

Corner Cottage : Foscot : Near Chipping Norton : Oxfordshire : OX7 6RL

Ms Debra Courtenay Crane
Case Officer
West Oxfordshire District Council
Elmfield
New Yatt Road
Witney
OX28 1PB

10th January 2017

Dear Ms Courtenay Crane

The Big Feastival 2017.
Application for a variation of a Premises Licence
Reference : W/16/01191/PRMV

I am writing in regard to the variation application submitted by Mr Joel Smith on behalf of Taste Festivals Limited.

In 2015 I wrote to West Oxfordshire District Council following the festival that year as the noise, traffic and general disruption to our small hamlet which is less than a mile from the site had become completely unacceptable. We have lived in Foscot for nearly 30 years and so have been impacted every year by the festivals held at Churchill Heath Farm.

The noise and traffic had grown to such a level that year I felt I had to make a comment. Since then I have attended every public meeting held and have liaised closely with the management team at IMG (Taste Festivals) who have attempted to put measures in place that reduce the disruption and disturbance and noise surrounding the Festival. It must be pointed out, that it is not just for 3 days, as the pre event build takes the best part of a week, as does the "breakdown" of the site afterward.

The area around the site is rural, and the roads are narrow. Many people cycle or ride horses. Naturally there are children involved in both of these activities.

As you are aware the capacity of the festival has been regularly increased since its inception. We are assured by Mr Smith that he has no intention of increasing the capacity past this current variation but given that the disruption is already not insignificant, a 25% increase is simply a step too far.

I have had extensive discussions with Mr Watkins (The Event Manager) regarding traffic flow in the last year, and although a traffic management plan is in place, a very large proportion of festival goers ignore that plan. I can give specific examples of my own experience below.

On the Friday of the festival in 2016 I was driving through Chipping Norton around 0930. On the B4450 leaving Chipping Norton, the road leading past the site and on the way to my house, there was extensive signage erected by the organisers stating "NO ACCESS TO FEASTIVAL TRAFFIC". I was in a line of around 8 cars and every one of them slowed and turned into the Feastival site.

On the Monday following the festival I went for a cycle ride about 0830 on the same road through Bledington toward Stow on the Wold. Virtually every car that overtook me was

packed to the roof with camping equipment and so obviously had been at the festival. One needs to bear in mind that this involves a left turn out of the festival site which is not permitted according to the traffic plan.

On the Sunday night after the festival, there was a constant stream of traffic past my house until 2330 at night. Once again, this would have involved traffic turning left out of the site against the onsite signage and turning right down an unclassified road with a sign on it stating "NO ACCESS TO FEASTIVAL TRAFFIC".

My point is that although there is a traffic plan in place, it can't be (or isn't being) enforced and a very significant proportion of festival goers ignore it. This puts an intolerable strain on some very minor B and unclassified roads. There are a number of tight blind bends and sooner or later it is inevitable that an accident involving a horse rider, cyclist or pedestrian is going to happen.

The organisers seem to think that the majority of the proposed increase in festival goers will be taken up by weekend camping tickets. When pressed however they would not state that they would limit any increase in ticket sales to weekend camping tickets, and so it is possible that the increase could be an additional 5000 festival goers per day. This would represent a huge % increase in traffic.

Moving to noise. The prevailing wind is from the South West, and so until 2015, residents of Foscot had not realised how much noise the villages downwind of the festival were enduring. In 2015 the wind changed and the walls of our 17c Cottage in Foscot were vibrating to the bass thump produced from the site.

In 2016 the organisers placed a noise monitoring device in Foscot, but I was surprised at just how loud and disruptive a "legal" amount of noise can be when the wind is in the wrong direction. I can assure you that the perception of noise is far more important than any arbitrary db level.

In regard to the variation to the live music hours. Mr Smith has given us his assurances that there will be no impact on residents regarding noise levels. We have to take him at his word on this matter but I feel this needs to be monitored in 2017 if this extension is allowed.

When the Feastival started it was seemed to be a Food Festival with music, it now rather seems to be the other way around, a music festival with food, particularly now as Jamie Oliver is no longer involved.

I am aware that the organisers try their best to placate the residents affected, but I sincerely believe that the current capacity of 20000 is more than the locality should have to cope with. I therefore would like to request that you reject the application to increase the licence to 25000.

