

Bridge Folk Club - Bookings Guidelines

What kind of music works for us?

Let's be honest; if you bill yourself as progjazzrockfolk or something similar you'll be much better suited to another venue with a different audience. We're sure you do fabulous music but The Bridge simply isn't right for you and you really don't need to read any further. Sorry, and the very best of luck with your approaches elsewhere.

OK; still with us? The beating heart of the club is happiest when it is nurtured by the traditional archives of the English-speaking world and, indeed, non-English speaking countries as well. So, that's all of the world and all of the various archives and you'll fit right in if you bring us traditional English, Irish, Scottish, Welsh, Antipodean, American, Breton, Galician, Scandinavian, Eastern European, etc etc etc. (Maybe not too much of the etc etc etc all on just one night).

Many of our guests include two or three numbers from great writers such as Richard Thompson, Christy Moore, Leonard Cohen and many more – all of whose work is very widely known and fits seamlessly into the kind of music we love. But we don't look for tribute acts, and remember what we just said – the easiest way to make us happy is by feeding us material from the traditional archives.

Guests are also welcome to bring some self-written materials. If they fit the spirit of traditional folk they always have a great reception from our regulars, but the most popular tunes and songs are always those familiar oldies that we already know **so we ask you to do a night that is at least 50% 'proper' trad.** We know that's very hard to define but mainstream folk acts know what we mean.

Just to emphasise this; when people ask 'Weren't the sixties great?', we totally agree – if they mean the 1860s (yes, it's a joke, but it has a hint of truth).

How far ahead do we book?

We are typically booked up about 18 months ahead and we simply can't offer dates within that timescale no matter how much we might love your music.

Your initial approach

Email your details to us at info@bridgefolkclub.co.uk. *Please do not enquire via Facebook or by telephone.*

It's wonderful to have recommendations and reviews from other people but we don't book anyone we haven't seen perform, so make sure you send us at least two or three videos of you performing live. We prefer to see you doing trad numbers, but that isn't a dealbreaker at this point if you confirm you'll include at least a 50% trad content in your gig (see 'What kind of music works for us?')

Please include direct links to your videos or attach them to your email; don't just give general comments such as 'check my amazingly marvellous supergreat website' or 'see me on FaceTube or Spoticloud or YouBook or Soundfy' – and please don't ask us to pay for downloads if you'd like us to review your music with a booking in mind.

NB Videos don't need to be studio quality but do yourself justice – shaky clips captured on somebody's phone in a pub won't show you at anywhere near your best so ditch them.

A nice little extra that can help you to make a great impression on us if you are ever close enough to The Bridge is calling in and doing a floor spot or two to show us how terrific you are in front of our audience. Just email us first so we can make sure you aren't planning to come on a busy night. We'll be as hospitable as we can and we might be able to squeeze you in for three or four numbers on a singers' night but there'll probably be space for only one number from you on guest nights because our regulars also like to perform*.

*We don't do support slots on guest nights, our regulars use the non-guest time.

Can you represent yourself or should you use an agent?

We deal 99% directly with artists, and all approaches from individuals or bands receive a reply.

Regretfully, and we know it might be our loss, we simply don't have time to read through the many recommendations and watch the batches of videos of all of the people represented by some agents who regularly overwhelm us with pages of artists, unfiltered by their approach to folk music. We respect everyone who works to support live music and we feel horribly guilty but we almost never reply to most agents.

*** Some agents do a great job – they know us and they send details about only one or two artists at a time whom they have picked specially for our club and they know we would love to have. If you are one of these agents and you're reading this you know who you are and thank you thank you thank you.

How long will you wait for our reply?

We meet to look at artists' enquiries as regularly as possible but no matter how much we try to avoid it real-life stuff can sometimes get in the way of our folkie interests. We reply as quickly as we can – honestly, we really do – but a booking decision might not be available for a couple of weeks, and possibly up to a month if holidays or other commitments and life events crop up.

It's very rare for enquiries to be lost but we're nearly human and can make mistakes so if you do not receive a reply within a month please contact us again; we won't be upset.

No, no, no, no, no. Yes

It would be lovely if we could offer dates to everyone but life isn't like that. If you get a 'thanks but no thanks' response it's usually for one of two reasons:

- our diary is already taken for the date you are after (see 'How far ahead do we book?')
- or you haven't told us you'd commit to that 50%+ traditional content that we ask for (see 'What kind of music works for us?')

If you get a 'yes please' we will suggest a possible date for your gig and maybe give you a choice of dates. It helps us to help you if you confirm your availability quickly because if more than one performer is touring at the same time we think the fairest way to finalise bookings is 'first accepted, first in the diary'.

