

Poplars Farm, Sandon – Premises Licence – Review.

Thatched cottage

Roe Green

Sandon

Buntingford

Herts

SG9 0QG

14th February

Dear Molly Shells

Ref: Annual premises licence, location Poplars Farm, event name Sandonfields.

I am writing with regards to the adverse impact in terms of the 4 licencing objectives the annual premises licence granted to Richard Maskell has had and continues to have on us as a family who live next door.

The licence holder and property owner has forced their choice of entertainment along with an influx of complete strangers on us and other local residents without any considerations for our well being or any thought for the consequences of their actions. There was no escaping the disruption and disturbance for those who chose to stay at home. The licence holder has shown little regard to any of the properties in close proximity or to the rural, peaceful, tranquil setting. The property owner and licence holder quote "I don't think one day per annum should really ruin everyone's lives." However why should the actions of one be acceptable if it is to the detriment of many of the local residents and totally out of character for the location.

The council has a duty to focus on the direct impact of the activities on persons that are adversely affected in relation to the licencing objectives as well as the promotion of these activities be it one hour, one day or a week. Equally disturbances and risks need to be considered when deciding a venue is suitable as a matter of impartiality.

"I have hired a health and safety expert, a traffic management firm, a third party noise management team and a dedicated waste management team." Said Mr Maskell. In my opinion and with evidence to support this these experts did not fulfil their obligations. Noise, litter, security, anti social behaviour, safety to the public and residents, damage to the environment, light pollution, drugs were all major issues and by no means trivial.

Contrary to the event management plan and all of the representations by Mr Maskell and his professional team at the licence hearing, Sandonfields 2018 was not a safe and well run event. There were many incidents that breached the 4 key licensing objectives which are supported by output by the police, the Post Event Safety Advisory Group and the event organisers own noise management report. This brings doubt on the people involved being capable of organising such an event adequately or even safely let alone meet the licencing objectives. The licence holder and landowner choose to ignore that the venue is not suitable in anyway for a music festival of such a size, the proximity of residents and the traffic infrastructure accessing the venue inadequate.

The EMP referred to no areas being vulnerable to public nuisance due to it being on private land with 200-500 metres of fields. This statement is completely false, the majority of the Roe Green residents who raised substantial objections and were very concerned all live within 500 metres of the main staging area. It states crowd noise is not expected to be a problem during the event as the nearest residential premises are more than 200m away. The car park, minibus and taxi rank areas were all said to be staggered towards the centre of the site and as far away from the nearest neighbours as possible. This statement is false. My house is less than 30 metres away from the only single track entrance/exit point across common land, our boundary less than 10 metres, the taxi/bus drop off/pick up point is less than 30 metres from my house, cars were parked against our boundary, tents set up along our boundary (even though the decision was taken for no camping) and our house less than 260 metres away from the main stage. How on earth could we not be considered vulnerable, in one sentence the licence holder claims there's no concern for public nuisance due to distance and in the next sentence he claims residents are nearer so tries to implement action due to close proximity of neighbours. These are serious inaccuracies, the licence holder failed to disclose the accurate proximity of the residential properties including my own to suit his own requirements with regards to public nuisance. In the noise management plan my property was deemed a noise sensitive location NSL1 unfortunately at the time I did not realise that this excluded me from raising any complaints about the public nuisance, I will explain further on.

The impact on us as a family started weeks before the weekend of the event. Workmen and deliveries were turning up at all manner of times during the week, weekends and bank holidays creating noise, causing disturbances and the loss of enjoyment of our own property. My husband is a shift worker whose rota pattern includes weekends, our property is a grade 2 listed thatched cottage with single glazed windows and thin walls, all noise created could be heard within the house, his well being was compromised due to the inconsiderate times. Workmen were loud, driving vehicles up and down the track at the back of the premises sometimes at speed causing unnecessary disturbances, using power tools late into the evenings, having numerous bonfires and late night drinking sessions with loud music playing. A report was filed with the police regarding one exceptional noisy and late night. Rubbish from whatever work was being done was left to just blow around the property then onto my property, everyday I have had to check my paddocks before I could allow my animals to enter them. My driveway was blocked by the same articulated lorry as 2017 event delivering a front loader and other equipment. I did engage with them before they started to unload explaining my Farrier was expected at any moment, their response "we'll move when he turns up" and proceeded to unload. I was left powerless to respond, they should not have blocked the access to my property. All deliveries should have been off loaded on the property of Poplars Farm and not on the road. Could it be the driveway was unsuitable for such vehicles? No thought or even courtesy was shown to myself, residents or other road users.

Fencing was erected against my post and rail fence a few days before the event by the sound management professional. Numerous panels were rusty, distorted and had sharp broken wires poking out of them, I was unable to put my own animals on my own land due to the broken fencing as it was a danger to them not to mention being a danger to the public once on site. In the event management plan it clearly showed the fencing well away from our boundary, this was not the case. From our house window it felt like we were caged in, very unpleasant and unsightly. Our boundary alongside the venue was not fully secured as the fencing did not go all the way to the end of our property. This was pointed out to the police a day before the event after they notified me that there would be campers at the end of our land. Police assured me it would be dealt with, another full height panel went up, but at the bottom where we have a gate adjoining Poplars land a crowd control barrier was placed. This was insufficient and unacceptable as it didn't secure my property, it

could easily be walked around. Perhaps the fencing used to hang the huge banners on, which went up 2 days before the event at the end of Poplars Farms driveway could have been put to better use by securing the end of my property rather than blocking the view of the road at the end of our drive making it difficult to exit safely. This unsightly sign was erected without permission on Common land with no thoughts as to whether it impaired residents views of the road when exiting their driveways. This was a clear safety hazard and was reported to the police but no action was taken.

People arrived on Friday night and set up tents next to our boundary at the bottom of our unsecure land and parked vehicles alongside our boundary. At one point a woman in a high visibility top questioned who they were at the top of her voice hardly respecting the neighbours and asked what they were doing. Clearly people were entering the site unchallenged which didn't give us great confidence in their security. In the EMP it did state that everybody would be escorted onto the site be it deliveries, workers or guests, good security involves knowing who is exactly entering and exiting at all times insuring the safety of everyone on site and the security of residents. This incident only heightened my worries and concerns about the whole event, officially it hadn't even started yet. It was clear to us we had to protect our own property and family ourselves as the organisers were not fulfilling their obligations. The whole weekend involved us having to check total strangers were not trespassing onto our property due to the insufficient perimeter fencing and lack of security patrolling the boundaries. We should not have to do this, our home should be a place of safety, it's the job of the event organisers to put in quality security measures. Sound checks were done during the course of the day which were to be expected and as expected they were intrusive. The noise could be heard clearly inside the house even with doors and windows shut. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] Generators could clearly be heard and were not silent as stated in EMP, lights were shining onto my property and my house all of which were still on late that night due to the organisers still setting up. My husband arrived home at 00.45 Saturday morning after having worked a late shift and the site was still active.

Saturday morning brought us music at high volume commencing at 8am, a lot of vehicle movement up and down the single track drive and a lot of movement and commotion out the back of the property. Vehicles began to build up parked along our boundary and a lot of noise was created by people arriving and numbers increasing. The peace and tranquillity of Roe Green was destroyed. Mid morning the noise consultant appeared on our driveway with some associates so I approached him. He stated he was going to take noise readings at the front of our property on the Common. I asked if I would be able to see these readings which he agreed to. That was the last I ever saw of Ross Sharples. No noise readings were ever taken from the point in front of our property, it was another false statement. Could that be because the levels would be in excess of the sound levels stated in the NMP and therefore highlighting public nuisance. He stated that crowd and traffic noise wouldn't be sufficient to be considered at the licence hearing and in the NMP, however I strongly disagree. All noise has to be taken into account. Noise from the public entering and leaving in cars or on foot definitely generated intrusive anti social noise especially as the entrance is less than 20 metres from my house. A large proportion of the crowd arrived by taxi which meant that during the course of the day we were subjected to a constant flow of cars entering and leaving using the only entry/exit point. At times a build up of vehicles occurred when cars were trying to enter and exit at the same time on the single track access. Its scary to think what would have happened in an emergency situation, pedestrians and vehicles were both using the same entry/exit point. At one stage I witnessed the fire service who were entering the single track access point having to reverse their vehicle back out due to a vehicle exiting. How could it ever have been seriously considered that one single track access point was ever going to be acceptable in the event of an emergency or evacuation

and be suitable for a smooth dispersal of crowds. If an incident had occurred near the house or barn at Poplars that access point would have been blocked, nobody would be able to get in or out and my family and premises along with other neighbours would have been put at risk. Where would the crowds and their vehicles have gone? There were emergency exits for people on foot, holes were cut in hedges which then led into fields, with crowds fuelled with alcohol where were these people then supposed to go, completely unsafe and not thought through fully. No thought had been given with regards emergencies and how that would impact the close neighbours, I was not given any information about the protocol of any emergency or whether I would be notified of any major incidents. Being so close I would have thought that we would have been a consideration. Living in a house with a straw roof any fire or explosion would have made us very vulnerable. Event organisers are responsible for inside the venue and the vicinity.