Yours sincerely

Clive Fidgeon

Tel : [REDACTED]

Mobile : [REDACTED]

email : [REDACTED]

2 LYNEHAM FARM COTTAGES • LYNEHAM • CHIPPING NORTON
OXFORDSHIRE • OX7 6QP

T [REDACTED] • M [REDACTED] • E [REDACTED]

Debra Courtenay-Crane
Case Officer
West Oxfordshire District Council
Elmfield
Witney
OX28 1PB

10 January 2017

Dear Ms Courtenay-Crane,

W/16/01191/PRMV – Application by Taste Festivals Ltd to vary premises licence [Prem/503]

We write to object to the application in respect of:

- failure to communicate to local residents that the increase in capacity would involve significant expansion of the current site
- lack of information and notification regarding use of the expanded site area or indeed any reference to it in the application
- failure to comply with the required criteria for its advertisement
- failure to meet the objectives of the current licence
- the increase in capacity from 19,999 to 24,999
- the expansion of the available site area by approximately 175% to accommodate the increased capacity

[1] Communication

At local residents' meetings convened on 2 and 23 November 2016, the applicant outlined their intention to increase the capacity of this event from 19,999 to 24,999 within the existing site area. We have no recollection of being informed that this would involve an expansion of the site area as indicated on the site plan accompanying this application.

We would like to note that the special conditions attached to the current licence granted in 2015 include the following:

'In advising of the decision the Chairman emphasised that good communication with local residents was paramount and the Council would anticipate such in future.'

We feel that the lack of information provided by the applicant prior to this application regarding the expansion of the site does not constitute good communication. We also note that the application form and the site plan were/are not available for public view on the WODC website.

[2] Reference to the proposed expanded site plan

There is no reference to the 'Additional Land for Variation' within the application form. The applicant offers no information about how this land will be used. This is of particular concern since it directly abuts several residential properties. In my conversation with you on 10 January, you stated that the applicant had not been

specific about the intended use of this land other than to say that it would be used for additional parking and camping areas. Presumably these areas would need to be lit for reasons of safety and security according to their use?

[3] Advertising

We believe that the Application for Variation fails to meet the criteria set out by the Licensing Authority in respect of its advertisement, which states:

'You must advertise your variation application by way of a notice displayed on pale blue paper at the premises for 28 consecutive days. The notice needs to be displayed prominently at or on the premises where it can be read from the exterior. A premises covering more than 50sqm is required to place a notice every 50 metres along the external perimeter abutting any highway.'

This requirement has not been met by the applicant, either in respect of the current site or the extended site as set out in the site plan accompanying the application for variation. We visited the site on 9 January and saw just seven notices on the perimeter of the existing site abutting the highway (see attached site plan which shows their location as blue fish-eye symbols together with a reference indicating a 50 m distance just above the map scale bar in blue. We can supply GPS-tagged photographs to verify this observation.

In a conversation with you on 10 January, you stated that it had been decided that the applicant need only display the advertisement notices at the access and egress points to the site and that they did not need to meet the requirements as set out above. Notwithstanding this, the applicant has still failed to meet the requirements since no notices have been displayed on the sites to which this variation applies.

[4] Licensing objectives

From various reports on social media, it would appear that the applicant failed to meet the requirements of their current licence in several respects as illustrated by the following comments on Facebook during the 2016 event:

'Can you also remind people that at 3am in the morning is not the time to put music out loud and speak to the top of their voices whilst swearing. Family camping I understand if you want to stay up late but be considerate to others. We are all here to have fun and enjoy ourselves as a family. Not impressed' (Ana Karoline Keogh)

'2 hours in blistering sunshine queing to get in, no nearby water taps, nearest is in another field (unlike last year), only 2 sinks to wash up at again in another field for over 200 campers (may more people then last year), stinky toilets (never smelt so bad since coming) and no toilet paper. A child in our group gets dehydrated and collapses and is sick due to no access to water in Apple field (great first aid team) Management made aware and said would bring in water taps as unacceptable hurrah!!!!

Security don't check wrist bands and we all witness a 10 year old passing security on their own with no question asked. Last year we felt our children were safer.

