

STATEMENT FROM ROTHERHAM ART EVENTS CONCERNING THE CLOSURE OF THE TRADES.

As per usual with such things the air is thick with rumour and innuendo about today's (Tuesday 3rd March) announcement, or should I say whisper, that the Trades are shutting their doors.

YES the Trades will be closing their doors **SUNDAY AT THE LATEST OR WHEN THE BEER RUNS OUT.** This is because the current Tenant is leaving the Trades.

Will the doors ever re-open? Quite probably.

Unwittingly RAE found themselves caught in the middle of what appears to be a disagreement between the Freehold owner of the Trades and the Tenant. It would appear on the surface that the current Tenant is applying a scorched earth approach to leaving the Business, even to the extent of suggesting that the building is to be knocked down, which plainly is not true if you look at the records of the local Planning Office, neither has a change of use application been made.

If RAE were the biggest single Trades customer, and the disruption to our planning complicated, then we need also think about those who had booked Private Engagement or Wedding celebrations at the venue. From what we have been told substantial deposits have been placed and on enquiring they are being told that it "might be sometime" before they a penny of their money back.

This is exactly the way that the current Management of The Trades have operated. Shall we say, muddied water versions of reality and complete ignorance to customers.

We know that the Freehold Owner has a number of options available to him, one of them the sketch of a plan from RAE to develop the Trades into a Community asset. **NO DECISION ON THE FUTURE OF THE TRADES HAS YET BEEN MADE.**

So how have we got here.

For eighteen months RAE have been attempting to get a Meeting with the venue's Management.

Eventually in October 2014, by accident, Mick managed to pin the person we believed to be responsible down, only to have what incentives we had for promoting events at The Trades ripped away, this included the small monthly publicity allowance made to RAE. Also, at this meeting our contribution to keeping the Trades viable was completely undermined, the extreme example being the figures he quoted for bar takings at Slamfest 2014, £750. We know that the Punk Festival had a minimum of 50 people in the Concert Room from mid-day – after 8:00pm there were a minimum of 300. On the night we were told takings were of the order of £5K. The event cost RAE £2K to mount, and given that The Trades refused to advertise or sponsor we eventually had to twist their arm to make a donation. We got £100. Lies and made up figures and a complete misrepresentation of facts.

If we could have pulled then we would have. RAE is passionate about music though, and we had some fantastic nights booked for the Autumn / Winter season which we wanted to see through. It was only at the end of this successful season that included three full houses of 300+ that we cut back our promotions.

It would appear that reduced programme has had a direct correlation with takings and the rest is now history.

RAE had an idea that things were not quite right given two lengthy spells where their telephone was down during which RAE became their answering service. These were periods when a large amount of work was lost to the Trades.

During our association with the Trades we have made many suggestions to the Management. Without exception they have all been ignored. No sorry, one was taken up – we suggested an illuminated sign for posters of upcoming events. We didn't get the illuminated sign, we got a black board the size of a postage stamp. Mick and I still laugh at that one.

For a long period Mick and I, despite placing so much business the way of the Trades, had to put up with a lot of hassle from Staff of the Club. Notices were put up barring us from using equipment (blaming us for breakages that we were not responsible for); notices were placed in the dressing room threatening RAE acts that if they leave the rooms in a mess they would be banned; even the cash box left at the desk was removed to prevent us using it!. We have witnessed up to thirty minute queues at the bar, and constant moaning from bar staff about having to work - they attempted to charge a Band that had just put £2.9K over the bar and cost the Club nothing to put on for post gig beers. Some nights they couldn't be out of the place quick enough and closed the bar when customers still wanted drinks. OK nitty picky things, but stuff that add up to whether people have a good experience of the Trades or not. For some reason from November 2014 this did improve a bit, but only after a couple of verbally violent arguments where eventually our view was put across.

We have tried our best to help the Trades find a new Tenant / owner. However, we have to be honest and say that the current Tenant undermined the early negotiations with a representative of the Freeholder causing so much confusion about the validity of the books, ownership and intent that the RAE contacts walked away.

The RAE Community Project offer to the Freeholder needs support though. What does Community mean? It means opening the Trades to everyone for any legal purpose. The facilities are fantastic, and only basic cosmetic things need to be done to turn the venue into a place where quality concerts and much else can be featured.

It needs to be remembered that The Trades is the second largest venue in Rotherham for events in the Town Centre.

Please Email us **HERE** to show your support for the RAE concept. Unfortunately figure and the detailed plan remain sensitive but when we can we will publish the full paper and call a Meeting of all interested parties.

IMPORTANT FACTS:

RAE WERE NOT AND WERE NEVER APART OF THE TRADES MANAGEMENT.

RAE DID NOT HAVE ANY FINANCIAL INTEREST IN THE TRADES

RAE HAVE DONE EVERYTHING THEY CAN IN AN ATTEMPT TO SAVE THE TRADES without us it might have closed twelve months ago

RAE HAVE BEEN FRUSTRATED AT EVERY TURN WHEN IT COMES TO RAE PROVIDING THE VIP SERVICE THAT OUR CUSTOMERS DESERVED AT LIVE AT THE TRADES EVENTS.

There is a future, but you the 3,000 plus people who have viewed the statement from earlier in the day and especially the 50 people who shared it need to drop us an Email so we can demonstrate the support we have for the Trades in Rotherham