The noise levels recorded by hand at NSL1 which was a point chosen by NHDC close to our boundary throughout weekend did not correspond with levels they were talking about over their radios on the day. These levels did not correspond with the levels we recorded on the NHDC noise app inside or outside our house either. At no point throughout the day or night were we able to escape the noise, it was so intrusive that it could be heard and felt over any sound made in the house. The whole family was subjected to listening to music that at times was highly inappropriate for children and not of our choosing. This is not acceptable whilst being in our own home. Our property is over 350 years old with thin walls which do not comply with modern British Standard regulations with regards to insulation which is the same for a number of properties within the vicinity.

We called the dedicated complaints line set up by the event organisers for issues regarding intrusive noise and got no response. Each time a call was made the line cut dead. My husband works for BT so is fully aware of how phones operate, to suggest that these were malicious calls or a misuse is incorrect. We notified the police patrolling Roe Green that we were unable to get through using the complaints number, they then tried to call the dedicated number with the same result. The police contacted the policeman at the venue and only then did Ross Sharples call us. He told my husband that all noise levels were operating within the agreed licenced levels and no further action was taken by him or his team. We logged multiple complaints with NHDC environmental health department and raised complaints on 101 due to no action regarding intrusive noise causing public nuisance. We were ignored and totally failed by NHDC, police and the event organisers noise management team. Just because sound levels may have been within agreed licence levels in the licenced area and at NSL1 does not mean that they were in my house. How could they possibly know the noise levels within our property without attending our premises to measure it? Ross Sharples lead the licencing committee to believe that all complaints would be dealt with appropriately to everyone's satisfaction. This again was another false statement, our other neighbour whose boundary is attached to Poplars Farm was also ignored.

In the code of practice on Environmental Noise control at concerts it states that topographical and climatic conditions can be such that MNL is lower at locations nearer to the venue so therefore my point being even if levels were measured within the licenced area and at NSL1 were within the licenced levels does not mean that they were inside my house as my house is further away. Our house is on the top of a hill and is the first substantial object that the noise hits so the noise dissipates and vibrates the building. Regardless of the levels being breached or not the intrusive noise was still a public nuisance. As stated in the same code of practice and stated by the licencing officer in the SAG meeting noise disturbances could still constitute a public nuisance without breaching the licence condition sound levels. I do question Mr Sharples professionalism as he was unable to take a simple ambient level reading correctly. I may not have qualifications in sound

management but I can read and have common sense. You do not set up a microphone close to a hedge and fence on a windy weekend, microphones should be away from any structure that could influence a reading but I guess that's what he was relying on, false figures. I also question why readings on the event days were not digitally recorded, less room for errors and would have meant that someone didn't need to stand all day at NSL1 and could have been dealing with complaints.

A nuisance does not necessarily have to be a high decibel level, it can be low level but persistent noise, such as a music bass beat which we were subjected too. It's frequency and duration, the time of day or night the noise occurs, weather conditions, any particular sensitivity of the complainant (e.g. shift workers; someone with sensitive hearing), the character of the neighbourhood where the noise occurs, existing background noise and the sounds typical for the area should have all been taken into account. It appeared it was easier for everyone to ignore us.

My daughter was made to feel uneasy in her own garden whilst looking after our ponies in the stable yard. Men stationed at the sound monitor NSL1 kept watching her and anyone else who happened to be in the garden, strangers parking their cars were also able to peer into our property, it was a complete invasion of our privacy.

Throughout the course of the day young people were entering and exiting the venue wandering around the common openly drinking alcohol, being noisy and dropping litter. Where was the security preventing this? A strong odour of drugs could be smelt from our garden, not to mention the pollution from the additional vehicle activity. My son has congenital heart disease so is vulnerable when it comes to the inhalation of pollution and smoke. Being subjected to this can have serious effects on his health, along with not being able to rest and relax due to the constant intrusive noise. Once I was aware of the drug use, I had to make sure he stayed indoors as I didn't want his health compromised. Since the autumn he has been undergoing diagnostics for further treatment which I do not wish to be published in the public domain but the information is available to the NHDC if required confidentially. The consequences of this means that any change within his environment, the unknown, repetitive noise all trigger anxiety and stress which impacts his well being in a number of ways. Other drug use was clearly visible. Empty gas canisters and roll ups littered the common and an empty drugs packet containing the remnants of a white powder in the phone box which is now a library was found by my daughter. What if a small child had found it? This packet was shown to a policeman who confirmed it was drugs. There was an obvious use of illegal substances which are known to cause hallucinogenic side effects and psychosis. Pushing attendees past our property on entry and exit increases the likelihood that they will trespass especially as our premises wasn't secure. Everyone within the area was at risk and if challenged some could have been violent. Risks increase with more serious drugs and with combinations that include steroids and amphetamines. Teenagers from 13 or 14yrs -23year olds are undergoing brain plasticity which means they can't read facial expressions and body language, and can't think through consequences of their actions. It is why most stabbings involve teenage males. If the zero drugs policy was not policed effectively then it's safe to assume they were not policing weapons/ knives effectively either. It just takes 20 secs of impulsive behaviour and as neighbours we were all put at risk. In a post event meeting with the police it seemed that drug use was accepted as part of the course with such events, but drug dealing was taken more seriously. Zero drugs tolerance means no drugs in my view, this event was advertised as a family event children were on site and exposed to this, my children and neighbours were exposed to this, we were all put at risk by the event organisers failing to protect all. It was their job. Another failing in their duties which could have resulted in serious consequences.

At 11pm music ended and the exiting process began. It was appalling, dangerous and excessively noisy lasting over 2hrs. In the noise management log there was a reading at 11pm of 57db for 15mins which was a clear breach of noise levels, however the sound management team feel that as music had stopped at 11pm this was pedestrian and car noise which was not to be taken into consideration. All noise should be accounted for, but if this was a reading from insignificant crowd noise I question the accuracy and honesty of the readings for the music levels throughout the day given they appear to rise only by 8db. Crowds of attendees made their way to the exit point and taxi point all within metres of my house. All of this could clearly be heard within my house. The obvious challenge of the single-track access route became gridlocked. There was no organisation, everyone was pushed out of the venue onto the common and roads. No vehicles could enter site to pick up due to attendees that had their cars on site exiting. This meant that the Rushden road became blocked along with many of the residents driveways. Vehicles and pedestrians were using the same exit point with no effective segregation. Public nuisance and Anti-social behaviour occurred, attendees were fuelled up with alcohol and some fuelled with drugs were excessively loud using appalling language and demonstrated challenging behaviours, some were still drinking, smoking drugs, verbally abusing residents, criminal damage took place, driveways and gardens used as toilets, it was extremely unsafe for residents and attendees. How could an experienced team allow this situation to happen, especially as it had happened the previous year. Did they learn nothing? It was unsafe and unfair for the attendees and residents. The key management of attendees is to give multiple manned exits to minimise build up of traffic and crowds which in turn minimises the risk of confrontational incidents and minimises the impact and risk to the residents. All of Roe Green was subjected to a high increase of risk due to everyone leaving at one exit point. Attendees began to wonder the area not really aware of the nuisance they were causing or the dangers they were exposing themselves too. It was dark, they were walking on unlit small country roads with a higher than usual amount of traffic on it completely unaware of the consequences of their actions. It was worrying to witness. What is also worrying is that the licence holder doesn't seem to think there is a problem. His solution is to stagger the exiting. How would that help, if attendees have bought tickets to a festival they are going to stay until the last act has finished especially when you look at the type of music/ bands playing and the real demographic the festival is aimed at. There will always be an issue of people leaving all at once creating a noise especially when there is only one exit and entrance. Using the public footpath as an alternative was never going to alleviate the problem as few people from the village attended and those that did used the front entrance to enter and exit. The police had to intervene as the situation had become dangerous for all and worst of all children were in the thick of it.

