PRESS KIT

Chelmsford's not-for-profit grassroots music venue, since 2017

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10 YEARS OF GIGS · ANNIVERSARY SHOWS JANUARY TO APRIL 2027

ABOUT HOT BOX

Hot Box Live is Chelmsford's dedicated live music venue, run as a not-for-profit Community Interest Company under the city's railway viaducts. Since opening in 2017 we've hosted touring names alongside hundreds of local acts playing their first-ever gig, and alongside the music there's poetry, drag, comedy, quiz, chess and club nights: as many as ten events a week, with bands coming from all over the world. We also speak up for grassroots venues nationally, leading roundtables at Music Venue Trust events and representing venues at the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in Westminster.

Being not-for-profit means every penny goes back into the venue: into the minority-interest and loss-making nights that keep Chelmsford's music scene diverse, and into keeping many events free.

OUR STORY

Hot Box started life in 2017 as a skate shop under the arches: skateboards by day, gigs by night, with the first gigs in February 2017. Chelmsford had no dedicated live music venue of its own, and bands used to skip the city for Southend or Colchester. We became a Community Interest Company in 2020, and in July 2022 the skate shop closed and the music took over full time.

TEN YEARS OF GIGS

In 2027 Hot Box celebrates ten years of live music, with anniversary shows from January to April. Bilk, Santu, The Dunwells and Don Letts are already confirmed, with many more to come.

SOUNDS GOOD FESTIVAL

In September 2024 Hot Box launched Sounds Good Festival: two days of grassroots music across four Chelmsford venues (Hot Box, Chelmsford Theatre Studio, Voodoo Keller Bar and a free stage in Tindal Square), run with 60 young volunteers learning how festivals and venues work behind the scenes. The Essex Chronicle called it "an exciting new chapter" for the city's music scene, and it will be back.

Frank Turner at Hot Box Live. Credit: Hot Box Live Photography.

> ***"Bands, DJs, open mics, comedy, drag, poetry, quizzes, dominoes, chess, gaming, community groups, whatever floats your boat; if it brings people together, it belongs here."***
>
> **Dave Hughes, Hot Box Team**

Address	28-29 Viaduct Road, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1TS (next to Chelmsford station)
Opened	2017 (first gigs February 2017). Community Interest Company since 2020 (company number 12637864)
Capacity	Up to 110 in the main room (lower for some gigs), plus a smaller back room
Opening hours	Mon-Tue 5pm-11pm · Wed-Thu 5pm-midnight · Fri 4pm-1am · Sat 2pm-1:30am · Sun 2pm-9pm
Press contact	press@hotboxlive.co.uk · +44 1245 415952 · interviews, press passes, images and video
Social media	@hotboxliveevents on Instagram, TikTok, Facebook and YouTube

NOTABLE ARTISTS

Fatboy Slim has played three fundraiser shows here to help keep the venue open (the latest a DJ set in April 2024), and Frank Turner has played here three times, including the Save Hot Box shows of July 2023. Ural Thomas & The Pain played either side of their appearance on Jools Holland's show, High Fade sold out four nights in a row, and hip-hop star Common once dropped in on a Saturday night. Also Molchat Doma, Professor Green, Maruja, Unpeople, Echobelly, Fujiya & Miyagi, Rat Boy, Beans On Toast, Guthrie Govan, John Otway, The Meffs and Penelope Isles. A fuller list is available on request.

AWARDS & RECOGNITION

Winner, Best Bar/Nighttime Venue
Chelmsford For You Business Awards, 2026

Local Heroes
AIM Awards 2021, in association with BBC Music Introducing

Best Venue
Panic Awards, multiple-time winner

Attitude is Everything
Live Events Access Charter, Bronze (held since 2024; renewal in progress)

IN THE PRESS

Essex Chronicle, 28 May 2026 "Red-hot line-up for Hot Box"
BBC Radio 2, 4 Sep 2025 Jo Whiley's show live from Hot Box, with interview
Icon Books, 2025 Ben Aitken's book Sh*tty Breaks features Hot Box
Essex Chronicle, 19 Sep 2024 Sounds Good Festival spread and review
DJ Mag, 9 Apr 2024 Fatboy Slim DJs tiny venue Hot Box fundraiser
BBC Look East, 3 Apr 2024 TV segment on the Fatboy Slim fundraiser
BBC News, 6 Mar 2024 Owner considers second job to tackle debt
The Big Issue, 6 Aug 2023 Venue Watch feature
Financial Times, 23 Jun 2023 Grassroots venues under threat
Phoenix FM, 1 Jun 2023 Interview on keeping the venue open
Essex Chronicle, 2 Jun 2022 Print feature

Also mentioned in The Times and The Guardian, and featured on BBC One. Hot Box also gets a name-check in Beans On Toast's song "Back Out on the Road".

RECORDED LIVE AT HOT BOX

Guranfoe	2021-10-22 Hot Box Skate Shop, Chelmsford, England (live album)
Jack Browning	Live From HotBox - 2021 (live recordings)
Iago Banet	The Hot Box Sessions (album; the cover is a shot of the venue)
High Fade	"Gossip (Live at Hot Box, Chelmsford)" (single, 2025)

HOT BOX IN NUMBERS

150+
music nights a year

300+
acts booked each year

9,000+
music tickets sold a year

200+
community events a year

8,000+
people at community events

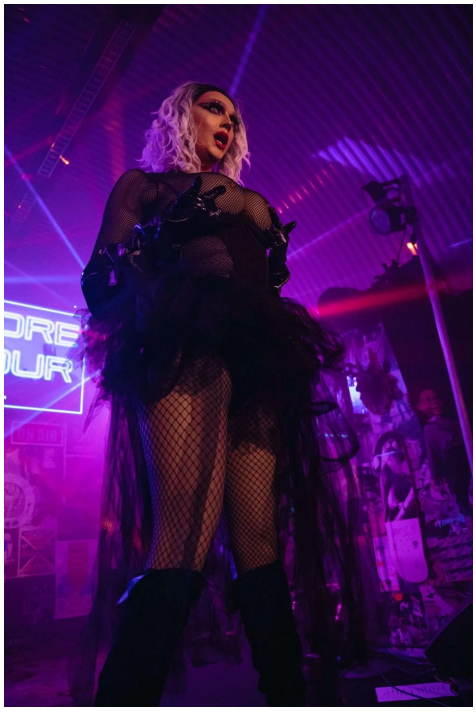
10,000+
visitors to free outdoor events

5,000+
people a year just for the bar

22,000+
social media followers

500,000+
total social reach

Figures reported by the venue.



A drag night at Hot Box Live. Credit: Hot Box Live Photography.

Our logo and photos are free to use when covering Hot Box Live; please credit "Hot Box Live". The logo (red, multicoloured, black and white PNG) and more are at hotboxlive.co.uk/press-media/. Higher-resolution photography and a short promo video are available from press@hotboxlive.co.uk. Updated September 2026.