You are coming to the club – how do you get to us?

Our address is Castle Garth, Newcastle upon Tyne. If you are using Satnav the postcode is NE1 1RQ.

There are some parking spaces directly outside of the pub and they are free of charge after 6.30. Make sure you turn left into the parking area as soon as you have driven through a set of traffic lights and under a railway bridge (it's obvious when you get there). DO NOT drive past and go over the High Level

Bridge into Gateshead. Gateshead is a lovely place but the High Level Bridge is buses only and you'll be fined!

You have a gig – what happens on the night?

Our club room is ideally suited to acoustic performances but if you like to bring your own audio equipment that is OK. (It must be PAT tested, of course) Doors open at 7.30 but we can meet you earlier if you'd like to set up or practise in the club room – no problem.

We start the performances at 8.00 and close at 10.30

The usual format (approximate times) is –

- Bridge residents/visitors do a warm-up until about 8.25
- Guest – 45 minutes, up to a break at 9.10
- Break for ten minutes; 9.10 – 9.20
- Bridge residents/visitors again, until about 9.45
- Guest – 45 minutes up to 10.30. Encores after 10.30 are no problem but we must – absolutely must – be out of the room by 11.00

We have an area where you can display and sell whatever CDs or songbooks etc you have brought. You take 100% of any sales. Please make your own arrangement for taking payments.

Videos of your gig

We video many of our guests and we love to publicise them (and the club) by posting the videos to our Facebook page and YouTube channel. If we *don't* video your gig it isn't a comment on your music; it's just because we can't arrange it every time.

We'll need your set list with the names of your tunes/songs and the composers or writers of any that aren't trad so we can put the correct titles on the videos. That keeps us clear of most copyright issues and everyone gets the appropriate credit. Your set list isn't a straitjacket, though, and it's not a big problem if you change your running order or add or drop items – you can always respond to how you feel on the night.

Guests have the final say about which videos are OK for publication. We'll never put individual numbers online that a performer doesn't want uploaded but we do expect to be able to use a reasonable proportion of your gig (50% plus) if it has been videoed. Remember, this also gives you good publicity and we'll

happily include links to your website and Facebook page – think about all of those extra sales!

After you get them you will have plenty of time – a month – to decide which videos are fantastic and if any have a bit of a problem. We'll assume that they are all OK if you haven't told us differently by the time that month is up.

When we start uploading the videos we'll post them with an interval between each one because we think that gives you (and us) the best impact and keeps the interest of our followers.

You are welcome to use the videos we supply in any way you wish and at any time. We'd be grateful for an acknowledgement for the club in any publicity.

How much do we pay and when do we pay it?

When we offer you a gig we'll specify your guaranteed payment. It is the same amount for solo acts and for bands. We pay on the night of your performance.

What about accommodation?

We love the company of folk musicians but none of us has spare rooms and we can't offer you a bed ourselves. If we know you are travelling a long distance to get to us we will add an extra amount to your gig guarantee to go towards your travel and hotel costs. Again, like the guaranteed payment for your performance, it is the same amount for solo acts and for bands.

There are gazillions of hotels around Tyneside. We don't like to recommend any because people have such different expectations but a little bit of internet research should get you a choice of places you fancy at different prices. If your accommodation is somewhere fairly close to us we might even be able to arrange a lift to and from the club, depending on how much gear you have.

What about gigs at other venues close to The Bridge?

It makes good sense if you are travelling to spread your costs around more than one venue and if it helps you to make a tour worthwhile we certainly don't mind if you also play other venues around our area.

There is an excellent website that you should look at. Go to –
<http://northumbriafolk.org.uk/roundabout.html>

It doesn't list every folk club but if you go to the North East Folk Directory tab and then the Folk Clubs tab it does give information about several in the north-east of England.

NB the details aren't necessarily 100% correct because it depends on club organisers checking they are accurate and updating their information when necessary, but most errors will be fairly unimportant.

Cancellations

If you need to cancel it's obviously better if you can give us a heads up a long time ahead but don't worry, we do understand that stuff happens. We'll do our best to work out an alternative date that would suit your changed circumstances.

Cancellations from our side are almost completely unknown but something outside of our control could happen. We'll discuss any problems a cancellation might cause and agree on a sensible outcome, preferably by finding another date for you. If our cancellation was at such short notice that you had already travelled to Newcastle we won't leave you out of pocket.

Anything else?

Any more questions? Please email them to us at info@bridgefolkclub.co.uk.

We love to support folk artists who are safeguarding the traditions we cherish so if you have read everything we've set out and you think you'd be a good fit for us please do grasp that nettle and send us your details. We're waiting!