Sunday morning around Roe Green showed clear evidence of the night before litter, damage and obvious signs of trespass. Some attempt was made to clear up on the Green and recreation ground but it was not from a professional waste management team and they didn't pick up everything. There were less attendees on Sunday but the noise levels were still unbearable, complaints were made but again we were ignored. It was another day of checking boundaries on a regular basis and making sure the animals were not distressed. Again my daughter was subjected to being watched by men drinking alcohol who were standing at the NSL1 sound recording point whilst tending to the ponies in the stable yard. A massive invasion of privacy, also it did state in the EMP that no staff would be drinking alcohol on site.

There was such a feeling of relief once the music shut down, the breakdown of the event started on Sunday evening but took many weeks to clear. In fact the whole site was never totally dismantled. Rubbish to this day is still left on the site. I am still picking up litter that blows into my paddocks from the venue. The waste management team if there was one was not adequate. Everyday I have to

check our paddocks before letting the ponies graze. The situation has been made worse by the grass being cut and the litter just run over and chopped up into smaller pieces [REDACTED]. Much larger debris from structures have been left to decompose in ditches, fields and woods. It is unsightly [REDACTED] and an offence.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

For a second year in its varying guises this music festival has had adverse impact on our lives. Mr Maskell quotes,

"I will endeavour to make this event as painless and unobtrusive as possible for you" which surely is an admittance that it will be intrusive and that he will be putting in measures to prevent this. Unfortunately he was unable to do so successfully.

"You won't hear a thing" not sure how that was ever going to happen, loud music, huge crowds, one access point in close proximity to residents in quiet, rural location.

"I am not trying to ruin Sandon village nor do I intend to gridlock roads, leave litter, damage local wildlife or tolerate anti social behaviour," All of this happened.

"I have to meet stringent conditions put in place by responsible authorities" Unfortunately nobody seems to be regulating these conditions, local authorities appear to be accepting the licence holder's verbal responses and EMP with no clear honest evidence to substantiate it, yet clear evidence from neighbours and residents of the breaching of conditions and who were subjected to the licenced activities, most at risk and adversely impacted have appeared not to be listened to. Events are to be promoted but disturbances are to be considered, licencing objectives to be promoted but failure to do so is an offence. The police commented this event in particular had faced higher levels of scrutiny due to residents concerns therefore the event team were under increased pressure. Of course the residents were going to go through all of the paperwork, rules and regulations, our homes and lives were going to be affected again and put at risk by the organisers actions, it was bound to cause anxiety. Everyday we put ourselves at risk but they are of our choosing, this event and its risks were put upon us and that is unfair. If the event team were as experienced and professional as they claimed pressure should not have been an issue and the event would have run without any adverse impact. Unfortunately due to the event venue proving to be totally inappropriate for such a festival the event team were unable to overcome the challenges it presented, and were never going to achieve meeting the 4 licencing objectives successfully. There were many promises on ways it maybe achieved but in reality they were never accomplished. Public safety and public nuisance were always going to be problem. Possibly people who went to the event had a lovely time, but when you are attending an event you are not considering what the neighbours are having to deal with or the work it requires to run an event. As neighbours we are having to deal with the consequences of actions being forced upon us by the licence holder and property owner who were not being responsible and ensuring we were not put at risk or affected in any way with what they had chosen to do on the property. They didn't even do us the courtesy of dealing with our complaints over the weekend or check that everything was satisfactory before after the event. Residents have had to endure negative comments from festival goers based on false statements perpetuated by the licence holder

and land owner all because we dared to challenge the validity of this venue. This was not just a weekend event for us, we were subjected to weeks of unfair disruption and disturbance.

Debbie Williamson
Thatched cottage
Roe Green
Sandon
Buntingford
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SG9 0QG

Jubilee House

Rushden Road

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SG9 0QS

17 February 2019

Dear Molly,

We wish to make representation regarding the review of the licence for the music festival, Sandon Fields at Poplars' Farm Sandon.

We feel it is far too big an event to be held in the middle of a residential area in a small, relatively remote rural village like Sandon. Sandon village is very quiet, particularly after 11.00 p.m. even at weekends.

This time, unlike the previous year, on the whole, noise from the event itself did not bother us at our home which is located in the centre of the village. This was probably because the music stages had been positioned differently to the previous year and were not facing towards the centre of the village. However there were still times when we could hear the bass in our house and, when out walking, we did notice that the noise was very high (to the extent that we could hear the words clearly) near Springers Barn and in places on Dark Lane and Payne End. We also noticed that the noise was very variable and sometimes it suddenly went from very loud to next to nothing in the same place.

We did observe that the traffic was much heavier than normal through the centre of the village on Saturday and appeared to be going to and from the event. This may not have been recognised by people not familiar with the area as they may not have realised just how little traffic there normally is on a weekend. There also seemed to be a large number of people, not from the village, walking along the road to the event, we assume they were from the cars parked closer to the village centre. Between 11.00 and 12.00 at night we could hear traffic going in both directions to and from the event in an almost constant flow when we would have normally expected just one or two cars passing at that time.

We had some nuisance from a group at around midnight on the Saturday night. Even though we had all the windows and doors closed, we could hear a lot of noise from a group of young people outside for a period of time. At one point they triggered our security light and were so loud that we thought they were in our garden but when we looked out, they were actually slowly weaving their way up the road along the grass verge immediately in front of our garden. They were almost certainly trying to walk home from the music event. We were concerned about them walking on the roads

because they appeared to be oblivious to their surroundings and not sure where they were going.

On the Saturday evening we were walking along the Icknield Way footpath through the event site at about 5.00 p.m. and were concerned to see that cars were driving down this footpath for a short distance in order to enter/exit the main car park. As we were walking beside the car park, just before we reached the crossing of the gravel driveway, two cars came in. The stewards, who had been lying on the ground with their backs to us and were completely unaware of our presence, jumped up and directed the cars across the permissive path and down Icknield Way towards us to enter the car park. We had to slow down/stop to allow the cars to go. Should children or dogs happen to have been walking along the footpath in the car park at that time there was a distinct possibility of an accident occurring, especially as there was only a ribbon strip on stakes separating the footpath from the car park. We were expecting the footpath to be properly fenced off from the car park.

As we continued our walk on Icknield Way we walked past the children's play area but were not challenged at all and we noticed that there was no one on duty at the entrance to the children's play area. As we exited Icknield Way onto Roe Green itself a policeman asked if everything was okay so we mentioned that the children's play area was not manned. He seemed to think that wasn't a problem as parents should be with their children. However, some parents do leave their children, if they think that the children are in a safe place and even if the parents are present, all parents can be distracted at times and given the location of the play area, without anyone on duty, it was easy for anyone to walk in and perhaps persuade a child to leave the area and go with them or for a small child to just wander off. Our concern was compounded by the fact that we saw a couple probably in their late twenties/early thirties leaning on some hay bales by the children's play area, drinking and smoking roll-ups. We don't know what was in the roll-ups and weren't close enough to smell if it was cannabis but their demeanour suggested that they were very relaxed. They may or may not have been parents watching their children.

[REDACTED] we did the same walk on Sunday a little bit later and again noticed that there was still no-one at the entrance to the children's play area yet children were in there and we or anyone could have entered had we/they chosen to,

We do feel that there was an issue with the safeguarding of children at the event itself, especially if, as the police have informed us, people who didn't have tickets were trying to enter the event via Roe Green Wood which backed on to the children's play area.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] We were dismayed to see that the Wood had not been protected by a double fence to prevent access and baffle boards to reduce the noise,

as we had been assured they would be. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] especially as there is evidence that people associated with the event did enter the woods. We understand from the police that the organisers claimed that the people entering the woods were not attendees but were attempting to enter the event without paying. Either way, if the event had not occurred, the people would not have entered the woods and contravened the restrictions imposed by the police [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

We would reiterate that we are not opposed to music festivals as such and are well aware that not all young people who attend music festivals take drugs and cause trouble but equally most do drink alcohol, sometimes to excess, and incidents do happen. We just think that Poplars Farm is a totally unsuitable venue for a large scale two day music festival as has been licensed.

