

PRESS RELEASE

JAZZ-LOVING FORMER MP BOB BLIZZARD TO CHAIR JAZZ SERVICES



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Bob Blizzard, the former government whip and Secretary of the All Party Parliamentary Jazz Appreciation Group, is to chair the jazz promoting and information organisation Jazz Services. Blizzard, MP for Waveney in Suffolk until the 2010 election, is a long-time jazz enthusiast who in an influential political career has combined that interest with many others - including global energy issues, education, transport and health. He inherits the chairmanship from former jazz promoter, Jazz Services board member, and business and IT specialist John Blandford.

Blizzard takes over the chair at Jazz Services after a two-year period under John Blandford's steady stewardship that has seen the organisation take over the Art Council's funding of the National Youth Jazz Orchestra.

The new Chair arrives at a time of new challenges for Jazz Services - facing, like all arts organisations, growing restrictions on public sources of subsidy. But jazz in the UK is statistically proven to give particular value for money, and its practitioners and extensively voluntary infrastructure are historically well-adapted to survival in tough climates. Jazz Services, an Arts Council England-funded organisation formed over 25 years ago to promote the growth and development of jazz in the UK, has been a significant source of support - and its role in jazz advocacy, communications, education, information provision, marketing, publishing, research and touring, has steadily expanded since the millennium.

Bob Blizzard said: 'I'm delighted to become Chair of Jazz Services - the only organisation that promotes the development and growth of British jazz right across the country, from the grass roots to international venues, from youngsters to professional musicians. I've been in love with jazz since I was a student. I want to do all I can to lead Jazz Services, with a fresh vision, into the tough era of tighter public funding for the arts, working in partnership with others. I believe British jazz can still thrive. There is now more musical talent than ever. I want to pay tribute to the important contribution that John Blandford has made to Jazz Services for the past two years, and I look forward to working with our dedicated and energetic director, Chris Hodgkins.'

Jazz Services' Director Chris Hodgkins concurs. 'I've had a long relationship with Bob Blizzard during his time as Secretary of the All Party Parliamentary Jazz Appreciation Group, and I was always struck by his enthusiasm and ability to master a brief and act decisively. I'm delighted he's going to be the new chair, and I feel his particular qualities are ideal for the challenges of the coming years. I'd also like to thank John Blandford for his sterling service and his work in bringing Jazz Services and the National Youth Jazz Orchestra (NYJO) together under one umbrella.'

NYJO's Chair, Nigel Tully adds: 'It will be a pleasure to work closely with Bob Blizzard as well as Chris Hodgkins on developing a more coherent approach to jazz education in this country and on improving NYJO's profile nationally and internationally. The importance of jazz to our cultural life is steadily becoming more recognised and a stronger voice representing better-coordinated jazz organisations can only be good for British jazz.'

For further details on Jazz Services, please contact Chris Hodgkins on education@jazzservices.org.uk

Notes to editors:

Jazz Services provides a voice and support for UK Jazz; promoting its growth, accessibility and development in the UK and abroad. Services include advice, advocacy, communications, education, information, marketing, publishing, research and touring. Jazz Services is recognised as a committed campaigner providing a valued voice for jazz in the UK. Jazz Services publishes Jazz UK, a listings magazine with a print run of 30,000 that is distributed by subscription and free through venues, colleges, libraries and shops.

Jazz Services works closely with the National Youth Jazz Orchestra (NYJO), which is an autonomous body, that receives its Arts Council England funding through Jazz Services. NYJO also receives funds from private donors, Youth Music and the Musicians' Benevolent Fund. Every year NYJO organizes over 100 open workshops for jazz musicians up to the age of 25 and more than 40 concerts.

Jazz Services gratefully acknowledges the support of Arts Council England and also the Performing Right Society for Music Foundation for their support on the Jazz Promoters Award Scheme.