

HIGH ONGAR PARISH COUNCIL

www.highongarpc.co.uk

Parish Clerk: Ernie Fenwick

Telephone: [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Lea Hall Bungalows
Dunmow Road
Hatfield Heath
Herts [REDACTED]

The Licensing Team
Epping Forest District Council
Civic Offices
High Street
Epping
Essex
CM16 4BZ

16 April 2019

Dear Sirs,

Uncle Ivan Limited – Zen Fest

We are in receipt of your Notification of Consultation in respect of the proposed event in our parish. The notification is dated 3rd April 2019. The event in question has been scheduled for 31st August 2019.

This council notes the grounds under which representation, in other words objections, can be made and these will be addressed; but we wish to record our long-held views that this type of event within, or close to, the village envelope is totally out of character with High Ongar. Wrong type of event, unacceptable numbers, ridiculous location. We believe these factors should be taken into account as it goes to the mind-set of the organiser(s) whose sole aim is to make money. This clearly in disregard of local residents for whom there is no upside.

Parish Council Objections

1. Prevention of crime and disorder

The applicant's response is to agree that crime and disorder will be discouraged, although they do not seem clear as to how they will address this. We do not suggest the applicants themselves will commit crime, or be disorderly, but they do not suggest how they will ensure that 1,300 attendees, plus staff, will be prevented from committing such actions. They mention taking instruction from the police. Can the police insist that there are adequate police officers on site throughout the event and that the cost of such a police presence be borne by the promoter?

2. Public safety

This council is concerned about public safety, or the lack of, due to the site chosen for this event. Whilst it is understood that the 1,300 people mentioned in the application might not be on site at one time, they might be. This together with the staff needed to run the event - man the stalls, serve the alcohol, sell the tee-shirts, organise parking and be responsible for lighting, security and the sound stage, etc. – this could easily be 1,350+ on site at any one time. Looking at the layouts forming part of the application the actual event space, excluding parking, comes to an estimated 2,200 square metres. Deduct the areas occupied by stalls, bar, toilets, zen area, stage (and on and on) the useable space might be as little as 1,600 square metres. 1,600 divided by 1,300 is less than 1.25 square metres per person. An absurdly small area per person in normal circumstances without taking into account dancing. Imagine the public safety implications should a fire, or a fight, or any other disturbance takes

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place and 1,350 try to exit at the same time. This council would prefer not to imagine it and certainly not to bear witness to it.

The current plan shows that all traffic, both entering and leaving the site, will be via High Ongar Road. Firstly, High Ongar Road is closed at its eastern end as the bridge across the River Roding is deemed unsafe. As a result all traffic in both directions will have to use the eastern junction to the A414. A fast stretch of road where vehicles accelerate from the speed restriction at the Four Wantz roundabout.

The High Ongar Road is narrow, with some 23 properties along it. The gate to the field is relatively narrow, some seven metres, so might not be appealing to some less experienced drivers on the basis that a vehicle is some 2.5 metres wide so one entering and exiting at the same time leaves little room for error. If drivers choose to park in the road, especially on both sides of it, it is debateable whether emergency vehicles would be able to access the site. This lack of access to emergency vehicles would be exacerbated if an incident on site – such as a fire – resulted in perhaps hundreds of vehicles exiting at the same time. It should also be noted that cars exiting in such circumstances would make it impossible for emergency vehicles to access the event site itself.

3. Public nuisance

The application states "The main area where these activities will be taking place is around 400m away from the entrance to the field ...". Not so. 400 metres from the gate is through the event area completely, and into the woods. Perhaps the promoters should be asked what they deem is the 'main area' for 1,300 people.

23 properties will be affected directly by traffic. More, including Mulberry House will be affected by noise. The application states that the trees and wooded area acts as a barrier to any noise generated, noise being their choice of words not ours. The application states that the trees are behind the stage and speakers will be projecting noise forward.

A public right of way goes through the field. The plan does not reflect the space occupied by the right of way, potentially reducing the useable size of the site still further.

4. Protection of children

This is a given but how do the promoters ensure that children, i.e. those under 18, are not admitted to the site unless they intend to check all IDs before allowing entry?

Notification

There is one other issue it is important to raise. This notification was initially sent to properties in The Street and a few days later to properties in High Ongar Road. Our conversations with residents in both locations suggest to us that they are to a large part scared of "repercussions" should their personal details be disclosed to the applicant. We do not share their fears, but that doesn't make their fears any less real. It is obvious that anyone living in High Ongar Road can be in any way happy about this.

You must gather that the Parish Council is unhappy about this event both in detail and in concept. It should be moved to somewhere more suitable, such as the grounds of Hylands House, or perhaps closer to where the applicants live. There are two fields directly opposite the applicants address which would be more appropriate.

The District Council should represent the interests of its residents, not those of outsiders.

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We look forward to hearing from you on this matter.
Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

Ernie Fenwick
Clerk to High Ongar Parish Council

cc: Mrs Maggie McEwan
Mr Alex Burghart MP