Summer Ball Update

13th March 2019

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1. Introduction

The Summer Ball is on Saturday 22nd June 2019 – Beit Venues intends to deliver a successful ball, on time, to budget and most importantly, as safe as possible with the resources available.

With three months to go until the event, this paper highlights upcoming changes and plans to mitigate risks.

1. Recommendations

Following ESP’s review of the ball, we have changed the egress plan for students entering the ball, which was previously highlighted as a weak point. To mitigate issues with crowd control during queuing, we intend to organise a wristband collection two days prior to the ball, to alleviate long waiting times for students and overcrowding within the foyer. Therefore, there will be two queues overseen and managed from the business school foyer on the night, with the intention that those who have pre-collected will have quicker access into the venue. ESP also flagged the risks involved in utilising Dramsoc within the build and production of the ball. This year we are working with Dramsoc to decrease the pressure and technical expectations, previously set at an unrealistic standard for the time and space available, and simplify the staging requirements within the three entertainments areas (the Great Hall, QTR and SCR). Plans to provide resources to ease pressure and intensity of ICU volunteer shifts have unfortunately been cut from the budget. We will be relying on ICU staff to help with the operational aspects of the ball and aid with health and safety on the night.

1. Terrorism

We liaise closely with college security and our external SIA provider to mitigate any risks with regards to external attacks on the night. The event lead for the ball has undergone project ARGUS counter-terrorism training, delivered by the City of London Police. The rest of the Beit Venues team, including the Summer Ball Project Coordinator, will be undertaking the Project ARGUS session in May, to expand the overall knowledge of the team, and ensure effective and practical steps are put in place to mitigate risks in this area.

1. Crisis Management Plan

Utilising the College’s form, previously used last year for the Fresher’s Fair 2018, the document will be updated and adapted for the ball, along with the specific hazards the event contains. Beit Venues will be collecting and reviewing the Union’s and College’s insurance cover, in regards to the event, which will help during the planning process to map contingencies and design plans for emergencies. It is the intention to liaise closely with Julia Cotton whilst the crisis management plan is being formulated. The crisis management plan will then be reviewed and tested using a table top approach to see if the model works for the event. Once the procedures are decided, a full communications plan will be incorporated alongside the crisis management plan.

1. Risk Assessments

There will be a review of last year’s external documentation and risk assessments produced by ESP. It is the intention to monitor and update risks from previous balls, and evaluate the new risk brought in by activities taking place within the event. This year we will be asking Dramsoc for three method statements for the three rooms / three stages they are designing, producing and managing during the ball. For each area, Dramsoc must produce examples of competent individuals responsible for the production of the stage / AV, in regards to the tasks being undertaken.

1. Security and Crowd Control Management

The crowd control and security operations will change alongside the plan for the new egress method. There will be a review of the security and steward positions within the ball, limited resources means that efficient security plan will need to be in place and robust incident procedures for specific operations.

Crowd control for the ball will be evaluated beforehand, to the competency level and experience held by the event organiser. A basic analysis of crowd behaviour and the risks involved will be utilised to aid incident planning and evacuation procedures. There will be a higher probability of risk due to the larger number of people attending and the demographic. The plans produced will highlight the risks which are reasonably foreseeable and mitigate them to an acceptable standard.

Specifically we will be looking at:

Surge points – how will they be controlled to slow students down.

Signage – this should be repeated and as simple as possible in terms of messaging.

Sticking points – how will they be controlled to move students easily.

Exit and entry points – how they will be controlled for all of the above.

1. Volunteers

There will be more reliance on ICU staff to take part and volunteer at this year’s event. Staff wellbeing during the event has been highlighted for many years, in several reports, to different committees. Rotas will be designed to alleviate stress points as much as possible, and incorporate breaks; however, these roles will encompass more responsibility in regards to health and safety, and will most likely fatigue staff. It is the intention to run feedback session with previous year’s volunteers on how we can improve upon bad practices in previous years, as we will need staff uptake to make the event run successfully. Without volunteers, we will be in vulnerable position in regards to operationally running the ball.