

KnockFest 5th August 2023 – Reference 23/01234/LAPRE

Overview

Originally this event was being advertised as the Knockholt Community Festival, with the organizer stating he was 'doing it for the community of Knockholt', however for background information, the organizer had never consulted with the community, and at a public meeting held on 11th May 2023, the organizer even admitted to not knowing that there was already a village community event held on a bi-annual basis in the local public house (The Three Horseshoes).

The organisers 'consultant', also stated that it was for 'local business' and people, but subsequently stated how he would be getting stall holders from all over Kent, and would be advertising it on a wide scale.

This situation has given rise to the view that the organizer is not doing it for the community, but as a personal business venture, which is actually to the detriment of the community.

The following I would ask you consider in the context of the event being for a maximum of 1,500, **including** all staff and stall holders, against the background that the population of Knockholt is 1,222 (2011 Census).

The Four Licensing Objectives:

Public Safety:

The event organisers gave great depth to the control of traffic, for pedestrian and vehicular on the venue, being managed by a conflicting number of staff according to the Able Security Crowd Management Plan, which varies from a minimum of 4 officers, and elsewhere states 8 officers, 4 of whom are vehicle control; 2 are entrance searches and 2 are roaming.

It will be left to your discretion to determine whether you consider this sufficient provision for in excess of 1,000 attendees, and a very large perimeter.

There were other elements of public safety such as First Aid provision, that at the 11th May 2023 were stated would be in place, but had still to be arranged.

You again may wish to assure yourself of adequate provision.

With regard to access to the venue location for emergency vehicles of any of the blue light services, there is to be grave concern expressed.

This is somewhat expanded upon with the public nuisance criteria, but the three main routes to the venue would be via Cudham Lane North leading into Cudham Lane South, or Rushmore Hill all in the London Borough of Bromley leading into Main Road, or Star Hill in the District of Sevenoaks.

You may wish to appraise yourself with any of these routes, at any time of the day or night, and you will become aware that the size of the roads, plus through Knockholt Pound area and the high level of residential parking on the main road, that flow of access is very much restricted, and will not be alleviated by the use of 'blues and twos'.

Prevention of crime (damage) and disorder

I must again draw your attention to the Able Security Crowd Management Plan, which in my capacity as a Chartered Security Professional, must be challenged as being inadequate.

It is stated that Police Officers will not be required, but I must draw your attention to the fact, that should they be required, particularly on a Saturday, from local experience attendance will be very challenging.

Prevention of public nuisance

I am obliged under this criteria, to draw your attention to the available routes to the venue, as outlined in my reference to attendance by emergency vehicles above.

On a normal Saturday, the village can very quickly become 'grid locked' with vehicles, particularly around the Knockholt Pound area, where there is a large volume of residential parked vehicles; a large village public house (The Three Horseshoes) that has insufficient parking for the clientele; and the joining of the Rushmore Hill route (from A21) and the Star Hill route from Sevenoaks direction.

Vehicles travelling in opposite directions on any of these routes, including the Cudham Lanes can only pass with extreme caution, and delay.

There will be significant public nuisance, not only from the volume of traffic, but the demographics of the village will be significantly harmed by the noise and pollution caused.

A small village firework event that used to be held annually, brought vehicle traffic throughout the area to a standstill, with much environmental harm as well as human frustration.

(It may be noted that the Management Plan states shuttle buses will be provided, although for whom is unknown as it is a 'local community event', as will arrangements with train time tables, although local community will have no need of buses or trains. The hourly bus service (R5 & R10), is already in place and underutilised, although if this event is granted a licence, will likely terminate prematurely as it will be so far behind schedule caused by the grid lock in the village and the inability to have two-way traffic in the Cudham lanes.

Protection of children from harm.

I have no observations on this particular criterion which are not included in concerns noted above.

Bob Martin