

REPRESENTATIONS TO LICENSING COMMITTEE – 29th MARCH 2023

Having had an opportunity to now view the comments made about our event, we have been greatly reassured by most of them being very supportive and in particular, commenting about how well the event has been organised over the years and also there being no evidence of any previous crime or disorder, danger to public safety or children suffering harm.

With regard to public nuisance, actual or perceived, this is clearly an issue to a minority of people living in the village and we have always been sensitive to their concerns and keen to ameliorate them as far as possible. It is accepted that there have been a small number of complaints about noise in previous years and we have taken positive, reasonable and proportionate action to mitigate this for example by positioning loudspeakers so as to face away from the village. Alongside this, we have also closely monitored and adjusted sound levels throughout the day and ensured that the last act performs in the marquee. Following this action, we are aware of no noise complaints last year.

Over our three last events, we have also ended our event earlier each year, from 1am in 2019, to midnight last year and we propose to end at 11pm this year. We view this as a good compromise, balancing the needs of villagers with the needs of the event. Any further limitations would significantly impact on the enjoyment of our event. For example, our last act this year is a Pink Floyd tribute band performing Dark Side of the Moon and outside darkness is required for maximising visual effects.

It is unfortunate that a number of comments surrounding our event - including those from the Chesil Bank Parish Council - are factually incorrect, exaggerated or not supported by evidence and appear to emanate from a small but vocal minority, all of whom incidentally live well away from the event venue.

One of their main concerns surrounds the parking of vehicles with one issue being that parking for the event is provided for one day only - Saturday - and that there are no parking arrangements for Thursday or Friday. This is incorrect. Last year and again this year, attendees driving to our events on both Thursday (less than 40 people) and Friday (less than 80 people) had/have access to the overflow car park at the Elm Tree Inn. Last year, this worked well and without incident. This resulted in few additional vehicles needing to park elsewhere and those that did, parked outside the village hall – where people attending village hall events or the church opposite have parked for decades – or in Rodden Road - where walking groups have regularly parked their cars over the years without objection.

A local farmer kindly allows vehicles to park in his field on Saturday on the understanding vehicles are not left there overnight. Following reports last year about cars being left parked overnight in the village, and in some cases being slept in, we are taking positive action to dissuade this. We have secured an overnight parking facility at Bagwell Farm Campsite and leading up to the event will ask people not to leave their vehicles in the village overnight, not to sleep in them and to park their vehicles in the overnight parking facility instead. During the event itself, we will also request that people do not leave their vehicles in the village overnight or sleep in them. It should be understood that we cannot stop people leaving lawfully parked cars in the village overnight - or stop people sleeping in them - but we will take all reasonable steps to dissuade people from doing so.

There are a number of comments suggesting the numbers attending our event may now be 5000 and that our numbers should be limited to 500, including volunteers, performers and stallholders. Should such a condition be imposed, we would no longer be able to stage this event in support of Samaritans. It would no longer be viable as ticket receipts and other income streams would not meet our costs. Our fundraising model relies on there being at least 500 ticket sales. On top of that, we normally have around 100 performers during the day plus more than 100 volunteers, stallholders and those otherwise involved in the event. Some people buy tickets and do not attend – they just want to support Samaritans - others arrive and leave early – families for example - and some arrive late in the day. It is always difficult to predict numbers at any given time, partly due to the vagaries of British weather, and it is always conceivable that they will all be there at the same time. Previous experience has shown that only 100-200 people are present at the end of the event – making their departure more manageable and orderly.

Asking for licensing conditions to be imposed on our event without evidence of crime or disorder at any of our events, or public safety being compromised or children not being protected from harm is unfair, unreasonable and disproportionate. In response to a relatively small number of historical noise complaints and what could be deemed to have once constituted a nuisance, we have taken positive and effective action. Likewise with parking concerns, we have and continue to take positive, proportionate and reasonable action to allay, remove or ameliorate concerns.

Apart from representations made by the Chesil Bank Parish Council, there were six more expressing concerns about our event and it should be noted double that number expressing strong support. In deference to the small number of concerns about the event becoming larger, we would be happy to accept a limit of 1000 people at our event and would view this as an effective, proportionate and reasonable compromise.

Since our event last year, we have worked closely with the Safety Advisory Group, police and Dorset Fire and Rescue and at all times we have taken on board their information, advice and guidance – as our Event Management Plan evidences - so as to ensure our event this year is safe and adheres to the 2003 Licensing Objectives.

We ask that you approve the application.

Submitted for your information

Tim and Hilary Warren

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