Love this event but noticed sincere and very worrying changes. Would appreciate a reply to reassure current campers. After Speaking to others we are not alone in our views. Hope the next couple of days improve. Very disappointed (Sylvie McDonald)☹☹

'I def agree about the security. Last year (our 1st) they were hot on searches and checking who comes in and out. This year it's a different story completely. I am here alone with my 5 year old daughter and it is a bit concerning. I even asked if they wanted to look in my rucksack and they said no! I also saw a group of children going into the ground from the camping area without an adult! The security people last year were what I expected and wanted to make me and my daughter feel safe' (Sarah Thompson)

'Can you please sort the loos out! Not once have they been cleaned during the day and no loo roll at all.' (Pam Townsend)

'Put toilet paper in the loos! PLEASE!' (Leanne Wade Pratt)

'Came home as got soaked as not enough cover to shelter from the storm Jamie can I have a refund?'(Ross Challand)

These comments indicate that the applicant did not even have sufficient resources or contingency for an event of 19,999 capacity. In view of the apparent breach of licence conditions (as listed above) during the 2016 event, we are concerned that the licensing authority may be prepared to grant this variation for an event 25% larger and that similar problems may recur without sanction. What undertaking is the licensing authority prepared to make that this situation will not be repeated?

The applicant's assertions in Section 16 suggest that they will provide extra welfare and sanitary facilities and staff, but these are rather unspecific both in terms of what is planned and the resources that will be made available. Reports from the 2016 event when toilet facilities were said to have been overwhelmed after just one day indicate the possibility of there being a serious public health risk. Also, what plans are there to provide additional cover for patrons in the event of continuous rainfall as occurred in 2016.

Prevention of Public Nuisance – Traffic

As the Licensing authority, you are bound by the conditions as set out in the Pool of Conditions (Licensing Act 2003):

PN27: 'The premises shall have a written dispersal procedure designed to make the maximum impact immediately before premises close, and directly thereafter, by exercising pro-active measures, to move customers from the premises and the immediate vicinity in such a way as to cause minimum disturbance or nuisance to neighbours, both residential and business, and to make the minimum impact upon the neighbourhood in relation to potential nuisance, antisocial behaviour, crime and disorder.'

There were reports of lengthy delays to those leaving the event on Sunday 28 August 2016, with queues of traffic exiting the site being delayed for up to one hour within the site's perimeter. The absence of adequate stewarding in the parking areas and exit routes led to frustration and anger from some patrons. In these circumstances it would not be surprising if, having finally left the site, some drivers frustrated by the delays, tired and keen to get home as soon as possible may have driven without the normal care and attention along the signed exit routes on unlit, unclassified rural roads.

This event already produces a substantial amount of traffic to and from the site, not only during the event itself but in the weeks before and after when the level of HGV movements in the vicinity are significantly increased. In 2015, Oxfordshire County Council installed a traffic counter (see attached report) on the primary access route to the site at the point where it leaves the Lyneham village boundary northern edge: this survey showed that the level of traffic flow to the event was 7,010 vehicles. This figure represents an increase of 465% over the usual traffic flow for this road (measured as 1,506 the weekend after the event). Throughout the event itself the amount of traffic using the directed minor roads is at times overwhelming with a continuous stream of traffic at the start and finish of each day, particularly as a result of those leaving the event late at night passing through residential areas in the early hours when people are resting (often with open windows at the event's time of year) where there is normally no or very little traffic and on an unlit road where vehicle headlights are particularly noticeable.

The variation also refers to 'Additional welfare and sanitary facilities' [Section 16 c) Public Safety]: There is already a substantial volume of contractor traffic associated with the provision of such sanitary facilities going both to and from along the designated access route throughout the festival. The combined increase in patron numbers and the prioritisation of camping tickets [as stated in Section 16 d) of the application] will presumably lead to a proportionate increase in vehicle movements to service the extra demand. We also note that 'additional cleaning staff' will be provided, presumably resulting in additional traffic to and from the site.

We also assume that there will be a proportionate increase in the number of trading concessions to service the increased visitor numbers, which will also increase the amount of commercial traffic using the primary access route.

The primary access route to the site includes the stretch of road between the A361 and the B4450 running through the village of Lyneham. This unclassified road has not received any substantial maintenance for at least 10 years, and is not wide enough for two HGVs to pass each other easily at several points, most notably through the village of Lyneham where the road surface is in a particularly poor condition. As such, it is simply not appropriate for it to carry all the directed traffic to and from an event of this magnitude.

