

Thank you for taking the time to send over your representations with regards to the Wilderness Licence application W/23/01303/PRMA. Having reviewed your comments, below is an update that we hope will allay your concerns regarding the application.

Wilderness Licence Application – Steps Undertaken

Prior to submitting the new application, we liaised directly with local residents with regards to feedback received via our information and complaints inboxes / social media / resident's hotline / Charlbury Forum / Cornbury Park Estate / West Oxfordshire District Council (WODC) and Thames Valley Police (TVP). The feedback highlighted three key areas of improvement: management of music noise, traffic management and the provision of information locally. In August we posted on the Charlbury Forum, highlighting initial thoughts on improvement measures for each.

We reached out to the members of the safety advisory group (SAG) to notify them that we would be applying for a new licence and to schedule a full SAG team debrief. Due to conflicting calendars, we were unable to arrange an all team debrief so individual meetings were scheduled with members from the Food Safety, Noise Pollution and Licensing Teams and TVP to review the 2023 festival and feedback received – all were in support of the application.

Post-application, we agreed with the WODC licensing team to contact 9 parish/town councils, who were emailed directly to alert them of the application and inviting them to send over local feedback and meet to discuss this in more detail. Some but not all councils responded.

Emailed and met with: Leafield, Charlbury

Emailed and feedback received: Ramsden, Fawler

Emailed no response: Finstock, Chadlington, Crawley, Combe, Stonesfield

We also met with councillor Liz Leffman to discuss feedback she had received directly during and post festival.

Blue Notices were displayed on 22.11.23 at 19 agreed locations around the perimeter of Cornbury Park Estate and refreshed on 08.12.23. An advertisement was also published in the Oxford Mail on 23.11.23.

Upon submitting the application WODC received positive responses directly from TVP and Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue.

Noise Improvements / Work

In 2022 we reoriented the Main Stage from pointing towards Cornbury House to facing into the festival site to help absorb music noise internally. This had positive results and, along with favourable weather conditions, meant we received minimal negative comments about music noise from the 2022 festival. We plan to continue with this orientation.

From feedback, we are aware that there are some concerns with regards to music noise. In particular, three areas were identified: late-night noise, Sunday evening noise and low frequency (bass) noise.

Having met with both WODC's Noise Pollution team and our independent noise consultant/expert, Vanguardia, we propose the following improvements:

1. We have reduced the hours of entertainment from 04:00 to 03:00 on Saturday and Sunday. The only venue that previously ran until 04:00 was our main late-night venue, The Valley.
2. On Sundays, The Valley will not operate. Previously this venue operated from 18:00-00:00. Closing it will significantly reduce off-site noise impact, particularly with regards to low frequency.
3. Performances on our Main Stage will continue to cease between 22:45-22:50, to manage the reduction in music noise levels at 23:00 from the higher to lower noise level.
4. We are also working with Vanguardia to assess how we strategically programme post 23:00 across our other venues, focusing on smaller venues to further mitigate off-site sound levels.
5. On-site and off-site noise monitoring by our independent acoustic consultants will continue to operate throughout the duration of the festival, when regulated entertainment is taking place.
6. We will encourage residents to contact us on our residents' hotline with complaints/requests for information during the festival, so we can respond promptly.

7. Our application proposes that a noise management plan will be prepared by our acoustic consultant and approved by the WODC Noise Pollution Team each year. This enables improvements to be made each year.

Traffic Improvements / Work

For reference there are 4 access points to the Wilderness site:

Blue Gate – Rangers Lodge, B4437 Forest Road, OX7 3HL

Green Gate – Southill Drive, B4022 Charlbury Road, OX7 3EW

Red Gate – Witney Road, B4022, OX7 3DF

Yellow Gate – North Lodge, Grammar School Hill, OX7 3EH

In 2021, we reworked the entire site plan to redirect traffic driving through Charlbury to enter site via North Lodge/ Yellow Gate to enter site via Southill Drive/Green Gate. This significantly reduced the number of vehicles passing through Charlbury and we received positive feedback. This continues to be our designated production traffic route.

In 2023, the works at Oxford Station and the adverse weather negatively impacted traffic internally and externally. Currently no works that will affect the direct London Paddington-Charlbury line are planned during the 2024 festival and GWR and National Rail have been contacted to confirm this.

Having reviewed all feedback received and discussed traffic issues with various local residents and councillors, we created traffic maps overlaying the specific locations of traffic feedback onto our existing traffic management plan (TMP) and signage plan. We then met with our traffic management company, CTM, to devise the below proposed steps for traffic mitigation:

1. Egress congestion: vehicles exiting from Blue Gate right onto Dyer's Hill / Market Street (Charlbury)

Direct all vehicles straight out of Blue Gate, then implement a "No Right Turn" order for the Rangers Lodge x B4437 junction, forcing all vehicles to turn left and follow the designated route back to the A40 at Burford, with regular exit signage installed along this route. This should significantly reduce the traffic along The Dyers Hill/Market Street and, further afield where this traffic mixes with traffic from Red Gate, causing congestion at the Enstone and Duke of Marlborough junctions. Additional staff will bolster operations here on the Sunday / Monday egress days.