Regards

Derek & Lydia Pollard

North Herts Licencing dept,

Please accept this email as our objection to the Sandon fields festival. The location is unsuitable as it always has been, the event for 2018 proved this and further provided lot of conclusive evidence to support this.

In Summary we feel they failed the 4 licensing objectives:

The protection of children from harm: The Children's area was outside the event and outside of the security checks. If common sense was used then a family event would not place the children's area in such a location.

The prevention of crime and disorder:

We unfortunately did report a crime. My wife was sworn at by event goers leaving the event while standing on our drive and calling for our cat who we had not seen all day since the event had been going on. This would not have happened if the event had a sensible exit away from residents and/or there been transport available to event goers. Or there were stewards/security taking responsibility.

Public safety:

The egress was absolute chaos. There was no duty of care to those attending once they had left. No staff for the event were outside (at least not close to us and we were maybe 100 metres from the exit point, from what I could see the Police were standing by to let the crowd disperse on foot slowly as there were clearly no taxis, taxi rank or any other method for the hundreds of people to get home. Hundreds of people left on foot walking the 5 miles towards Baldock in the dark with no street lamps on national speed limit back-roads. Occasionally when a car would speed past they would all be illuminated by the car lights as a constant stream of people on the road.

The prevention of public nuisance: as per the crimes reported, the constant bass and the hundreds of people wandering about for several hours after the event ended, this was a clear failure. Hundreds of event goers then congregated on the cricket green; on and all around the children playground and the cricket club house for several hours shouting and creating a disturbance. Eventually they dispersed by being picked up by cars up or walked on foot. There was no taxi rank, I had to ask a taxi not to park on our drive during the day. During a 111 complaint to the police about taxis parking on our drive I also asked them about the other line of cars parked on the drive up to the cricket club house and the cars that were parked on the green outside the cricket club house. I was told this was a civil matter but that they would pass this on to the event organisers.

All of the above points were raised as concerns previously and all of them were rubbished, or assurances were made to the contrary. I had thought the sound would be the hardest aspect to deal with and while this was invasive it was actually the end of the event that had the biggest negative effect.

Please note that even though we reported a crime and all of the above mentioned points all of this responsibility falls with the event organisation, and not those who attended.

The phone number to call for noise complaints did not work, complaints were made to the council about this by us who provided a mobile phone number instead, we logged our first complaint with the event directly when they sound team were outside our home.

The sound levels recorded were deemed acceptable by the noise review and the levels decided by the event organisers. However the bass was present all day long especially on Saturday. This was recognised by the noise team both verbally to us and is also well documented in the review and complaints and raised as points to consider for 2019, but there is nothing that actually limits this or measures it so this is largely useless. 65db may seem reasonable on paper but when you have 65db with the bass turned up and you can hear it in every room of your home it is pretty invasive. Our children stayed away this night and I am glad they did as they would not have been able to sleep.

Interestingly during the last 45 minutes, when you would expect the event is building up to the high point of the evening (and probably at the loudest), no recordings were taken inside the event.

The main stage pointed directly away from Roe Green but the marquees were sideways on, no synchronised readings were taken from the marquees with any of the properties. This is important as after 23.00 the main stage would stop and the marquees would continue. Had these been monitored a realistic prediction for the sound when the levels should be at the reduced levels could be taken. But instead the prediction was based on the records taken from the main stage and NSL 1 and 2. The stated volumes they could achieve would then be borderline even if you looked at the incomplete data that was provided. However I believe and always believed that keeping the sound below 45db after 23.00 will be impossible, the effects of the bass levels have not been mentioned again.

We were told that that background noise of people, stalls etc would not be relevant but even the sound of people leaving after 23.00 was recorded as 57db, 12db over the maximum that they imposed for the events music at this time.

Sunday was a different matter, this was always going to be more of the "family day" due to the times and the acts that were playing. Apart from the the sound (which was still noticeable during the event) the exit was very different, I believe mainly due to the time of day it ended. It should be noted that this is the day they have decided not to run the event for on 2019, not the day that cause 75% of the problems.

If the event is to go ahead then I would ask that the council puts in place conditions that will guarantee the mistakes of the previous years events will not happen again:

- Ensure to take measurements of the bass, and set a reasonable limit.
- Change the "Noise sensitive locations" to the most noise sensitive ones based on the direction of the speakers.

- Ensure there will be transport to and from the event (shuttle coaches, an actual taxi rank inside the event). Most well run festivals this far from a town would have a shuttle service of some sort.
- Create more than one exit point AND add exits that lead away from the residents. Reducing contact will reduce the chances of antisocial behaviour from the event goers.
- Place stewards/security outside the event to manage the crowds (effectively managing them, not just to stand there in a yellow vest and do nothing)
- Put the Children's area inside the event
- Do not allow the event to continue after 23.00 when it is clear there will be breaches of the sound levels, especially if bass is actually measured.
- Remove camping from taking place, camping would not ease the egress as the camping numbers were in addition to the 2000 from 2018's event. The event this year is not planning to have any camping either which I take as an admission that they know it will be an issue but unless it is removed from the licence the threat will always be there.

However ideally the only concession I would like to see is the location. If the event relocated to a suitable location, one with better access and no neighbours within 750 metres (or at least neighbours who wanted the event on their doorstep) this would be the simplest way to resolve all the problems mentioned above. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
Poplars farm is far too small and next to too many neighbours who were adversely affected.

Kind Regards,

Samuel and Alex Carlton
1 Roe Green Cottages
Roe Green
Sandon, SG9 0QE

Sandon Matters

Increasing well-being for all inhabitants.

Molly Shiells,
Licensing Officer,
North Hertfordshire District Council,
Council Offices, Gernon Road,
Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 3JF

17 February 2019

Dear Ms Shiells,

Review of Licence for Poplars Farm, Roe Green, Entertainment Licence for Annual 2 day Music Festival

Sandon Matters wishes to make a representation on this because members believe that events relating to the Festival that occurred during 2018 confirmed that the site is inappropriate for such a music festival. A number of members of the group live in Roe Green and were personally adversely affected by the Festival.

Whilst we would encourage rural enterprise that provides local employment and is of benefit to the local community we do not believe that the provision of such a licence serves the local community. Sandon is a very small parish area of approximately 150 houses and 500 residents in total. [REDACTED]. There are virtually no facilities or services in the area. For example, there are no shops, no pubs and no public transport. Most people choose to live in the area because they value the tranquillity, [REDACTED] and the views. The population of the village is such that the number of older people far outweighs the number of young people. In order to survive, the school is heavily reliant on children from other villages and towns as far away as Baldock attending; the children from the village being in the minority. The venue, Poplars Farm, is located in Roe Green, a small hamlet, of just 30 or so houses, [REDACTED]. A number of vulnerable single elderly people live within the immediate vicinity of the venue.

There is now a two year history of music festivals held at this venue, the first one in 2017 being held under a series of temporary event notices. Both events have had a significant adverse impact on residents, particularly those neighbouring the site. Sandon Matters and its predecessor Sandon Conservation Group received numerous comments from village residents regarding the impact of both the 2017 and 2018 events. The impact of the 2017 event is documented in objections submitted to the application for the perpetual licence for an Annual 2 day Music Festival.

The perpetual licence was granted albeit with a total of 47 conditions and the Music Festival was held over the weekend of 9th and 10th of June 2018. Unfortunately the conditions did not ensure that the licensing objectives were met and numerous residents have contacted us to express their ongoing concerns about the Festival. We should stress that it is not just the elderly raising concerns, parents with young children and people who attended the music festivals at Poplars Farm have all spoken to us about their concerns.