[5] Scale of the event

This application represents a significant increase in the scale of this event by 25% over previous years in terms of the numbers of people on a much-expanded site. The applicant has consistently failed to indicate a limit on the size of this event. We are concerned that this application for variation represents an incremental scale creep over which as local residents we have no influence.

We trust that this letter of objection will be fully circulated to all those concerned in deciding this application for their consideration.

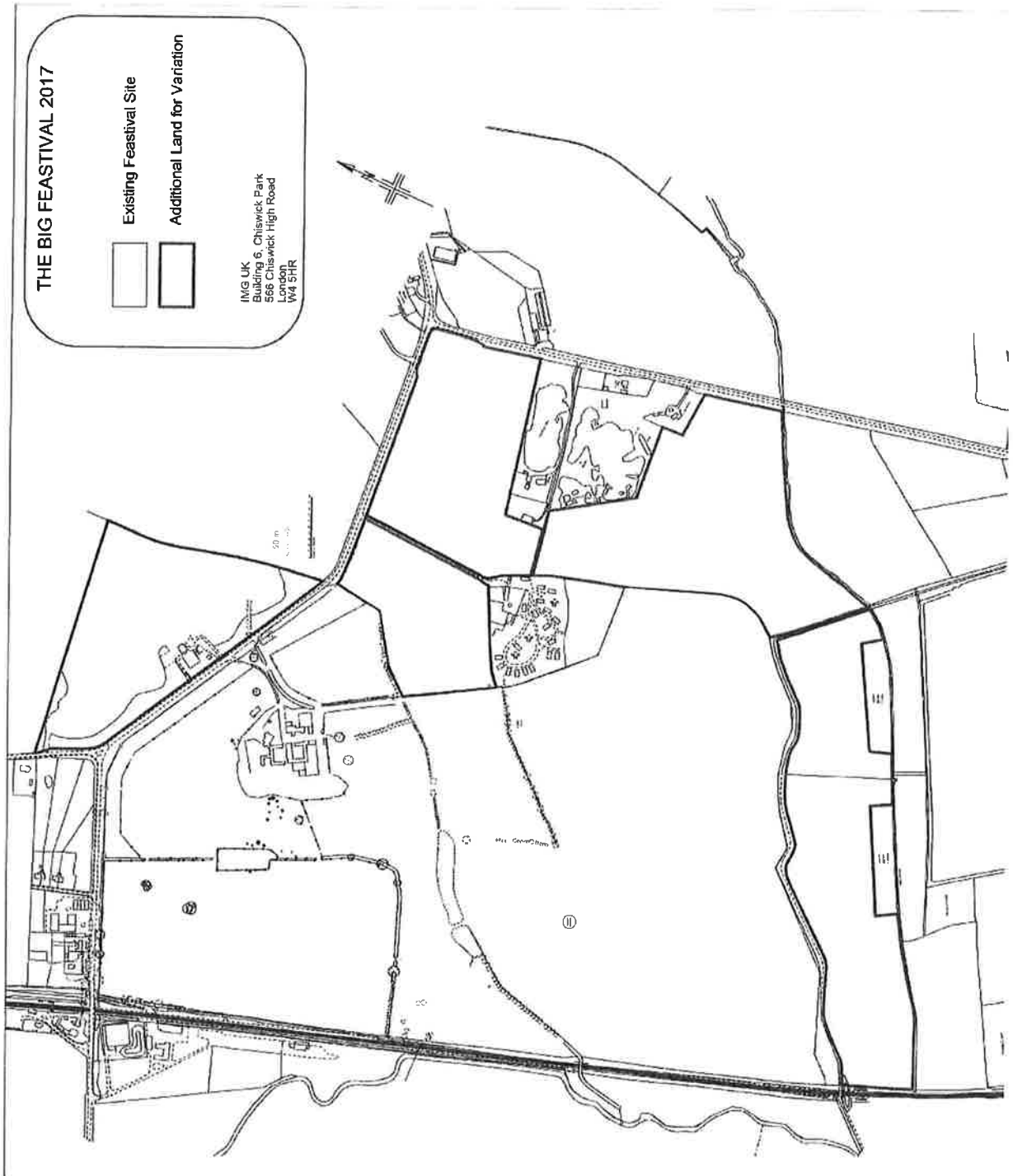
Yours sincerely,

Howard and Carole Sherwood

Attached:

