

Summary of Focus Group Meeting Wednesday 21st November

Topics: Room Use, Room Entry, Memberships

Focus group attendees included representatives from MusicSoc, ChaOS, Chamber Choir, Latin Ballroom, Edge Arts Community and individual and small group users of Music Rooms, the Fine Art Studio and Dance Studio. Edge Staff in attendance: Jamie Eastman, Eloise Tong, Sophie Cooper and Brittany Wallis

After a short introduction by Jamie on the topics for this focus group and upcoming week, a who's who of the room helped us understand the breadth of participants from societies, small groups and individuals and their involvement at The Edge.

The focus group then split into two groups to discuss the positive and negative elements of current and proposed room use, room entry and membership at The Edge. This was then shared in an open room discussion, followed by a brief general Q&A about proposals and following focus groups.

Positive feedback

- Membership was felt to be priced well, particularly for societies and small groups
Idea: Per semester and not per year for further flexibility
- Transparency of booking system proposed i.e being able to see availability live reduces admin and time taken to make bookings and better see access times. It also gives bookers an awareness of what goes on in the spaces, such as arts/dance/music classes – which they felt would be beneficial.
- Agreed that the different types of membership presented in the proposal served individual users and small groups better who fell through cracks in previous system when booking larger spaces such as the Fine Arts Studio or Dance Studio
Idea: to provide Open Session times in FAS and Digital for multiple users to come and go and use the space. Free on the Studio membership.
Idea: to propose clarification and options for smaller groups, i.e. the process for two or three individual rehearsing together
- Membership clearly organised creating a clear community and mailing lists of users of certain disciplines and rooms
Idea: When booking a session, ask 'How many people expected to use the room?' to keep accurate records and provide understanding of room use.
- All agreed that the electric drum kit should be replaced by the spare piano to relieve the pressure on pianos in other rooms, particularly the amp room
- Room booking without box office could mean later or more standardised late sessions in the building
- **Idea:** Make Level 3 Lockers Edge Membership use only to reduce use by non-arts users from other areas of campus.
- New piano in choral room very good and appreciated
- Agreed that moving the grand piano back to the Music Studio would work best
- **Idea:** Feedback sessions and a suggestion box provided to see how changes are impacting
- Agreed that the Weston Studio is best served for society access, as a large space for rehearsals

Negative feedback

- Piano swap from Music Studio to Ensemble room not working for ChaOS groups
Idea: Move baby grand back to MS, or have baby grands in both rooms!
- Current platinum card for advance only piano limits those who can use the larger rooms such as the ER. This then puts additional pressure on other rooms including the Amp room, which then gets over-used for solo piano use.
Idea: piano in arts corridor moved to practice room 2 to relieve pressure and amp room used for band and small group practice only, possibly umbrella'd by MusicSoc. (Jazz groups in particular who are not part of ChaOS)

- Current inflexibility of timings and ad hoc bookings due to other events; unclear process
- Current inflexibility for access for instrument storage
- **Idea:** These smaller lockers and stands removed from ER to another space for access such as Digital Studio, instrument store or elsewhere on Level 2. Current inflexibility of timings and ad hoc bookings due to other events; unclear process
- Proposed 'Society Cards' prove difficult for MusicSoc and bands as don't have chair or committee member at each practice as ChaOS often do.
- Concern over how ad hoc bookings for societies would continue – Socs are currently given access to booking system two weeks before individual users to book additional sessions to regular rehearsals for upcoming events.

It was agreed that another two sessions would be useful to discuss plans further. This includes the already scheduled session on Wed 28 Nov and an additional session proposed for Wed 5 Dec (TBC). The next focus group will look at online booking, terms and conditions and unpick any further concerns on membership and room access. The last session will address any un-resolved issues and suggestions from the focus groups, working towards a final outcome.

It was felt by all that the focus group was a great way to clarify and analyse the current and proposed room use of The Edge and how access might work, whilst also openly problem solving and gaining deeper understanding of other users and society's practices for rehearsal, access and room booking.