

AEV AGM – 23 September, Business Design Centre
AEV Chairman's Report - Delivered by Max Bull, AEV Chair

Welcome to the AEV's annual AGM.

Thank you all for coming to The Business Design Centre, I am delighted to welcome you all here today.

Whilst it has been the most challenging time in all of our history, I am pleased to report that the association has had another successful year responding to the demands and supporting its members through the Covid-19 pandemic. We are in a good place financially which you will hear from Jeremy shortly and membership interaction and engagement is at an all-time high. We have continued to meet virtually on a more frequent basis with working groups taking place every week and our focus has been to continue supporting members through the Covid-19 pandemic and lobbying government to recognise the events sector in their response and support.

Despite the pandemic I am delighted to report membership has increased to 45 having welcomed 2 new members this year, namely Emirates Old Trafford and Cranmore Park. The range and diversity of venues joining the AEV continues and these members were enticed due to the response and support they could see the association providing the venue industry during the pandemic.

The working groups have always been the life and soul of the AEV and this year has seen the frequency and attendance increase. We have hosted 109 virtual meetings over the last year. We currently have 14 working groups, 7 of which are cross association and 38 of our members have joined in including some of our international members. 1,735 interactions, 32 guest speakers, 150 hours over the last year. These are impressive stats! Whilst there is a huge desire for the groups to meet face to face, the team are keen to keep the momentum going with regular, shorter meetings and in the short term will continue virtual whilst members are busy getting events back up and running. Project Confidence and Events Reopen, the two new groups which evolved in response to the pandemic will continue at the members' request.

The pandemic has brought the 3 associations AEV, AEO and ESSA closer together than ever before and the collaboration and communication has been a great team effort. Lobbying Government has been the main priority over the year having succeeded in gaining recognition for business events within the Government Visitor Economy Group, our job has been to fight for continued financial support including furlough, business rates and the most recent announcement of the government backed insurance scheme. As the Government worked through its response from lockdowns to the Roadmap of steps 1-4, the team acted as the conduit between government and industry for the Events Recovery Programme which took place over the summer. Now that we are open, the focus is looking forward to decide what we want from government in the future.

A decision was taken by the Board to cancel the 2020 conference and I am delighted that we will be launching the 2021 event taking place here at the BDC in November next week. This will be the first time we have brought our members face to face since the pandemic and I look forward to seeing you and your teams for what I know will be an inspirational day.

None of us could have imagined how long our industry would be closed and how challenging it would be. Our members have continued to turn to their association for guidance and support and I am delighted that the team have responded with the support of both the AEV and EIA boards to champion the interests of the industry.

The progress and achievements that have been made with such a small team are commendable and I would like to thank the AEV secretariat for their hard work. I would also like to thank my fellow Board members for their contributions.

I, the AEV Board and the secretariat would welcome any feedback from members, or even prospective members, as to how we could add further value to your businesses. The AEV team are very keen to add more value, create more opportunities and serve the membership more fully. We have the opportunity to proactively shape our association to further enhance the value that it can provide for the future.

Thank you all for coming.