Our main concerns are:-

1. Crime and Disorder

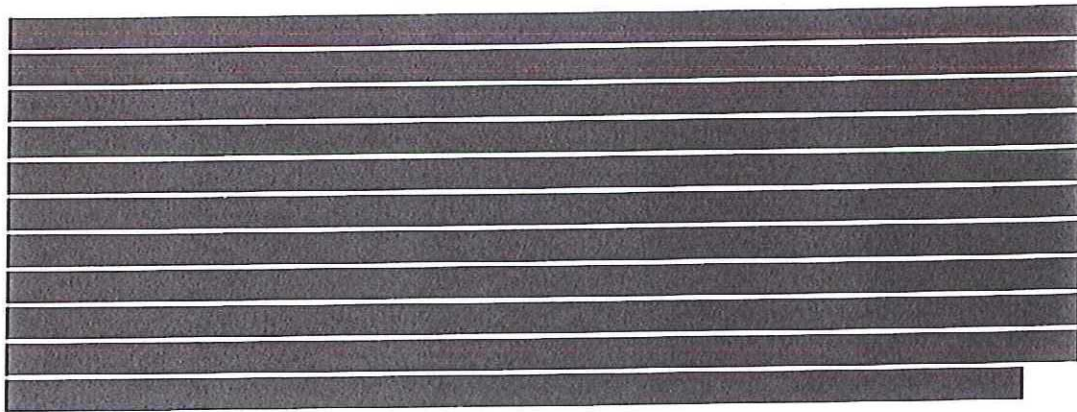
We would stress that Sandon is a very quiet, small, very rural area with virtually no public facilities. The 2011 Census showed the population of the civil parish of Sandon to be just 495. Policing is generally only provided by PCSOs on an occasional basis as there is normally very little, if any, crime and disorder in the area.

Poplars Farm is located in the middle of a residential area and very close to neighbouring residential properties. The only entrance/exit for both pedestrians and vehicles to the event was through the front entrance to the premises. This entrance comes out directly on to Roe Green Common and faces the Children's Play Area. The entrance runs just 20m or so from the nearest neighbouring property and there are three other neighbouring properties bordering the site on the other side of the entrance.

In 2018 there was a very large police presence, which largely comprised officers from urban areas in Hertfordshire, around Roe Green during the event but this still did not prevent incidents occurring, particularly late on the Saturday night when the festival closed for the night. The police were taken by surprise at the number of people exiting the site on foot and then milling around on Roe Green whilst they decided how they were going to get home. Most of these people were under the influence of drink and/or drugs and a number continued to openly drink alcohol or take drugs whilst situated on and around the Green. There were incidents of trespass on people's properties, damage to property and aggressive verbal abuse to residents going about their own business. Residents reported that the police officers appeared reluctant to intervene and only did so if heavily pushed to do so by a resident. This was possibly because the officers concerned were normally located in urban areas where such anti-social behaviour is much more common. Whilst there might not have been a large number of arrests, there certainly was a great deal of disorder with 1500 or so revellers loose on Roe Green Common late at night and there were subsequent complaints to the police about their lack of action in controlling the disorder.

We believe offences were committed under s34 (1) of the *Road Traffic Act 1988* during the event. Within the event site itself, in order for cars to enter/exit the main car park the cars had to travel along the public right of way, Icknield Way, for a short distance and cross it. Residents witnessed cars doing this. This part of Icknield Way is a designated

footpath under the 2010 Definitive Map & Statement of Public Rights of Way and the exemption allowed under s34(2A) does not apply to this footpath.



2. Public Safety

The roads around Sandon and Roe Green are country lanes which are narrow, winding and unlit. Pavements do not run alongside the roads and, whilst there are occasionally grass verges to use, pedestrians generally have to walk on the roads alongside the traffic. At weekends, particularly in summer, there are a number of walking and cycling groups who travel to and around the area. Some were in the area when the majority of attendees were entering, if not leaving, the site. There are no cycle lanes along the roads and very few footpaths beside them so it is normal to see both pedestrians and cyclists on the roads as well as cars and farm vehicles. In addition, there are a number of horse riders both locally and from further afield who exercise their horses in the area and have to use some of the roads because the bridleway network is incomplete. There is a lot of wildlife, including Fallow deer and badgers, which can suddenly appear and cross the roads unexpectedly. There is no public transport in the area and without access to a landline telephone it is difficult to arrange transport pick-ups because it is difficult to obtain a mobile signal in the area due to the lack of mobile network masts.

During the day and early evening residents did notice groups of mainly young people walking down the road from the Sandon village to Roe Green and entering the venue on foot. It was concerning that the groups seemed oblivious to the dangers of walking on country roads and paid little attention to their surroundings particularly as traffic through the centre of the village towards Roe Green was much heavier than usual on the Saturday around the opening and closing times of the festival. Also there were a number of cars parked along the roads leading into Roe Green sometimes on the grass verges or in front of houses but also just parked on the narrow roads. Cecil Sales Car Park was full of cars even though the place was closed and the car park is normally empty at the weekend. Presumably this was because attendees did not want to pay to park at the venue. When the event closed on the Saturday night, because of the lack of available

transport, large numbers of attendees resorted to walking along the roads in the darkness without reflective clothing, torches or accessible maps in an attempt to get home or to somewhere where they could obtain transport home. This puts their lives and other road users' lives at risk. One resident, returning to Sandon late at night was so worried about a person trying to get back to Baldock that he stopped his car and turned it around to give this person a lift so that he was safe.

Within the event site itself, In order for cars to enter/exit the main car park, the cars had to travel along the public rights of way, Icknield Way, for a short distance and cross it. This footpath is popular for walkers and was the event management team's preferred means of entrance to the site for villagers. Unfortunately, the stewards directing cars did not always observe walkers on the footpath and rather than stopping the cars to allow the walkers to pass safely, simply allowed the cars to drive on. Were children or dogs to be walking along the footpath in the car park at the same time as cars were entering there was a distinct possibility of an accident. . It should be pointed out that Icknield Way goes across all the lower fields on the site so it would not matter where the car park is situated in those lower fields; cars will always have to cross Icknield Way. Further, there was only a ribbon fence separating the footpath from the car park when residents were led to believe that the footpath would be protected by proper fencing.

3. Prevention of Public Nuisance

In terms of noise, it has to be accepted that it was inevitable that there would be a public nuisance caused by noise, given that the premises are so close to residential properties and the Noise Management Plans clearly stated that it only addressed the noise produced by performances and sound checks. There was no consideration of the noise created by the fairground, the food outlets, the large number of attendees, vehicles entering and leaving the site, or the set-up and take-down of structures. In urban areas some of the noise created by such things just adds a little to the background noise whereas in a quiet rural area it has a much more significant impact and can travel much greater distances. The Guidance that the Noise Management Plan referred to does state that associated noises such as these should be taken into account when setting the limit for the music level and that the music level should be adjusted downwards to take account of them but this did not happen.

Whilst it is true that parts of the village did not suffer from noisy music as much they had in 2017, it is clear that the assumptions regarding noise attenuation and identifying the most noise sensitive residences were hopelessly inadequate. Repositioning the stages after the 2017 event merely directed the noise in other directions so that Roe Green Wood and residences to the West and across Roe Green to the South West suffered excessive music noise, particularly low frequency noise. Residents reported that at times the noise was so loud it made the walls of the houses shake and was unbearable. It was

also noticeable to residents out and about that the noise was very variable, it could be relatively quiet at one spot but a short distance away it would be extremely loud.

[REDACTED]

Some damage was caused to Roe Green Common by large vehicles driving over parts of the Green when attempting to gain access to the site. Further damage was caused by the large numbers of attendees, many of whom were under the influence of drink and/or drugs wandering all over the Common rather than keeping to the footpaths across the Green, desecrating plants, dropping litter, some of which was dangerous to both humans [REDACTED] Some attendees trespassed on residents properties, damaged property and were aggressively abusive to residents going about their own business.

Although the music festival itself only lasted two days the inconvenience to neighbouring residents lasted considerably longer. Large transporters delivering equipment started arriving more than a week before the event. One actually arrived and blocked a neighbour's entrance preventing the farrier from accessing her property whilst the police were meeting with residents at a nearby neighbour's house! More than a week after the festival was taken up by transporters removing equipment. Litter was still evident in the area some weeks after the festival.

