

Ref 23/01234/LAPRE - Land to the north of the Junction with Shelleys Lane Knockholt Kent

Comments from Knockholt Parish Council:

We acknowledge the successful food festivals held previously, however the situation in Knockholt is very different as the locality of the previous foodfest is in close proximity to the A21 dual carriageway. By comparison access to the proposed site in Knockholt will be more complex, taking traffic through residential areas and very narrow lanes.

We held a public meeting with the organisers and residents and there was general disappointment at the failure to approach the Village and assess public opinion.

Please see below our comments on the 4 crucial points to be taken into consideration;

Public Safety:

Having viewed the traffic management plan, we would welcome more detail regarding how traffic and parking will be managed outside of the venue itself and within the venue to detail how the one way system will work.

We draw attention to the fact that the only sufficient access to Main Road Knockholt is via Rushmore Hill, all other access points are single track lanes with on road parking.

We note that the specific location of the site is on a staggered cross road with obscured sight lines from the Cudham direction.

Over the Weekends, there is a significant increase in bicycle, foot and horse traffic throughout the Village. Main road Knockholt tends to be used as a rat run between the surrounding areas which generates heavy traffic flow. Furthermore, the entrance to the site is a matter of a few yards away from Shelleys lane, as a result of this there is a possibility of a rise of traffic confusion and accidents. We would like details of how these issues will be managed.

We note the absence of a fire risk assessment from the documentation that we have seen and we would expect to see one to protect this sensitive ecological area and the surrounding ancient woodland, all of which falls under TPO protection.

We believe that the majority of attendees will arrive by car, including those at the far end of the village due to free parking and at night visual splays are extremely limited.

The organisers state that they are encouraging people to use public transport to get to the venue, however public transport in the area is totally insufficient, with a limited bus service from Orpington and the nearest train station being 4 miles away with no bus service or taxi rank. Furthermore, the last bus from Knockholt is at 9.20pm

At the public meeting the organisers suggested there may be Go Coach transport and Taxis organised but without specific detail we have reservations regarding how this could work.

It was also suggested that the entire usable site will be fenced off, however there is no written confirmation in any of the documentation provided to confirm this.

There is also no mention of the public footpath that runs across the rear of the site and this would afford unauthorised entry and exit on foot.

We observe that the Shelleys Lane gate would provide adequate emergency exit for the site but the 2nd exit appears to disappear onto a field with no means of adequate egress.

Getting attendees in vehicles on site will need to be conducted very efficiently as there is no room on the road for 2 vehicles to pass, in addition, the absence of any pavement or laybys will result in severe congestion.

We have severe concerns regarding access for the emergency services within the village and over the vehicular access for emergency vehicles getting on and off of site in the event of an emergency, furthermore, getting a fire vehicle onto the site will create logistical challenges.

At the meeting with the organisers, we were told with respect to the poor mobile phone service in the area that there will be a satellite WiFi system in place as well as emergency contact number for residents. There was no mention of this in the plans.

Prevention of crime and disorder:

We would assume that the employed security service will be adequate to maintain an appropriate presence on the site at all times.

To manage the festival, the organisers informed us that the capacity will be capped at 1500 including staff and stall holders with the majority of tickets selling on line and few available on the gate, however there is no mention in any documentation. We hope to see this introduced into the plans so that it can be enforced should the event go ahead.

We have been informed that the organisers will police the entire event. We hope this will include prevention of disruptive behaviour.

Prevention of public nuisance

We would expect the site management team to ensure that no attendees will be parking on the Main Road and possibly blocking residents driveways. We did suggest to the Organisers that traffic cones may prove useful to prevent this.

We were informed verbally that the music would finish at 9pm but there is nothing in writing to confirm this.

Protection of children from harm.

The majority of concerns regarding children's safety are hopefully covered in the previous points and otherwise we would expect that children would be under parental control.