

### When the Sun Shines, so does the Event Industry

There really is nothing like the summer to underline the power and the influence of what the Events Industry represents, every day and all year round.

There is something about the summer programme of events that underlines why Britain is so strong globally in events of all kinds. Think about some of the big national events that are staged over the summer months; Glastonbury, Wimbledon, Ascot, Chelsea Flower Show and immediately images are conjured up of history, heritage, global identity and a taste of quintessential British-ness.

Unsurprisingly minds are immediately focussed on the consumer festivals, sporting and music events, but it's also no surprise that one of the largest events hosted by Britain arrives in July, when the European Society of Cardiology Congress 2015 comes to ExCeL London with 35,000 professionals.

This summer a serious business event takes the spotlight; a hearty reminder that, as well as the big globally recognised sporting and cultural events, there is an amazing array of major business events throughout the year, which bring abundant social and community benefits to local destinations.

Our natural inclination as a country is to lose ourselves in chat about the weather, to raise our hopes on sporting success, but this summer, let's focus on providing a really warm welcome to events that stimulate almost every part of our visitor and business economy and create a global advert for the country. All organised and staged by the creative talent that shines on Britain's Event Industry.



### BVEP calls on Industry to Support Government Events Strategy

The Business Visits & Events Partnership is urging the UK events industry to maintain and strengthen its united voice in support of the Department of Culture Media & Sport's (DCMS) Business Visits and Events Strategy, published in April.

As is to be expected following a General Election there are a host of changes and new positions for Ministers and personnel within key departments with an interest in events (DCMS, UKTI and BIS). New priorities are identified by the incoming Government so the BVEP has been applying pressure to ensure new Ministers pick up on the progress started under the last government.

There can be no doubt that the last 12 months has seen the UK events industry significantly enhance its relationship with government more than ever before, resulting in the recognition that growing the number and value of events held in Britain is a key priority. The Strategy called for the formation of an Events Industry Board to be co-chaired by DCMS & BIS Ministers and include representatives from key government departments, National Agencies and the Industry.

The message from the BVEP is clear, and that is to push for the implementation of this vital strategy. For more information on the strategy visit the [BVEP website](#).

# Major Threat to the UK Festival Sector

The future of many festivals and outdoor events are under threat of closing following a new move from the Valuation Office (VO) to impose business rates on greenfield festival sites.

The move will affect sites such as agricultural land, which are currently exempt from such rates, and will force them to pay taxes for any events taking place on the land. Furthermore the VO is backdating the imposition of these rates on events that took place as early as 2010, leaving many landowners receiving bills that are running into the tens of thousands.

The events currently being targeted are mostly festivals, however it is anticipated that many other events could be affected in the future, including rallies and community events. One event organized by Young Farmers is already reported to have been sent a bill.

The industry is getting together to address this with both the Valuation Office and the Government to stop it from doing irreparable damage to the industry and putting in jeopardy the future of hundreds of festivals and events that bring a huge economic and social benefit to rural communities.

In the meantime the industry is also calling on event organisers that are suffering as a result of this change, to come forward so that the industry can understand the breadth of the issue and build the case to reverse this practice as soon as possible. A survey is being completed to gauge the full impact on the Industry.

You will find the survey [here](#).



## Still No Party Time!

For the third time of asking, the Chancellor of the Exchequer has failed to increase the tax exemption available to companies that hold staff parties in the Emergency Budget announced on the 8th July.

Currently businesses enjoy a £150 tax exemption on employee benefits relating to annual staff functions. The UK events industry has called for this to be doubled and for the Treasury to benefit from the inevitable boost in corporate expenditure that this would create for UK based small businesses. The exemption was last reviewed in 2003 when the exempt charge was increased from £75 to £150.

However there was one small glimmer of hope for a future change: the Chancellor announced as part of his budget proposals that a discussion paper will shortly be released for new rules on tax relief on travel and subsistence expenses. The Partnership will campaign to have the uprating of the exemption included in this review.

Any increase would support the progress of the Events Strategy that highlighted the value of business events to the UK and seeks to grow the number and value of events held in Britain." says Richard Foulkes, Vice Chairman of the BVEP.

If you have an issue, campaign or news item you wish to share with the industry, submit an article by contacting [info@businessvisitsandeventspartnership](mailto:info@businessvisitsandeventspartnership).



## Britain for Events Outlines Plans

Britain for Events, the UK event industry's most inclusive self-promotional initiative, has outlined its plans for the campaign. Activity includes three government dinners, an up-weighted social media campaign and a month of events during National Events Month October, #NEMO.

The campaign receives high level and influential support from industry associations including the AEO, HBAA, ISES, MIA, NOEA and the BVEP, as well as commercial partners including Cvent, Venuefinder.com, International Confex and George P Johnson.

The response from event organisers around the UK – and many overseas – has been outstanding. From a standing start last year Britain for Events grew its social media platforms universally through #NEMO. On twitter alone the campaign picked up nearly 3,000 followers and is expecting that number to double in October 15.

The Britain for Events campaign runs throughout the year, supporting activities that help raise awareness of the issues event organisers have, with the aim of making the UK an internationally competitive destination for events. It works with government, but also directly with business, working with UKTI, BIS and other business communities from the CBI to the CIM.

Equally, #NEMO is gaining momentum with the MIA supporting the campaign hashtag during its 25th Anniversary activity, and raising awareness of the AIM accreditation in front of government; the HBAA in running a series of coordinated and simultaneous events up and down the country; and the AEO is using the campaign to represent the UK market at meetings in Europe and the



This means identifying new parliamentarians willing to come together to form a new Group. The BVEP is identifying MPs who may have an interest in joining a new APPG. However more importantly is also highlighting to MPs who have event businesses, venues and significant events in their constituencies, the role events play in the lives of their communities.

Plans are being drawn up to create a database of MPs, who can be regularly updated on industry issues and encouraged to represent the industry's concerns on both a collective and individual basis.

Combined with the government's implementation of the Business Visits and Events Strategy, a strong force of MPs in Parliament will ensure the industry is properly recognised as policies that affect it are developed.

If you are in touch with Members of Parliament who represent the constituency where your business is located or where your events take place, please let the Partnership have the details so that MPs with an interest in the Sector can be added to the Partners Parliamentary database. Contact: [info@businessvisitsandeventspartnership.com](mailto:info@businessvisitsandeventspartnership.com)



## Getting MPs Onside

Over the last three years the industry has benefited from having a strong body of politicians within Parliament showing a keen interest in its activities and growth opportunities. Much of this was facilitated through the All Party Parliamentary Group for Events, under the leadership of Nick de Bois.

Unfortunately Nick lost his parliamentary seat in the General Election and so the re-establishment of the Group needs to start afresh.

