



HERTFORDSHIRE

CONSTABULARY

**SONISPHERE**

KNEBworth PARK  
4th-6th JULY 2014

**Information in support of Section 30  
Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003  
'Dispersal Order'**



**Application for a Section 30 Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 –  
Dispersal Area within local authority areas of Stevenage and  
North Herts**

This application is to seek consent for a ‘Dispersal Zone’ under Section 30 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act (ASBA) 2003 within Stevenage and North Herts (Knebworth and the surrounding area).

Section 30 of the ASBA 2003 states that where a Police Superintendent or above has reasonable grounds for believing that members of the public have been intimidated, harassed, alarmed or distressed OR that the presence or behaviour of a group of two or more persons in any public place in the relevant locality has resulted, or is likely to result, in any members of the public being intimidated, harassed, alarmed or distressed he may make a written authority under with the consent of the Local Authority allowing Police Officers and Police Community Support Officers to disperse groups of more than two people.

The initial concept of this legislation was targeted at youths under the age of 16 that were congregating in the community and causing concerns in the locality. The evolution of this legislation allows for the dispersal of any groups of persons, regardless of age, who display behaviours causing or likely to cause intimidation, harassment, alarm or distress.

The concept of using this legislation in the environment of Sonisphere comes from positive effect on previous Sonisphere events (Knebworth Park – 2011), Eastern Electric (Knebworth Park – 2013), and also other large scale events such as the Policing of the Reading Festival and Wimbledon Tennis Tournament. All of these events have seen the clear benefits of using this legislation to remove criminality from the area as it has been declared anti social. This power has reduced criminality and been legally unchallenged.

**Information**

For 2008 to 2011 Knebworth House has been the venue for 'Sonisphere'; a major music event that delivered rock, heavy metal and similar musical acts. This event was spread over 4 days and includes camping in the grounds of the house. Sonisphere was scheduled to take place in both 2012 and 2013 but was cancelled for various reasons and therefore did not go ahead. In 2013 a new promoter is produced a 3 day camping event along the similar lines as Sonisphere but with a different crowd profile. The event known as 'Eastern Electrics Festival' was a DJ based dance festival with entertainment running from 1400hrs through to 0600hrs.

Sonisphere is scheduled to return to Knebworth House from Friday 4<sup>th</sup> to Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> July 2014.

- **Section 30 application in 2013**

An application under Section 30 ASBA was made by Hertfordshire Constabulary in 2013 and due to the granting of this order forty one separate directions to leave were made under Section 30 during the Eastern Electrics Festival. This shows the legislation is a vital tool in the safe policing of a large scale music event that could if left unchecked have a significant adverse impact on the local community.

One event of note was the seizure of eighteen thousand nitrous oxide canisters from a van containing four males who had travelled to the event to sell the items. Superintendent Simon Hawkins, Silver Commander, stated S.30 ASBA was used to great effect to exclude the males as the law surrounding "legal highs" is very vague. This seizure and subsequent exclusion of the males will have undoubtedly reduced the risk of harm to concertgoers who may have suffered health problems or in extreme cases death due to inhalation of nitrous oxide.

Historically at Knebworth the crime has maintained at a set amount with offences of theft and drugs primarily but associated with this is the sale of counterfeit goods and tickets that attract organised crime. Attached are the figures for the last 4 years although not shown within these is the proactive work by ANPR officers in stopping organised crime from entering the park. In support of this application we can evidence that known criminal gangs that have targeted our events have been removed under sect 30 then been arrested as far afield as 'T in the Park' in Scotland. This legislation was used for the first time in 2011 and proved very successful with some 30 removals conducted. This had a definite impact on crime and those associated with it. No complaints were received from any persons removed.

- **Threats from supply of Controlled Drugs**

With this number of attendees and their general lifestyle profile comes a significant market available to those selling controlled drugs. The use of controlled drugs is expected as is the presence of officers in the immediate vicinity of the event. This leaves the surrounding area vulnerable to organised criminal groups (OCGs) that will seek to take advantage of the event weekend. With the supply of drugs and the demand from the attendees of this event type comes off shoot crime. There is the obvious potential for robbery, street violence and theft outside of the event. This places a significant risk to surrounding towns, villages and hamlets. Those involved in crime will seek to find locations that they feel are not patrolled by police officers and therefore an appropriate boundary line has been sought for the Dispersal Order.

