



The Met is an award-winning live music and arts venue in Bury, Greater Manchester. Housed in a historic Grade II listed building, it has in recent years benefited from a £4.6 million refurbishment. It is also home to the popular Automatic restaurant and Edwin Street creative hub which incorporates a recording studio.

In addition the venue organises the annual Head for the Hills festival which welcomes some 12,000 music lovers to nearby Ramsbottom.

Run by the Bury Metropolitan Arts Association charity, The Met relies not just on revenue provided by the ticket-buying public, but personal and corporate donors and income generated through assets such as office space.

Following refurbishment The Met called in Avoira to specify and implement a major IT upgrade. This extended a longstanding business relationship which has also seen provision of wi-fi, networking and two-way radio services at the festival.

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### Business Needs

The Met was keen to ensure it was meeting customer expectation by offering the tens of thousands of visitors it welcomes annually access to free wi-fi.

In addition, the venue required a secure, private wireless network for its staff and to serve three tenanted offices within the complex.

At the same time management wanted to upgrade the telephone system to one that could support Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephony. This would help minimise costs by enabling some calls to be made free of charge.

To further enhance productivity and enable remote working, The Met was also keen to take advantage of applications and services that would assist efficient management of day-to-day operations.

These would also assist with the running of the festival site to which staff temporarily relocate to run box office, entry, stage and front-of-house services.

### Our Solution

A public wireless network incorporating the Purple wi-fi platform delivers free wi-fi and yields demographic data which can inform marketing communications. A secure staff network runs alongside, with both running off six strategically placed access points.

The existing hosted telephony system was updated with a Yeastar hybrid PBX running over 4 SIP trunks, complemented by Yealink handsets. The powerful Office 365 applications and services platform was deployed to support staff remote working and when hosting the festival.

For the festival itself, a sophisticated wireless solution featured a dual internet connection for load balancing and resilience. Wireless point-to-point links the site and box office, plus four exterior and interior access points are managed by a Motorola wireless controller and a wired connection to the management office. A separate VLAN delivered a guaranteed 6MB to enable the BBC to host live broadcasts.

Finally, staff and volunteers were equipped with Motorola two-way radios to facilitate effective communications across site.

### Business Benefits

"Wi-fi is something customers expect and makes our facilities more attractive to hirers who want internet access for their visitors, performers and production staff," comments The Met's chief executive Victoria Robinson.

The private network has made life easier for staff working across the venue and relieved pressure on desk space, whilst Victoria reports Office 365 means they "can work from home and at different sites, including Head for the Hills, and still access central resources"

"We're grateful to Avoira for the quality of advice and service it has provided to The Met when upgrading our communication and collaboration tools."

**Head for the Hills' organiser and the Met's Artistic Director, David Agnew adds: "The expertise and resources Avoira provide are absolutely integral to the efficient operation, safety and security of the festival."**

### Avoira Ltd

Pennine House, Salford Street, Bury, Lancashire BL9 6YA  
Tel: 0161 763 3333 Email: [info@avoira.com](mailto:info@avoira.com) Web: [www.avoira.com](http://www.avoira.com)