Suspending parking and traffic light usage along this route were also considered. However, these were deemed inappropriate due to the detrimental effect this would have on local residents in terms of parking limitations and potential wait times due to the convergence of 4 roads that would require traffic lights to manage traffic affectively.

2. Egress congestion: vehicles exiting from Yellow Gate / North Lodge left onto Park Street (Charlbury)

Implement a "No Left Turn" order and road closure on Grammar School Hill, immediately to the left of the Yellow Gate junction. Additional staff will bolster operations here on the Sunday / Monday egress days.

Internally we are also relocating some campsites to distribute external traffic more evenly and reduce the number of vehicles exiting via Yellow Gate / North Lodge.

3. Festivalgoer Parking, Congestion Grammar School Hill and Hixet Wood (Charlbury)

Implement an enforceable No Stopping/No Waiting order, along Grammar School Hill to Five Ways junction, with a permit scheme for residents of Hixet Wood / Wellington Cottages, to prohibit festivalgoer parking along this stretch of road. Previously no hard order was in place, but this stretch of road was coned when agreed/required.

Implement a road closure at Five Ways, similar to the one reached in 2023 in liaison with TVP, to prevent any vehicles accessing Yellow Gate from that direction.

4. Monday egress congestion further afield (B4437 x A44 junction Duke of Marlborough, B4022 x A44 junction Enstone)

There will always be a build-up of traffic at junctions on Monday post-show due to the number of vehicles exiting site. However, the above points should help alleviate this. We are also exploring incentives for alternative travel methods to reduce the numbers of cars coming to site altogether:

- Bus: Added a 2nd London pick up location and have opened survey to explore other potential pick up locations.
- Train: Exploring GWR partnership / incentive scheme.

- Cycling: Adding bike parks to all routes to encourage local residents to cycle rather than drive. Review Ride to Wilderness scheme to incentivise use.

5. Heavy Traffic through Leaffield – routing of HGVs and buses

- Explore options of routing vehicles from the A40 through Witney to remove routing any vehicles through Leaffield, particularly HGV/build traffic.
- Implement a staff closure at both ends of Hatchings Lane, to prevent it being used as a cut through by festival traffic and prevent exiting traffic turning left onto Hatchings Lane post-show.. Allow residents through using a permit scheme.

Improved Signage

- We will completely review and replot the traffic signage plan with CTM, and the AA based on above changes to the TMP. The plan will include early provision for delivery traffic.
- Installation of pedestrian signage, from Charlbury bus and train station along preferred routes.
- WODC have confirmed that they are happy for us to explore attaching some signage to existing posts/signs in key locations, to ensure these are clearly visible throughout the duration of the festival traffic signage period.
- Add more reassurance signage along routes – both ingress and egress.

Increased External Staffing

Explore roaming patrols / drone monitoring of: Charlbury, Charlbury station and Blue Gate, between Fiveways – Yellow Gate and between Fiveways – Green and Red Gate. Add CTM and Festival Republic management staff to key egress routes on Monday post-show for monitoring and liaison.

Other Traffic Management

- **Traffic lights:** we will continue with these on Finstock Road (Green and Red Gate), running as required.
- **Train shuttle:** explore splitting this at the station for the 2 sides of site, to prevent excess external movement.
- **Road resurfacing:** we have confirmed that Grammar School Hill between the Fiveways junction and Yellow Gate road is due to be resurfaced pre-festival.
- **Taxi Management:** we will continue to liaise with local firms (send route map prior to the festival) to reinforce the routes they should be using and encourage local residents to contact us if they see taxis contravening this, so we can contact their firms directly.

Consultation and Planning

The first versions of the new traffic and noise management plans are in the course of preparation. They will be scrutinised as part of the planning process via the SAG. We will also schedule a local meeting to review these with councillors and local residents, ideally towards the end of January. We are planning for local and SAG meetings as per the below schedule:

End Jan	Local residents and council meeting 1
End Feb	SAG Meeting 1
End Apr	Local residents and council meeting 2
End Apr	SAG Meeting 2
19-Jul	Local residents and council meeting 3

Local Resident Outreach and Information

We will be making increased efforts with regards to local outreach, including an expanded residents' letter drop, adding a residents' information page to the Wilderness website, collating a list of applicable local forums and groups and ensuring we are proactive with adding information to them, sending key information to local councils pre-festival to distribute and display.

We hope that the above information allays the concerns raised in the representations received, however if you have further enquiries, please do not hesitate to contact me via email at ekirkby@festivalrepublic.com.