4. Prevention of Harm to Children

The venue is opposite the village play area. During the event children not attending the event were placed at risk of harm because:-

- a) The play area is open to the road and local children do not associate much road traffic with the area. To allay residents concerns regarding the increased risk of an accident because of the increased traffic in the area during the festival, the licensee had stated that he would place some form of fencing around the children's play area to prevent children from running straight out into the road. This was not done,
- b) At the close of the event on the Saturday night a large number of attendees strayed into the children's play area and litter, including drug needles, was left

on the ground. This was not cleared up before the next day, putting the children at risk of physical harm.

At the event itself a number of residents observed that the children's area was not secure as on a number of occasions there was no member of staff checking/controlling access to the area so it was entirely possible for a small child to wander out unobserved or an adult to enter unchecked. At times it appeared that adults were lying on the straw bales by the children's area drinking alcohol and smoking cannabis.

The issue with the safeguarding of children at the event itself, was particularly concerning given that, after the event, police informed residents that people who didn't have tickets were trying to enter the event via Roe Green Wood which backed onto the children's play area.

Residents remain concerned that a regular event of the size licensed will decimate the area and that there is not an effective complaints procedure in the event that there is disruptive behaviour or excessive noise. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED].
Indeed, on the face of it, we would claim that it considerably increases the adverse affects on all three and feel that the licence should be revoked unless satisfactory evidence is provided to demonstrate that all the obstacles can and will be overcome. If the sub-committee is mindful to add yet more conditions to the large number of existing conditions in order to overcome these obstacles it is imperative that the adherence to the conditions is carefully monitored by the responsible authorities.

We trust that you will fully consider our points and look forward to receiving details of your decision on this licence review in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Dr. Lydia Pollard
On behalf of Sandon Matters

Poplars Farm Roe Green Sandon Premise Licence Review

General Comment



The Licensing Act of 2003, states that members of the public may object to 4 main criteria that are not regarded as being frivolous. These are:-

Prevention of Crime and Disorder,
Public Safety,
Prevention of Public Nuisance, and
Prevention of Children from Harm

We assume that the review process will only be considered under the same criteria or the organisers failure to meet the aims of the event spelt out at length in the Event Management Plan

Loud music from 12pm to 11.00pm is absurd in the context of being neighbourly. 11 hours of such noise was intolerable, especially for the elderly living nearby as the noise made windows and doors vibrate reporting the noise nuisance on the Saturday night was virtually impossible as phone numbers given were unobtainable or just not answered. Whilst the noise from vehicles trying to leave the event was bad enough the situation was made worse by the number of people evicted from the site onto Roe Green many of whom gave the impression they did not have a clue as to how they were going to get home. At the second hearing the organisers made a great play on the duty of care to people attending the event this certainly did not apply once they have left the Poplars Farm premises and certainly did not apply to the residents of Roe Green. This was totally un-neighbourly in our opinion.

Roe Green, Sandon is a tiny hamlet and the potential influx of up to 2000 (according to the revised (many times) Event Management Plan but not stated on the application form) people over not one, but two successive days was an unnecessary burden on the ability of the occupiers of neighbouring properties to enjoy the comfort of their own homes and garden curtilages. Residents should not be subject to abused being shouted at them from people in cars leaving the event. The sheer volume of the continuous music for so many hours on end, we would respectfully regard as being a very public nuisance to all nearby residents and, indeed, the rest of the village. As was the number of vehicles arriving and leaving the site via a single access.

The location of the proposed event is in a totally unsustainable location, being remote from the train stations of either Baldock or Royston and there being no public transport services to the village at all. This means that it is highly likely that almost all potential attendees would need to come by car. Any attendees wishing to walk to the event would be risking their lives by walking along narrow country lanes with no footpaths. Any risk assessment would deem that to be totally contrary to public safety and, of course, highway safety. This, in our opinion is totally unacceptable.

Tony & Eve Barker The Dell Roe Green Sandon
Mrs Elsie Graves Dell Cottage Roe Green Sandon

Dear Molly Shiells,

I write to ask the Councillors on the review panel to give due consideration to revoking the licence granted for an annual music event at Poplars Farm, Roe Green, Sandon.

I live on Roe Green, a very quiet rural spot and a specially protected conservation area. My cottage is just one house away from Poplars Farm which sits alongside its neighbours on Roe Green. All our drives give on to a narrow road leading to Sandon village. The cricket ground, football pitch and children's play area are immediately opposite, on the other

side of this road which is bordered by quite high verges. There are no footpaths.

PUBLIC NUISANCE

Despite the claims in the Event Management Plans that the management team would aim to deliver

"..... a sound level without significant disturbance to local residents"

and again, that the noise from the music

".....would not be audible within any noise sensitive premises with windows open for ventilation",

I can attest to the fact that the noise from the music alone was VERY audible and disruptive within my cottage despite closed, double glazed windows throughout both the 2017 and the 2018 events.

In the late afternoon of Saturday 9 June, I walked with a friend towards the village from Roe Green. We took the footpath on the edge of Sandon village itself, past the Sandon Fields entrance, the bouncy castle area and followed the footpath back to Roe Green. The noise levels, even in areas relatively close together were very, very varied. The ground beneath our feet vibrated with the bass (which was a problem throughout) and the noise was extremely loud as we left the children's play area and walked roughly west, back on to the Green. As we passed a van with a sound engineer taking measurements beside the first footpath on the edge of the village, where the noise level was certainly not at anything like the levels elsewhere I asked if he could take some soundings outside a neighbour's house on Roe Green. He rang to ask permission from Ross Sharples to move from his allotted station. I took the opportunity to report the non-working of the 0800 number which residents had been given to report unacceptable levels of noise. I was told by Ross Sharples that I must have dialled a wrong digit.

I AND several neighbours AND one of the duty policemen whom I had observed trying to get through on the same number at the request of a neighbour? Had we ALL dialled a wrong digit?

PUBLIC NUISANCE, PUBLIC SAFETY, CRIME and DISORDER.

The noise levels increased through the evening, with crowd

noise adding to the music, but the music did stop at 11p.m. At 11.10 p.m., some 200, mainly young people POURED on to Roe Green at the same time as a STREAM of cars and taxis tried to make their way both up and down the single drive from Poplars Farm. The noise brought me to an upstairs window from where I have a very clear view of the road, the cricket ground, pavilion and part of the football pitch. It was CHAOS, with people milling about all over the Green, many on their phones, presumably trying to get taxis and as time went on, thumbing for lifts without much success. From about 11.20 on I watched two groups of young men, some sitting, some staggering about alarmingly on the high grass verge opposite. This was very concerning as cars and taxis, frustrated at not being able to exit the gate of Poplars Farm because of cars and taxis trying to get in, were accelerating fast as soon as they got on to the road. I thought the wandering and staggering was because the young people had had too much to drink, which was worrying enough in the circumstances, but two neighbours separately observed them smoking cannabis. There were several incidents of threatening behaviour reported which I did not observe, but earlier in the day, walking towards the village, we had had a car full of young people, all complete strangers, calling obscenities and making lewd gestures at us. They turned in to Poplars Farm's drive.

11.40 p.m. Another sight which I could have done without was that of a young woman pulling down her knickers and going to the toilet in the middle of my drive, luridly lit up by the lights from my cottage, but also by the headlights from the cars streaming past. By 1a.m. The crowds on the green seemed largely to have dispersed. Many people had resorted to walking home along unlit country roads. The potential for accidents is obvious.

At the Hearing for this premises licence, in response to residents' questions, the organiser had assured both residents and Councillors that only local people would be allowed to leave Poplars Farm site on foot. Quite how local people were to be separated from the rest was, like much else, swiftly passed over.

Where were the taxis and minibuses also promised by the organisers?

Where were the security staff?

Where was the concern for the safety of those young people?

Many neighbours had felt that the large police presence throughout the 9th and 10th June was a waste of scarce public resources. We were, however, very grateful for the police over the two hours outlined. While very many of the young people milling about on the Green had no intention whatsoever of causing problems to residents or anyone else, there would certainly have been more incidents but for that police presence.