- [a] Location of Notices on site plan
- [b] 2015 Traffic Flow Report prepared by Oxfordshire County Council

Location of Notices advertising the Application for variation of Licence dated 9 January 2017



The **Big Festival**

28th - 30th August 2015

Traffic Flows North of Lyneham Village (Counter 15063)

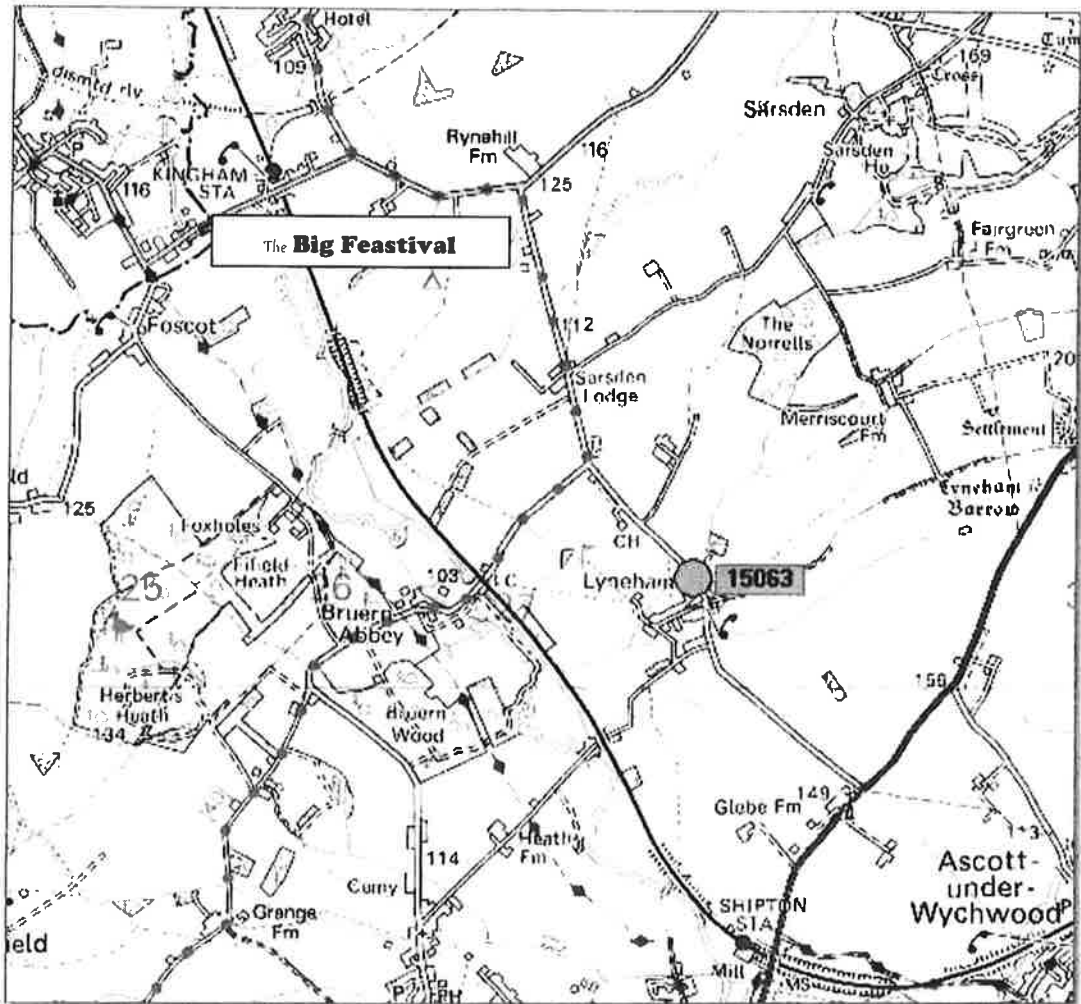


Figure 1. Hourly Northbound Traffic Flows

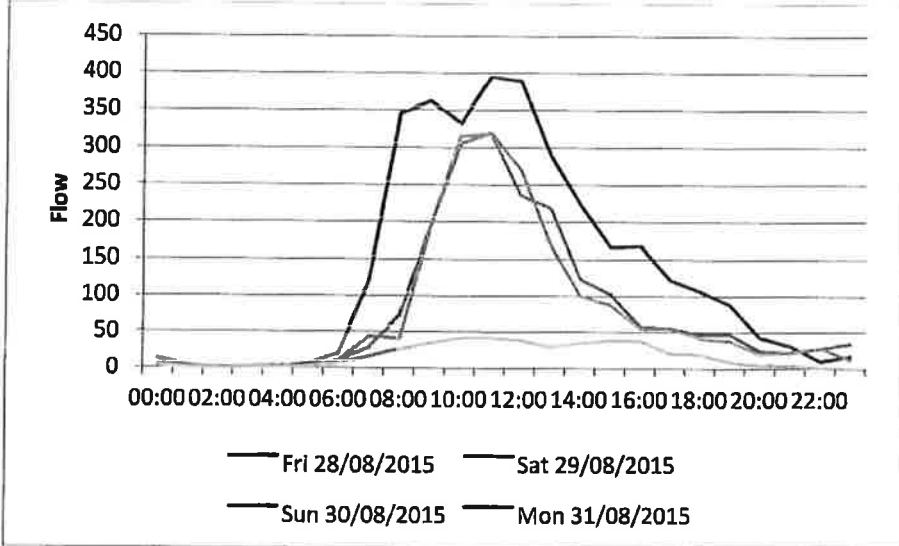


Figure 1. shows that the busiest day for traffic approaching The Big Festival from Lyneham was Friday 28th with the main bulk of traffic arriving between 08:00 and 13:59 with the main peak between 11:00 and 11:59 (395 vehicles in the hour). Saturday and Sunday had a very similar pattern of approach traffic with both days peaking between 10:00 and 11:59 (max of 319 vehicles in an hour). Monday traffic returns to normal flows staying below 50 vehicles per hour throughout the day. Figure 2. highlights the difference in weekend traffic during the festival compared with the following weekend. On average over the 3 day there is an increase in flow of 4.7 times that of the following weekend.

