



## **Association Of Independent Festivals Launched**

*6pm Thursday 19th June, Earls Court:* - The Association of Independent Music today announced the launch of the Association of Independent Festivals - a non-profit trade organisation created to represent UK music festivals. The association launched with twelve festival organisers on the Board, with a second wave of festivals to be invited as members over the summer.

The brainchild of Bestival promoter Rob da Bank, he said at the launch, at AIM's AGM: "*AIF has been a seed in my brain ever since we started Bestival five years ago, where we came up against so many issues, from where to source good toilets to stopping campsite theft, to being greener, saving money, and making our event as good as can be.*"

AIF will operate as an autonomous division of AIM with its own board and structure, as outlined below. It will be chaired by AIM Chairman Alison Wenham, joining some of the UK's strongest and most creative music festivals as founder members, ranging from the 40,000 capacity Creamfields in Liverpool, to the 6,000 capacity Summer Sundae in Leicester.

Commented AIM Chairman and Chief Executive Alison Wenham: "*AIM has come a very long way since it opened its doors nine years ago, and no greater compliment could be paid to us than to work with the newly formed AIF. AIM is a broad church of interests. AIM's and AIF's members are all independent entrepreneurs working in music. AIF will represent independent British Festivals, another great example of indie culture at work, requiring imagination and hard work. The synergies are undoubtedly there and we hope to provide AIF with a supportive and experienced environment in which they can develop the collective platform for the UK independent festival industry.*"

Speaking about the association with AIM, Rob's manager and co-founder Ben Turner said: "*It was clear that working with somebody as strong and visionary as Alison and the AIM board was a clear route to market, a powerful message of our intention and an indication of where this concept can be taken for the benefit of festival owners, and subsequently the festival-going public. The AIM Board has been open, constructive and nothing but encouraging. At the same time, having our own identity is important. We have our own issues and agendas.*"

All festival promoters included in the AIF Board were approached by the founders, and the association will operate on an invite-only basis going forward, meaning all new association members will be selected by the Board. The organisation will also operate a Friends of AIF, in similar style to Friends of AIM, opening the door to companies ranging from merchandisers to toilet providers who wish to communicate directly with owners.

Services provided by AIF from launch will include use of AIM's lawyer Michael Fuller, discounted entry to AIF and AIM networking events, exclusive exposure to companies operating in the festival market, including shared knowledge of service providers around the UK and Ireland to help reduce overheads for all festival owners. AIF will immediately open up dialogue across music business and government, making itself available for consultation on key issues facing the festival market. There are also plans for collective marketing initiatives for AIF members.

The move comes at an opportune time for the festival industry as a whole. There are reportedly over 450 music festivals in the UK alone, with the recent explosion of the last few years appearing to have slowed-down. Believing this is the right time for such a positive show of strength from the independent sector, Rob da Bank stated: *"In the current very competitive, very intense climate, it's more crucial than ever to be able to bond together as like-minded independently spirited festivals to ride out the problems and make them all better for the paying customer."* Creamfields owner James Barton adds: *"There is a real opportunity to combine our spending power to deliver exciting business ideas. The smaller festivals are also often overlooked, and it's important we now have a voice to influence decisions being made that impact on our business."*

### **AIF Corporate Structure:**

**Co-Founders** Rob da Bank, Bestival, Ben Turner, Graphite Media  
**Chairman** Alison Wenham, AIM

### **Founding Board Members**

Chris Greenwood, Big Chill  
Chris Smith, Womad  
Dave Farrow, Beautiful Days  
Franc Gooding, Bloom Festival  
Freddie Fellowes, Secret Garden Party  
James Barton, Creamfields  
Jim King, Loud Sound  
John Reynolds, Electric Picnic  
Nick Ladd, Glade  
Rob Challice, Summer Sundae Weekender  
Tom Baker, Field Day

The first board meeting is expected to take place at the end of July.



### **Frequently Asked Questions**

#### **Q/ Who Is Entitled To Be A Member Of AIF?**

**A/** All members are approved by the AIF board and membership is by invitation only.

#### **Q/ Are There Any Companies Who Are Not Allowed To Be Members?**

**A/** All festival owners that wish to be a member will be judged individually. It is the intention of AIF to only allow festival owners who have a maximum of two individual differently named festivals on their books in the UK & Ireland.

#### **Q/ Who Do Festival Owners Approach About Being Members Of AIF?**

**A/** All emails relating to AIF should go to [info@graphitemedia.net](mailto:info@graphitemedia.net)

#### **Q/ How Are Festival Owners Charged By AIF For Membership?**

**A/** Payment is based on an annual payment of 15% of the sterling equivalent of their licensed capacity for the previous year. So a festival with a 10,000 licensed capacity, would contribute £1,500 per annum to AIF.

#### **Q/ How Often Will The AIF Board Meet?**

**A/** There are ten board meetings per year, and one AGM meeting.

**Q/ How Does Voting Work?**

A/ The AIF board operates on a 'one member, one vote' policy.

**Feargal Sharkey In Conversation with AIF's Rob da Bank and James Barton**

**Rob da Bank** launched Sunday Best in 1995 at South London's Tearooms Des Artistes. The club night was based on an 'anything goes' policy and it soon launched into a respected record label. In 2004, the parties became bigger, and the then BBC Radio 1 leftfield DJ launched the boutique festival Bestival that attracted a 7,000 strong audience to the Isle of Wight. It has grown to 30,000 in five years, and has been voted Best Medium Festival at the Virtual Festival Awards for the last three. In 2008, a spin-off festival Camp Bestival launched, taking place in Dorset in July. Rob currently presents four hours a week on BBC Radio 1 from midnight to 4am, which focuses on eclectic music. da Bank is the TV host for Aim's forthcoming Independents Day on Channel 4.

**James Barton** launched the now legendary Cream nightclub in Liverpool in 1992, and in the mid-nineties it became the blueprint for the superclub era. By the late 90s, 70% of people applying to university in Liverpool cited Cream as motivation for their choice of university. After launching club events around the world, in 1998, the Cream team launched Creamfields – a large annual dance music festival featuring DJs and live acts. Creamfields events have since been staged in Buenos Aires (Argentina), Andalucia (Spain), Punchestown (Ireland), Punte del Este (Uruguay), Istanbul (Turkey), Mexico City (Mexico), Moscow (Russia), Prague (Czech Republic), Lima (Peru), Santiago (Chile), Rio de Janeiro, Curitiba, Belo Horizonte (Brazil), Wroclaw (Poland) and Lisbon (Portugal). It currently hosts more festival events around the world under one brand name than any other event in the world.