- **General Crime threats**

Outside of drug related crime is the risk for theft from persons / tents within the event itself. As is evident from the crime figures provided (Appendix A) there is a significant threat of theft from persons. Intelligence from Detective Inspector Matt Phillips offers support to this that these events are targeted for specific personal property. With the influx and ready access to iPhones, iPads, tablet computers, etc comes the risk of organised crime groups stealing personal property. Any intelligence or evidence of these groups attending within the locality of the applied Dispersal order will provide police to disrupt this activity before it comes to fruition.

The use of controlled drugs also creates an increased number of vulnerable persons. The effects of controlled substances can be devastating and there are those that will prey on these individuals. The crimes can be from physical and sexual assault to simple theft. Making the relevant locality a more controlled environment will minimise the risk of crime allowing the police officers the opportunity to disrupt the planning of crime before the opportunity for the commission of crime arises. Crime prevention in the first place has a number of benefits: -

- Reduces the numbers of victim of crimes,
- Ensures safety and reassurance to those attending, and
- Encourages others to hold events in Hertfordshire providing revenue for business

- **Threat from Organised Crime Groups (OCGs)**

With these OCGs comes the strong potential to attract other more serious crimes. Due to the locality to London there is the real threat from organised drug and generic criminal gangs from London. There is also a significant threat from criminals and their possession of and use of firearms specifically in relation to drugs crime. The presence of more than one OCG is real and a Section 30 Dispersal Order will allow officer to deal with the threat when they have reasonable grounds for believing the threat.

### **Updates from Hertfordshire Constabulary**

- **Information / Comment from Silver Commander – Superintendent Simon Hawkins**

*As the Police Silver Commander for the Knebworth event, I have considered all of the various options within my powers and policy to help prevent crime and tackle anti-social behaviour. Music events do attract travelling criminality and appeal to motivated offenders who are willing to use such situations to target vulnerable victims, which do increase with larger gatherings of people where alcohol is easily available. This can range from fraudulent merchandise sellers through to organised crime groups targeting wallets, mobile phones as well as drug dealers. While the police have powers within the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) to stop and search, we cannot exclude them from the area where they will often target the genuine music attendees. My experience of using the powers within Section 30 Anti –social behaviour act 2003 is that this is a proportionate yet effective piece of legislation that can greatly assist the police to tackle crime and prevent rather than trying to deal with the aftermath. Without access to this power the police would be seriously hampered when trying to exclude known criminals who are only intent on creating self-gaining opportunities that will harm people who only want to enjoy themselves.*

- **Intelligence update from Bronze Intelligence – Detective Inspector Matt Phillips**

*“There is significant intelligence to suggest the threat of crime and disorder is high at the Sonisphere festival being held at Knebworth this year.*

*On a national level, Sonisphere is one of several festivals being held in the UK over the weekend of the 4th to 6th July 2014. Sonisphere is the largest festival that weekend with anticipated ticket sales of sixty thousand due to the three main headline acts: The Prodigy, Metallica and Iron Maiden. These are international bands with a huge fan base.*

## APPENDIX 1

*This number of festivals over a tight time period acts as a magnet for Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) who operate from the UK, Eastern Europe and North Africa committing coordinated thefts from tents and pickpocketing for mobile phones / iPads etc. Intelligence from regional and national sources last year monitored OCGs travelling UK wide with the sole purpose of targeting attendees (normally when vulnerable - drunk etc) to pickpocket and target tents to steal. OCGs have been known to target over a hundred victims of crime in a few hours at one event before moving on to another. It is also known that multiple OCGs can target just one event.*

*There is no doubt Sonisphere will be targeted.*

*I have liaised with Tim Hogan of the Met's National Mobile Phone Crime Unit (NMPCU), who assesses the risk that certain headline acts present to an event. They analyse crime patterns for individual bands to anticipate the level of offending they may attract. In the opinion of the NMPCU, Sonisphere presents a HIGH risk of attracting OCGs due to the bands appearing, the previous crime patterns when they have played elsewhere, combined with the number of people and their likely vulnerability at Sonisphere.*

*Not only this, the event has been targeted every year by ticket touts, fraudulent merchandise sellers and drug dealers whose income is generated by this type of event. Due to the demographic of the attendees, there is no doubt that drunken / drug related disorder can be anticipated and this provides a threat all of its own with the related offences this can cause e.g. assaults, public order etc.*