Figure 2. Northbound Weekend Flow Comparison

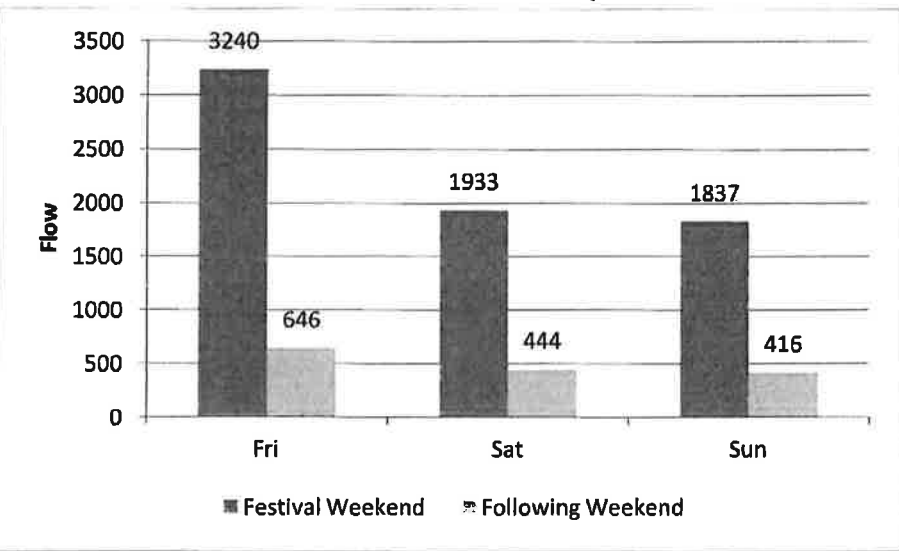


Figure 3. Hourly Southbound Traffic Flows

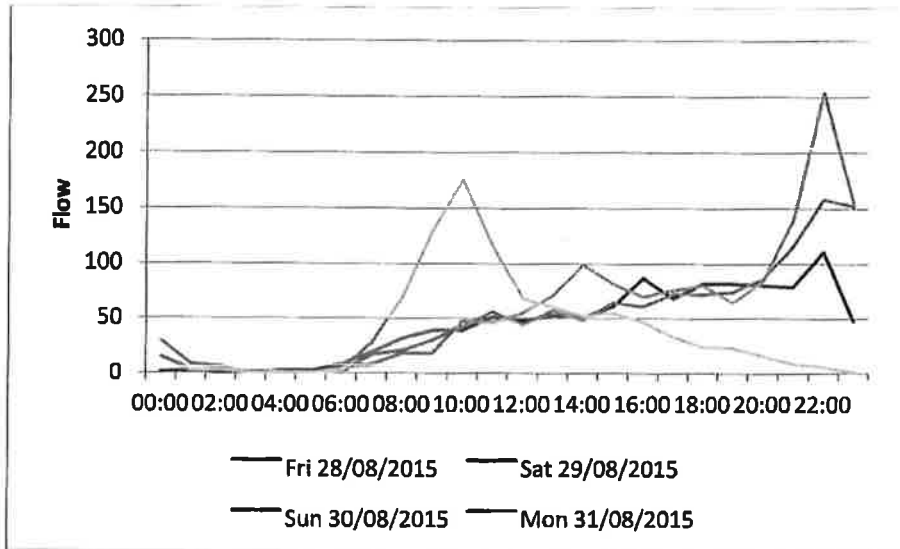
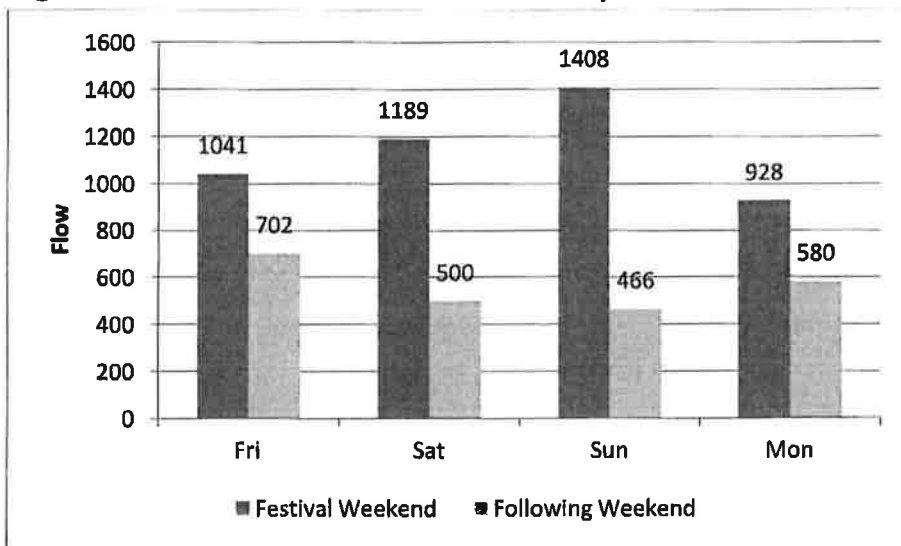


Figure 3. shows that the majority of traffic leaving the festival while it was still on via Lyneham did so between 22:00 and 22:59 with a maximum of 254 vehicles in the hour leaving on Sunday. Monday also had a morning exit peak between 07:00 and 12:59 with traffic returning to normal flows of around 50 vehicles per hour after this period. Figure 4. shows the variation in southbound traffic during the festival compared with the following weekend. This also highlights that less vehicles travelled through Lyneham when exiting the festival compared to vehicles attending the festival. Friday to Monday Approach Flows (Northbound): 7424, Exit Flows (Southbound): 4566 indicating that a large proportion of traffic left via an alternative route.

Figure 4. Southbound Weekend Flow Comparison



From: Roger Speddy
Sent: 10 January 2017 12:17
To: ERS
Cc: Tim Hayward
Subject: Objection to Variation of Premises Licence W/116/01191/PRMV

Dear Sir/Madam,

We wish to make formal objection to the above Variation.

We live at Cox's Wood, Kingham, OX7 6UJ a property that will be greatly affected by the proposed increase in the land area.

We attended a meeting called by the applicant on 23 November 2016 to explain their intentions to increase the capacity of the Event from 19,999 to 24,999. At this meeting, no mention was made of the proposed increase in land area to be used. In fact, it was stated that the increase in numbers would be contained within the current area used for the Event. No explanation has been given as to why they need to increase the land area so significantly and what it would be used for.

