturday due to a gap in knowledge and this was detrimental to the service / queuing system. Diagrams needed for next year so to avoid this problem for Bars and Beit Venues.

Beit Halls re-entry was an issue as a lot of students did not understanding they can’t go in and out of Beit Halls into the ICU. Clearer signage from the first night would be beneficial in terms of tougher stance of policy and direct, consistent communication from day one.

BBQ set up – there were no portable lights for staff to see. This is a health and safety issue – Beit Venues will look to invest on behalf of catering. Kristie and Jess set up the BBQ tables and marquee in preparation because by 6pm there was no sign of set up and Beit Venues didn’t want catering staff to have to do it in the dark. The question of who is allowed burgers became apparent. During multiple instances J&R / DramSoc were refused BBQ food, even after confirmation from ICU staff that they were allowed. Also some ICU staff working the event were not served. This is a small issue which could be better managed for next year as it affected staff / volunteer wellbeing.

PORK BALLS instead of burgers. Issue has been discussed by Senior Management and Interim Bars and Catering Manager.

Smirnoff bar - in the end the offer promised by the company to Asher and Kristie was not delivered and a less substantial measure was delivered. The portable bar was not cleaned up by their staff afterwards. A firmer stance on expectations for service and responsibilities will be outlined with the intention to not see a repeat during upcoming events and next year’s Welcome Week.

Welcome Week Safety campaign – due to all the issues with ticket scanning, staff and volunteers were pushed into the role of the queue management. A lot of reserves (free bottles of water) were given out of the beginning, therefore, we ran out for the end of the night handouts, which could have been more beneficial to students. Overall this was a very long shift for ICU staff volunteers from 7pm until 2am and it has been agreed that this is not practical or sustainable. Categorically the most stressful event for Bars and Beit Venues during Welcome Week.

It would be useful to have a briefing before the event specifically for bars/catering and staff volunteers in regards to Show Your Colours. FAQ sheet for volunteers and staff on the night would be a beneficial step as there’s a lot of uncertainty / gaps in knowledge at the beginning of Welcome Week.

Lighting and tech – Dramsoc / J&R were on time in regards to set up. Overall, using CSPs for this event worked well as they were calm and professional. Dan Price said he didn’t know how to set up the DJ decks so Tristan (bar staff) set it up in the end.

Noted that it was empty in the Quad – for Welcome Week 2019, there may be an opportunity to consider having more outside music and attractions within the quad. This could alleviate numbers within the building if the outside space it utilised more.

Budget: £3,000 down for bars (expected loss due to the tills) and £200 made from the BBQ.

Sunday 30th September:

The Sunday event ran a lot more smoothly and SIA were more productive and checked IDs. Ticket scanners worked on Sunday, which meant students’ tickets were processed quickly and efficiently, overall, and with the lower attendance rate, there was never really a queue.

Safety campaign worked better on Sunday, bars appreciated having staff and volunteers on hand to help.

The professional face painters were very popular – this is something we would like to repeat again. Although it was a nice idea for volunteers and OTs to do the face painting on Saturday, it was easier to leave this to professionals and not overload staff.

Halls seniors caused major issues on Sunday evening. It was noted that not all halls sent their hall senior names to Kristie to be recorded on the guest list. Multiple hall seniors turned up for the event without their halls t-shirts, even after specifically beforehand that this was a requirement. Simon O’Hanlon was confrontational about our policies to Dom Murray, however, Dom diffused the situation. Halls in turn were also contacting Kristie at 5pm on the night to add names, when the Beit Venues team were unable to check emails whilst setting up the event. Hall seniors were seen taking off their t-shirts when they were in the venue. When staff asked hall seniors to put their t-shirts back on, they didn’t. Students approached ICU staff because they couldn’t find their halls seniors. It was noted that the majority of halls seniors have taken advantage of the situation, enjoying the event but not fulfilling the role as a welfare provider. Next year we were look into alternative welfare solutions and possibly cap the number of halls seniors attending.

Christian Union were very beneficial at both events and helped the welfare initiative.

One halls coordinated using an ICU minibus to ferry students back to their halls. It might be a beneficial initiative to consider for all the halls which are located further away. We would need the halls to communicate with us if they’re doing this so we can help promote it. Beit Venues could provide very simple maps to students for those living further away, outlining where the halls are.

We thought the acts were good for the budget and type of event, we thought we could improve entertainments by adding more music / activities in 568, as it can get very quiet with everyone in Metric or queuing outside for Metric.

Budget: £2,000 down (expected due to the attendance difference between Saturday and Sunday) and £120 made on the BBQ.