*I would consider the use of the Sec 30 power to be an effective tool to prevent and disrupt these crime types and that it is a proportionate response to the threat this event poses to the attendees and local communities."*

**Location and times sought for the Dispersal Order**

- **Time sought for the duration of the Order**

The intention would be to operate a Dispersal Zone around the Knebworth site to run from: -  
**0600hrs Friday 4<sup>th</sup> July 2014 – through to – 1400hrs Monday 7<sup>th</sup> July 2014.**

- **Location of the Dispersal Order**

This site covers two local authority areas of Stevenage and North Herts Council areas. A map of the location is attached in Appendix B. Application is sought for 'consent' from both Local Authorities but it is appreciated these will cover adjacent geographical areas, and therefore the decision to allow the application is a matter for each council to consider. The map has been split to show the relevant areas under each council's responsibility.

- The sector bounded by the red and blue lines denotes North Herts District Council.
- The sector bounded by the blue and green lines denotes Stevenage Borough Council.

. The Dispersal Order would allow officers to require persons to leave the relevant locality who were either ejected from the event for anti social behaviour or were stopped outside of the venue.

To be included in the area is Stevenage railway station. Stevenage railway station receives approximately 25% of the customer base. Previous experience shows that displacement is not an issue with a small number of notices handed out.

**Conclusion**

It is understood that this legislation can be divisive and seen negatively but we owe the majority of the law abiding public some protection against organised crime. This power would assist police in removing from the area those people who are intent on causing anti social behaviour with their criminal actions and will send a clear message that we will not tolerate this sort of behaviour.

This is the only camping festival that weekend and we can be guaranteed of visits from organised crime gangs. These gangs also bring inquisitive crime to the area in the form of Burglary and Robbery.

In looking at alternative legislation there is nothing that is as appropriate as this. Sect 27 of the Crime reduction Act relates to alcohol related which in our case rarely applies as the OCG gangs do not drink.

## APPENDIX 1

The promoter and representatives from the authorities are in favour of this approach and see it as an aid to promoting a safe public event and reducing crime.

Human rights have been considered for this operation and the rights of the festival attendee have been balanced against the rights of the broader community. Articles 2, 3, 5, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 14 will apply to this operation. Also Article 1 of protocol 1.

**The advice of Hertfordshire Constabulary to both Local Authorities is that the application for this Dispersal Order is both necessary and proportionate in preventing crime and disorder and providing the best opportunity for a safe event.**

**There is sufficient detail in this document to provide information and evidence of the potential risks and challenges associated with this event. We have used the experience of colleagues in the management of similar rock music events as well as our own experiences of managing major events (such as Sonisphere, et al). The application is not gratuitous; but is detailed and the powers used to 'disperse' persons can only be used when an officer feels there are reasonable grounds to believe. The requirement for 'belief' should provide comfort to the local authorities that there would need to be a real and present threat of unwanted behaviour occurring.**

**It is the view of Hertfordshire Constabulary that should this application not be supported then the ability of the police to manage this event could be restricted.**



## Appendix A

### Recorded crimes in Knebworth (Hertfordshire Constabulary beat G1P) during festival dates

#### Sonisphere – 2009-2011 and Eastern Electric 2013

Offence	2009	2010	2011	2013
Other Theft	39	79	27	19
Theft From The Person	96	76	11	31
Actual Bodily Harm and other Injury	3	3	4	3
Possession Of Controlled Drugs (Cannabis)	4	47	3	5
Possession Of Controlled Drugs Excluding Cannabis	10	4	3	5
Public Fear, Alarm or Distress	1	1	2	1
Trafficking In Controlled Drugs	1	0	2	10
Assault Without Injury on a Constable	0	2	0	2
Robbery Of Personal Property	1	0	0	7
<b>Total</b>	<b>155</b>	<b>212</b>	<b>104</b>	<b>166</b>

Whilst there was an increase of drug trafficking offences compared to previous Sonisphere events all of these offences were detected following the search and subsequent arrest of offenders.

It is noted there was an increase in robbery offences however one suspect was arrested and later charged with two linked offences. It is noted the suspect and two males he was arrested with were from outside Hertfordshire, reinforcing the intelligence that organised criminal gangs would travel to target events of this nature in order to commit acquisitive crime.

# Appendix B

## Location of the Dispersal Order – Relevant Locality