The relevant authorities have been very active, as the Licensing Act requires, working with the organisers from the beginning of their licence applications and continue to do so. A very large number of amendments and requirements have been accepted verbally and on paper by the organisers. However, at this time of shrinking budgets, the relevant authorities do not have the resources to ensure that these

commitments are honoured and a great deal of faith and trust have been lost because the experience of people on the ground has been very different from the promises and assurances given.

In very many of the 71 letters sent to NHDC objecting to this licence application, residents, who know the area well, repeatedly pointed out the danger of crowds of people leaving an event of this kind because of the location: narrow country roads; no pavements; no street lighting; no public transport; the distance for taxis to come from the nearest town, particularly on a Saturday night, one of the busiest of the week for them; the proximity of Poplars Farm to its neighbours and the obvious dangers. All very, very relevant to the licensing objectives of PUBLIC SAFETY, PUBLIC NUISANCE and CRIME and DISORDER. I suggest that this event is in no way suitable to be held on Roe Green and ask the panel to revoke the licence.

Mary McElroy, Polyanna Cottage, Roe Green, Sandon, SG9 0QG

Sent from my iPad

Danyells
Sandon
Buntingford
SG9 0RF

N.H.D.C.

12 FEB 2019

8th February 2019

North Herts Licensing Authority
NHDC, Gernon Road, Letchworth

Dear Case Officer

Sandon Fields at Poplars Farm, Roe Green, Sandon 9-10th June 2018 -- Review of License

The Parish Council met in open forum as normal on 6th February to discuss the current review of the license for Sandon Fields 2019. We maintain the view expressed in our letter dated 18th July 2018 that the 2018 event showed that the site situated in the middle of a village conurbation is unsuitable for such an event of such a size and scope in 2019 or thereafter.

The 2018 event was larger than the 2017 event and was limited to 2000 persons. But it was clear that even at this size the site struggled to cope with peak times such as the ending of the live music on Saturday night when the festival goers poured out en masse via a single track driveway causing potential safety issues to those on foot or driving. There were also two instances of anti social behaviour that caused distress to two residents at that same time on Saturday evening.

The event also created substantial noise. The Parish Council have asked repeatedly for the noise report from the Licensing Authority but this report has not been forthcoming. That said, whatever the noise signature was deemed to be relative to plan in that report, the reality in some parts of Sandon was that the noise and vibration had a great impact on many of the surrounding houses over the weekend.

The Parish Council did not object to or reject the licensing application for the 2018 event and as part of that decision we took into account a number of promises made by the organiser of the event, a number of which were not delivered. It is in that spirit that we submit our view that, whilst there were a number of residents of Sandon who went to the event and enjoyed it, the event on balance caused much more distress to residents and critically from a licensing and planning perspective the 2018 event showed the unsuitability of the site for such an event.

Moreover, at a community meeting held in Sandon on 17th July 2018 that Councillor Chamberlain attended, Police Inspector Ablett noted the unsuitability of this venue for an event of the 2018 size. You will no doubt have direct access to the Police's expert view on this and other aspects of the 2018 event.

We thank you for taking the time to consider this letter.

Yours sincerely

James de Uphough

Chairman of Sandon Parish Council

On behalf of Sandon Parish Council

Sandon Parish Council

17 Dark Lane
Sandon
Buntingford
Hertfordshire
SG9 0QT

N.H.D.C.

12 FEB 2019

27th July 2018

North Herts Licensing Authority

NHDC, Gernon Road, Letchworth

Dear Case Officer

Sandon Fields at Poplars Farm, Roe Green, Sandon 9-10th June 2018

The Parish Council met in open forum as normal to discuss Sandon Fields 2018. Our key, considered opinion is that the 2018 event showed that the site situated in the middle of a village conurbation is unsuitable for such an event in 2019 or thereafter.

The 2018 event was limited to 2000 persons and it was clear that even at this size the site struggled to cope with peak times such as the ending of the live music on Saturday night when the festival goers poured out en masse via a single track driveway causing potential safety issues to those on foot or driving. There were also two instances of anti social behaviour that caused distress to two residents at that same time on Saturday evening.

The event also created substantial noise. The Parish Council have asked repeatedly for the noise report from the Licensing Authority but this report has not been forthcoming yet. That said, whatever the noise signature was deemed to be relative to plan in that report, the reality in some parts of Sandon was that the noise and vibration had a great impact on many of the surrounding houses over the weekend.

The Parish Council did not object to or reject the licensing application for the 2018 event and as part of that decision we took into account a number of promises made by the organiser of the event, a number of which were not delivered. We also asked for the right to review the licence each year. We are now exercising that right in this letter and whilst there were a number of residents of Sandon who went to the event and enjoyed it, the event on balance caused much more distress to residents and critically from a licensing and planning perspective the 2018 event showed the unsuitability of the site for such an event.

In conclusion we ask the Licensing Authority not to renew the licence for this event in 2019 or thereafter.

Yours sincerely

Helen Stubbings Clerk

On behalf of Sandon Parish Council

Elm Tree House
Roe Green
Sandon
Buntingford SG9 0QE

Sunday, 17 February 2019

For the attention of
North Hertfordshire District Council Licensing Department
By Email molly.shiells@north-herts.gov.uk
licensing@north-herts.gov.uk

Dear Sirs,

Re Sandon Fields Festival -- Premises Licence - Poplars Farm, Sandon

I understand that a formal review of the licence is to be undertaken.

I have little to add to the comments made in my letter to the police dated 17th June 2018, copy attached, and specifically the items I have marked with an 'X'.

Crime - The Police failed to deal with criminal activity when we reported drug taking on land outside the festival site and indicated that such matters were within the control of the Festival organisers.

Disorder -- The Saturday night scenes at the end of the festival were appalling. A large drunken crowd milling round an unlit village green is never a good idea.

Public safety -- the festival is held in a small village -- there is no street lighting and the roads are largely unmarked. Taxis, often with defective headlights, were racing to and from the festival site. Intoxicated festival goers were walking from the festival and I met more than one group intent on walking the five miles to Baldock. The opportunities for disaster to strike were numerous. Hopeless and dangerous. The possibility of another road death in the village is significant in these circumstances.

Public Nuisance -- The noise coming from the festival on Saturday night was unacceptable. We could not hear our television despite having double glazing. We complained and it was acknowledged that the music was at nuisance levels. It was not, so far as we could tell, turned down. We felt violated and intimidated by this row and can only imagine how it was received by our elderly neighbours.

Yours sincerely,

Steven Krempel

MR S J KREMPEL:
ELM TREE HOUSE
ROE GREEN
SANDON
BUNTINGFORD
HERTFORDSHIRE SG9 0QE
ENGLAND

17 June 2018

Chief Inspector David Partridge
Hertfordshire Constabulary Headquarters

Stanborough Road

Welwyn Garden City

Hertfordshire AL8 6XF

And By Hand

Dear Chief Inspector,

Re: Sandon Fields Festival – June 2018 at Poplars Farm, Roe Green, Sandon

X

X On Saturday night/Sunday morning (9th/10th June) as festival goers were leaving, having been awoken by shouting outside my house, some 300 metres from the entrance/exit of the event, I got up and went to see what was going on. I found festival goers (or leavers!) beyond Roe Green House intent on walking (5 miles/2 hours) to Baldock, beyond Cecil Sales' grain store at the other end of the green, at and beyond the cricket pavilion and a considerable number, which I estimate at approximately 200, milling around on Roe Green apparently waiting for lifts and taxis.

X At this point, a little background information may assist. Roe Green is crossed by a 40 mph road with no pathway and no street lighting. In most places there is something of a bank at the side of the road which makes evading traffic problematic. There is, in places, uncut grass which restricts vision and at the event exit there was a large road sign marking and very effectively obscuring vision at the single point of access to and egress from the site. Add to this the clear unfamiliarity of many vehicles drivers with driving on country roads, the feeding frenzy of taxi drivers on piece rates and the absence of correctly functioning headlights on at least three taxis and you will maybe begin to understand the scenes of chaos that greeted me. I was genuinely concerned for the safety of the festival goers, many of whom were clearly very inebriated.

X I parked my vehicle on a neighbour's drive (with their consent) near the festival exit/entrance and observed events there for a considerable period. It would appear that the festival security/marshalling staff were making little or no effort to deter festival goers from leaving the site on foot and appeared to be largely indifferent to the dangerous position they were putting themselves in. It was also clear that the Police were also making no effort to protect festival goers from the very obvious perils of staggering around busy unlit roads in the dead of night!