2. Sun-Dry

Overall the event was successful and well attended. The event was organised to feed 60 students but fed at least 85 students on the day. The chef could have done with an extra pair of hands in terms of food preparation but coped well on the day. There was no marketing drive for this event however, the event was full. There was a large cross reference of students, lots of postgraduates which was a nice surprise. Sun-Dry highlighted a current gap in student events / a need for more non-alcoholic events, as Beit Venues had a lot of emails during the run up to Welcome Week about events available which were non-alcoholic / under 18’s friendly. Only James Meddler was available to attend the event to talk to students – it would be beneficial to rota the OTs better next year. The event could have been improved with a better outlining of the allergens present and there was difficulties sourcing a portable speaker, which Beit Venues have now invested in. Decoration of the event worked well and Beit Venues stayed within budget.

3. Glitter Jam

Bar sales: £890 in Metric

Sold the tickets very far in advance which meant we did well out all 440 tickets, however, only 180 were collected on the night. This in turn made metric very quiet, which was not the desired atmosphere for within the club venue. Those who attended did enjoy themselves. It was good to have staff on the glitter stand for the event but by the middle of the event, we were a little short staffed.

Due to the lack of attendance, we tried to sell wristbands at the end of the night for Metric but this tactic did not work in the end and we sold very little at that late stage in the night. Beit Venues may consider it to be more beneficial to do something in the day rather than the evening because Imperial Mum’s and Dad’s takes place during the day.

Bars found cleaning up the glitter after the end of the night an inconvenience.

4. UV Ping Pong (H Bar)

Bar sales: hit budget.

This was a very busy and successful event which we would like to replicate again. The set up went well, with the external company providing the tables and setting up the activity. The event was something different for students to try and the tables were used by students throughout the night. Lighting could have been improved in the venue to be more atmospheric. Volunteers oversaw the event which worked well. The event itself was not promoted as much as it could have so Beit Venues was happy with the outcome and attendance.

Kristie Knapp and Jess Harrison got stuck in the lift trying to help with pack down, this was logged in the end of night report. Unless completely necessary, would limit any kind of manual handling undertaken by ICU staff and leave to trained professionals.

5. Fresher’s Fair

Bars: Missed budget by £500, noted that the evening was busy but not packed within the bars.

Noted that maybe for next year JH and JP will not participate in the Fair and would prefer to sell tickets to the events / promote live on the fair floor.

Not sure what happened with the bars stall

Big band in Metric and Quiz in 568, Wine tasting in H Bar (cancelled) and quiz at Reynolds.

Big band was okay as an event (very quiet in Metric) as there were no a comfortable furniture / spaces for people to sit and enjoy. Marketing of the quiz times was incorrect. Negatively impacted on attendance. Quizzes happened anyway.

Bar vouches – all students were promised bar vouchers for bringing back tables. Beit Quad ran out of vouchers, JP asked for more vouchers which did not turn up. Students were rather irate with the ICU staff. At the end of the evening, with ICU staff, it was noted that a whole pile of drinks tokens were seen on a table at the ICU staff do.

6. CSP Wednesday

Hit capacity at 10pm

Sold out pre-bought tickets and had a large amount of students turn up on the night. To investigate where the balance between letting students in at 8pm, when the pre-bought ticket holders haven’t turned up before the 9pm cap, to be look into with bars and with Beit Venues. Ideas from next year include capping the time to get in with the pre-bought ticket to 10pm.

Bars – down a £1,500 from a £24,000 budget

BBQ - £259. BBQ took place in the pitch black again.

Looking for ideas of how to manage the Metric queue, different formats are being considered.

Lot of incidents on the first Wednesday of term. Didn’t have many major incidents but bars and SIA were involved in breaking up a lot of sports teams. We would categories the first CSP Wednesday of the year as a higher risk evening and Beit Venues should consider a different behaviour management plan for these nights. Proactive approaches to avoiding bad behaviour would be to liaise with Student Activities and promote through them that bad behaviour will not be tolerated during the first week of term. Serving in plastic cups from 8pm on Wednesdays. JP heard a lot of glass smashing that evening.

Follow up: CSP specific comms / promotion piece within the Union for Welcome Week, which could be utilised for ACC and CSP Wednesday nights, to highlight that there is a standard of behaviour expected on these nights and bad behaviour will lead to disciplinary measures.

Lacking on branding for this evening – no distinct look / presence.

7. Karaoke – H Bar

Very popular with the Postgraduate students. Terrible lighting within H Bar. The bar couldn’t control the lighting at all within the room due to technical difficulties. H Bar called building technicians but couldn’t fix it for this event. Impacted the mood a little bit but didn’t stop the students from enjoying themselves. Worked well with a volunteer overseeing. The overall karaoke system is not unified and doesn’t look professional like an external company. Microphone connection unreliable and one microphone is completely broken.

Dom noted that bars could desperately do with some training on the karaoke machine for how to run it.