Given the lack of information provided to support the application and the lack of consultation for the need for increase in land, we therefore wish to make formal objection on the following grounds:

1. the potential increase in public nuisance to areas affected by the land increase due to noise, lighting and general access by the public:
2. the potential affect on public safety due to the location of the land abutting well used roads and the close proximity to neighbouring properties:
3. the potential risk for crime and security due to the significant increase in numbers being much closer to occupied properties than in previous years.

We do not make this objection lightly. We have been a supporter of the Event in the past but do not believe the Applicants has acted openly as to their intentions and have failed to fully communicate their intentions, the need for this additional land and their plans to deal with nuisance, noise and security to residents who will be greatly affected by this application.

Yours Faithfully

Roger and Linda Speddy

From: Timothy Heywood
Sent: 09 January 2017 16:29
To: ERS
Cc: Timothy Heywood; Francine Heywood; Neil Owen; Nigel Colston; Roger Speddy
Subject: The Big Feastival 2017 - Objection to Variation (W/16/01191/PRMV)

Dear Debra,

Many thanks for your call back earlier today.

As mentioned, I have attempted to add a comment to the above case but it states that "**Comments may not be submitted at this time.** Sorry, we are not currently accepting comments from the public on this application." I find that this is a bit concerning given that the date for reviewing the variation is, I believe, planned for Wednesday 11th January. In addition, surely the variation should at least have some documentation summarising what the planned changes are to the event? There are no details on the website, so I am not sure how anyone is meant to understand what is being proposed and therefore have the opportunity to comment (if they could).

I appreciate that the event 'organisers' held some sort of meeting in November but I did not attend and as we would be significantly impacted by this proposal, I do not understand how we are meant to be informed of any proposals. In this instance, it was lucky that our neighbours had spoken to someone in Lyneham who did attend the meeting. Relying on a neighbour's friend to find out about this application cannot be how this is meant to work. How are the public meant to know about the proposal or be able to comment on the case when there is so little information on it?

These rather major process issues aside, as far as I understand, the proposal is to increase the attendance of the event from 20000 to 24999 and to expand the land that can be used by the event significantly – shown in the attached document which I believe you supplied to my neighbour today (again – why isn't this rather crucial document attached to the proposal on the website?). Given that a large part of the land being highlighted is directly adjacent to our property, I wish to object to its use on the grounds of noise, impact on privacy and safety. This assumes that the land would be used for either car parking and/or camping but would be even more of a concern should it be used for actual events.

1. The land runs within 20m of the house and is separated by a small hedge. We also have a small latched wooden gate into the field which we use for accessing the field for walking. There is therefore minimal security in place between the field and our property.
2. Our house is deliberately open plan with no window coverings on the ground floor meaning that anyone in the adjacent field would have direct views into the property. We would not feel safe if the field was being used for parking or camping and would severely impact our rights to privacy.
3. Our master bedroom directly overlooks the field in question with two large windows onto the area in question and two side windows looking towards the event site. In the summer, we tend to have both blinds and windows open. We would obviously not be able to do this if the field was used due to the noise, lights and privacy.
4. Although I appreciate it is probably not a WODC concern it is a personal concern so I would like to raise it. We have a number of valuable artworks within the property which would be in direct view of anyone in the adjacent field. I would need to declare any proposed increase in risk to my insurers who I am sure will increase the premium for the period to cover such a change. Should this happen, I would expect any such increase in costs to be fully covered by the event organisers.

In summary, we have been a great supporter of the event in the past and have lived with the increased noise and light pollution. This has been just about manageable as the event is a little distance away at

the moment – although it is clearly audible and the lights used for the car parking are very bright. Using a field that is directly next to our house and garden for either parking and/or camping is not acceptable on the grounds of a) noise (festival campsites are not quiet places!!), b) light pollution (assuming that there would also be some lighting required for health and safety reasons) and c) personal privacy and safety.

You would be most welcome to visit us at home and we can show you how and why we are concerned. Alternatively, I can easily take some photos if that would help.

With kind regards,

Tim and Francine Heywood
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Kingham
Oxfordshire
OX7 6UN