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Great line-up for Kesgrave Music Festival

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Kate Moyes, who died of cancer aged just 29, has proved as inspirational in death as she was in life. Entertainment writer WAYNE SAVAGE spoke to friend and Kesgrave Music Festival joint co-ordinator Debbie McCallum about this year's event.



Kate Moyes

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Listening to Debbie talk about Kate, tears in her eyes, her voice on the verge of breaking with every memory, you get how important events like these are.

Staging the festival comes at a heavy price for the organising committee; and I don't just mean the thousands of pounds or countless hours of volunteers' precious time it takes to make sure it goes all right on the day.

"There are always mixed emotions. Towards the end of the evening, when the headliner comes on, you look at the crowd and think - and I get emotional thinking about it - 'yeah, we've pulled it off again with the help of someone up there'," says landlady of The Bell, Debbie.

Kate, who grew up in Hadleigh, died in August 2005 with a very aggressive form of cancer 15 months after diagnosis. She passed away at St Elizabeth Hospice, where she'd been receiving care for six weeks.

Debbie met her when Kate began working behind the bar having quit her job at BT in Martlesham to train as a radiotherapist at Suffolk College.

"She was a very kind person. I met Kate at a time in my life when I was very low; I would say I was on the point of a nervous breakdown," she confesses.

The line-up

Main Stage
 noon - Th3 A.M's
 1pm - Skin the Fish
 2pm - Jade
 3pm - The Pursuit
 4pm - The Reason
 5pm - Electric Dreams
 6pm - Wanted
 7pm - Smokin Hogs
 8pm - Bouncing Off Concrete
 9pm - The Inflatables
 Headliners - Ska'd 4 Life
 Live Lounge
 1.00pm - Steel Pictures
 1.45pm - Steve Cosmic
 2.30pm - Benjamin Bloom
 3.30pm - Caution Horses
 4.30pm - MC2
 5.30pm - Rogues Cradle
 6.30pm - Flaming June
 7.40pm - Reb Capper
 Headliners - Voodoo Bones

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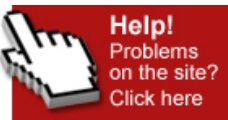
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"Meeting her was such an inspiration. She gave me huge strength I didn't know I had and I will always thank her for that."

Debbie, whose late father was also cared for at the hospice after going from having years to live to suddenly just days, can't praise staff there enough.

"You were able to visit Kate and spend quality time away from a hospital controlled environment, it's like being at home but with that specialist care.

"We hadn't got the facilities for my dad at home and I didn't want him to stay in hospital. We were very fortunate and got him into the hospice straight away and I could never personally thank them enough. I was able to be with my dad, that was a very important thing."

The hospice - the main beneficiary of next Saturday's festival, with some proceeds going to the air ambulance - works to improve life for people with a progressive illness.

Focused on an individual's needs, it provides specialist support wherever it is required, be it at home, in the community or at the hospice.

An independent charity, its services are free and cost £6.6million a year - that's £13 a minute - to run, with almost three quarters of that coming from the community.

The idea for the annual fundraising festival came after talks with Kate's parents.

"We all need to heal and to heal sometimes is to do something," says Debbie.

"Kate loved to have fun, loved life, loved music. So what better way to celebrate her life than a music festival. It was a perfect fit for her personality and passions.

"We can put somebody on the moon, but we can't find a cure for cancer. I find that hugely bizarre."

Kate's tribute fund currently stands at just over £71,005; a figure Debbie hopes will swell even more when an expected 4,000-5,000 people flock to the latest Kesgrave Community Centre from 11.45am-10.45pm on August 6.

If you buy your wrist-band beforehand you can save money and reduce your carbon footprint by catching First Eastern Counties' route 66 bus from town for a child's fare.

There'll be plenty to enjoy once there, including a funfair, bouncy castles, food, stalls and all sorts of music.

Nearly 100 bands applied to be part of the event. The 20 who made the cut are donating their time for free.

"I'd like to say a big thank you to all the bands who apply every year so wholeheartedly. Ed Sheerhan has played the festival before, so it's also a pedestal for greater things," says Debbie.

Poignantly, this year's event falls on Kate's birthday.

"Instead of lighting candles on cakes we're going to have glow sticks and at 9.45pm we've got the choir Funky Voices coming on. They'll do three numbers and hopefully that'll be great," she adds.

Mounting health and safety and insurance costs continue to cast a shadow over many community events, never mind the current economic climate.

"This year we've had to pay for police and we've got a good package but there's still extra money to find and it's a lot of money for some individuals to raise to stage the event.

"It all makes it more difficult for individuals to put events on and I think for some villages it's going to be a real tough time and I think that's quite unfair. Small places and committees might decide to not do it because the pressures on them are quite high."

While Debbie and her fellow organisers accept money is tight, they're so grateful that people rally to help those worse off than themselves.

"The whole of the committee and Stuart [Kate's widower] would like to thank everybody for their continuing support; from the small donations that come in here to everyone who buys a ticket.

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"Some people will buy a ticket but don't come to the festival. Without those people, without those donations, without that help... it's a marvellous thing to see people come together like that," says Debbie.

"A life lost is never a good thing; but to be able to remember that person's life and do something good out of it is."



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