8. Bandeoke – Metric

Bandeoke had the potential to be a good event but it was very quiet in Metric. It was really hard to get people into Metric for them to see Bandeoke, as there’s nowhere for people to sit within the venue. All the people from H Bar Karaoke came over for this event. Needs better lighting within the venue and presented differently. Metric can look quite intimidating if there’s not a lot of people in there already and there’s nothing to entice students in as an event space. Bandeoke was a good company to use but Beit Venues will assess whether having such a big event planned after CSP Wednesday is wise.

9. Quiz – H Bar

There was an issue with the PA system / microphone and students couldn’t hear the host, as the venue was so loud / popular. 22 teams signed up at the beginning of the evening for the quiz, only 10 left by the end of the evening as they couldn’t hear him delivering the quiz. Ran as normal quiz night.

10. UV Ping Pong – Reynolds

Company delivered the tables early. Some interested in the ping pong but never got busy. Worked in the space but probably not promoted well, at the right time during the week?

11. Fresher’s Ball

Smooth entry in terms of crowd control – ticket system was the best it had been and we had no big queues. Students need to know that their ticket is on their college card, if they sell on their ticket on to another student. Time was wasted reading student conversations to prove they had sold on their ticket. Much improved and preferred system by bar staff and Beit Venues. Stilt walkers looked great in the quad, something to catch the students’ eye as soon as they entered the event. An overall better welcome for our students compared to the weekend. Reached capacity at 11pm.

We faced a lot of issues with Beit Hall re-entry. Bars eventually put up no re-entry signs to explain to students that they could not walk into the event without a ticket, no could we go back to their room during the event. Planning to run clear signage during next year’s event from day 1.

We had two fire alarms in a row during the headliner performance. The incident was handled the best we could by bars, staff and Beit Venues at the time. Attained the fire report from the first alarm, no further information from the report other than a student had set off the alarm by breaking the fire alarm red box by the Union Bar exit. No answers to what caused the second alarm.

Beit Venues to balance out the building by putting entertainment activities in other rooms, as everyone wanted to be in Metric to see the Stickmen which caused crowd movement issues.

Big queues this evening for Metric and the line went all the way back to the Beit Halls archway. Temperatures in Metric were unacceptable. Need to attain the temperatures of what was reached this particular evening. Temperature logs are recorded within the College.

BBQ issues with catering staff not allowing ICU staff / Dramsoc / Jazz and Rock to access volunteer food. Not on “the list”.

\*small note – we can’t offer food options for H Bar because it’s not our catering outlet. How do we feed volunteers working shifts for those events?

Acts for the Fresher’s Ball was well received. Stickmen played longer than they should have because of the fire alarms and the performance was very popular with students.

12. Wolf Rocks

We assume this went okay – Adam ran it. Did not hit budget.

Well received event although not promoted very well. As the Beit Venues team was busy working the Freshers’ Ball, we were unable to see the Wolf Rocks event. Next year, we intend not to run such a large event in conjunction with the Fresher’s Ball next time.

13. Brunch and live music

Moved guitarsoc from Union Bar to 568 and this worked well.

£908 in terms of food sales for AM. Brunch and music did not co-inside in the end. Thoughts were that it wasn’t obvious from our promotion whether the event was free to attend.

This event was always planned to take place for Sunday but had been marketed for the Saturday.

14. Post grad speed meet - cancelled

15. Postgrad 90s vs 00s

We saw a third of the attendance compared to last year. Marketing issues throughout. Missed ticket sales, sold more on the door but struggled with the weather on the night of the event.

Down £3,000 on the bar

Looking to change the concept completely – however, the event itself ran well. Targeting the postgraduate as a cohort for an event in metric is a risk. Better to do a themed event that is open to all students.

16. Board games

This didn’t really happen in the end. Event plan had a mistake on it – bars didn’t use initiative to put the games out earlier for the event.

17. Comedy night

Full capacity for 100 people seated. Didn’t turn that many students away. Only had 65 seats for Metric and they don’t interlink.

£250 taken for Metric on the night. Event went well and would replicate again next year.

Final key points

* Noted there was a Welcome Week briefing between Kristie and Paul G to go through all the events beforehand. However, Asher did not attend so most likely this information was not passed on to bars.
* Not enough wristbands ordered for the large events.
* SIA throughout the week were a mixed bag, a few incidents mentioned by Asher. Next time all names should be recorded and escalated to Claire straight away. They must remain vigilant.
* Projector screens within 568 were not on/used throughout the week.
* Beit Venues kept an up to date TOIL spreadsheet. Useful to analyse the hours worked. Questions for next year whether the hours reasonable in regards to staff wellbeing.

Budget: Welcome Week was £6,000 down in ticket revenue in comparison to last year. Overall, the majority of events sold well ticket wise, however, we lost significant money from the Postgraduate event.