X Moving on; I was unable (again because of work commitments) to attend the meeting that the Police had with some of my neighbours before the event, but my reliable Informant, has briefed me that the Police's message at the meeting was that its response would be 'proportionate'. I understand that a significant number of conditions proposed, imposed and accepted in the licence for the event were broken before, during or after the event. These include administrative provisions around the clearance and signing off of the Event Management Plan, provisions around on-site camping, event set-up and break-down and so on. Each breach is a criminal offence.

X

X

Please rest assured that I have no problems with festivals, I attended many such events when I was younger and still do, but this one was just in the wrong place! It has fractured a small peaceful community.

It is likely that this letter will be circulated and I reserve the right to circulate your response.

Yours faithfully

Steven Krempel

no dog

MRS D M KREMPEL
ELM TREE HOUSE
ROE GREEN
SANDON
BUNTINGFORD
HERTFORDSHIRE SG9 0QE
ENGLAND



18 February 2019

FOR THE ATTENTION OF:
Molly Shiells
Steve Cobb
North Herts District Council Licensing Department

BY EMAIL PLUS BY HAND AS EMAIL BOUNCED

Dear Sirs

Re: Review of Sandon Fields Festival at Poplars Farm, Roe Green, Sandon

The above music festival took place over the weekend of 9th and 10th June 2018. There were, as far as I was concerned, various breaches of the four main licensing objectives.

1. Prevention of Crime and Disorder

When the event finished on the Saturday night there seemed to be no marshalling of any kind in evidence, certainly not where the exit met with the public highway, with cars and people milling all over Roe Green and more importantly the road. It was dark so people were not visible to the cars going up and down the roads on which people were walking. Cars are allowed to travel here at 40 mph. There are neither street lights nor footpaths as this is a rural, residential area. It was, I believe, down to a matter of luck that no one was knocked over. The police informed us that they would not be marshalling traffic as the event management personnel should be doing this. A duty of care, I think, is owed to those attending this event to organize traffic safely and to all other road users.

2. Public Safety

I repeat all of the above which is pertinent to this.
The emergency access route for the event passed over another person's land, over which, I believe, consent had not been granted.
The vehicular access to the event is obtained over a single track. This is the same track over which vehicles have to exit and emergency services would need to use.

3. Prevention of Public Nuisance

We were told by one of the representatives of the noise management team when called out on the Saturday night of the 2018 event that the noise was at the nuisance level.

We have double-glazed windows which were shut. The music level was reduced but the bass level was still easily audible and uncomfortable.

There was anti-social behavior such as a female festival goer urinating in a neighbour's driveway. This was clearly visible to those neighbours.
The festival which occurred in 2017 included festival goers trespassing on neighbouring property and also using a resident's garden as a lavatory.

The telephone number we were given to report breaches did not work and we had to contact the local authority to get a number which did.

4. Protection of Children from harm

All of the above relates to this

I would also mention that although the applicant offered concessions in order to obtain the licence and the subsequent licence contained conditions to be observed before, during and after the event, some of these conditions were breached. It appears that the applicant is, at the very least, cavalier in taking note of them.

I understand that the effect of failure to comply with any conditions attached to the licence is a criminal offence.

The residents of Roe Green are entitled to ask the licensing authority to review the licence on the grounds as set out above to prevent the event from taking place again. It is the wrong venue for such an event.

Yours faithfully

Deborah Krempel

Review of Licence relating to Sandon Fields, Poplars Farm, Sandon

We live at Roe Green, Sandon and following the Sandon Fields music event held at Poplars Farm, Sandon on the 9th and 10th June 2018, we completed a noise log at the suggestion of Hertfordshire Police. Our noise log has been submitted and accepted as document no. 5 with the application for review of licence prepared by Mr and Mrs Dell.

Our noise log was based on the pro forma document provided by the Environmental Health Department of NHDC and sent by us to NHDC on 26th July 2018. However, we would be grateful if the further information set out below, by way of clarification, could be considered as a submission for the purposes of the licence review as it falls within the licensing condition of the prevention of public nuisance.

Our experience of the event of 9th and 10th June 2018 varied significantly from the promises made by the organiser prior to the event, conditions agreed by the organiser with NHDC and feedback provided by the organiser at the Safety Advisory Group de-brief meeting. Reference is made below to those conditions and a number of associated documents, compared to the reality of the event. For convenience each specific Document or reference is set out under an individual heading.

Minutes of First Half of Licensing Hearing held 18th May 2018 (LH)

1. On page 7 of the Minutes:
 - Mr Sharples of Rossco (Noise Management Consultancy), in response to a query raised about the level of noise heard from a distance at the earlier music festival held at Sandon Fields in September 2017, is quoted as saying 'the sound travelling was due to a meteorological condition, this was a known phenomenon, which was not unusual'.
 - Further down the minutes it states 'the Chairman asked Mr Sharples to give some examples of his experiences'.
 - Mr Sharples said that 'he had only experienced the meteorological phenomenon once in 10 years, but if this were to happen, the music would be turned down'.
 - It would appear this 'not unusual' (but witnessed only once in 10 years) 'meteorological phenomenon' (currently unidentified by Mr Sharples) occurred not only in September 2017, but curiously also over the weekend of 8th to 10th June 2018 in view of the level of sound travelling again from this event. We would suggest that this frequently occurring 'phenomenon' in Sandon makes the venue totally unsuitable for music festivals.
2. On page 9 of the Minutes it states:
 - 'Mr Maskell advised the Sunday event was effectively a large village fete, with music that was more family orientated.'
 - We had several visits from 'Matt' and 'Chris', two of the sound engineers appointed by Rossco on Sunday 10th June following our complaints in respect of the loud music. Matt told us that they had thought the Sunday would be quieter (in terms of complaints) as the day was for families and the music was different.
 - Matt admitted that they had underestimated the number of complaints likely to be received on the Sunday and he felt this was down to the nature of the music on the Sunday and the increased bass accompanying that music.

Sound Management Plan V3 prepared by Rossco (SMP)

1. Reference is made on page 6 of the SMP to the Code of Practice on Environmental Noise Control at Concerts (1995) where it is stated, in relation to '1 to 3 concert days per calendar year per venue',

that 'the MNL should not exceed 65dB(A) over any 15 minute period' within 'rural venues'. Roe Green Sandon is a very rural venue and the following should be noted:

- A reading was taken at 13:20 for 15 minutes on Sunday 10th June from behind our house by Matt and Chris the sound engineers. This measurement was about 50Db but Matt volunteered the advice that the 'bass is way up' (we could all feel the vibration through our feet) and sent Chris back to turn it down.
 - Matt returned to our house again at 14:40 (we had not called him) to make sure we were okay and he was apologetic about the inconvenience to us and said that he could see that we were being reasonable and not complaining without reason. He explained that Chris was now going to sit on the mixer desk to ensure that the bass was not turned up again. Matt also explained that the stage was in a bowl, we were uphill and to the side of the stage and we were therefore getting the full effect of the noise and especially the bass. He said that the bass noise and vibration, which he admitted he could feel, was due to the 'kick drum and electric bass'.
 - The noise increased and at 15:15 we rang again to complain. Just before Matt arrived at 15:35 the music was turned down. However, when Matt took the reading, between 15:35 and 16:00, (over 15 minutes) he advised us it was 'way over 70dB'. It must therefore have been a good deal louder than that before his attendance, bearing in mind it had been turned down between our call and his visit. He advised that there was nothing that could be done about the bass because it had been turned right down. He explained that another test site was receiving the acoustics but we were experiencing all the bass. He explained that the bass was 'omni-directional' and therefore we and our immediate neighbours, would get the bass because of the topography of the land.
 - Matt later explained that the bass should not have been turned up because Chris was sitting there, but clearly it had been turned up.
 - The topography of the land and concerns that it would amplify the noise had been mentioned by us, and numerous other objectors, both within submissions and at the hearing of the licence application, but the impact was not considered relevant at that time by either the applicant or the licensing sub-committee.
2. Paragraph 4.3 on page 13 of the SMP states the 'set up/event timings' as follows:
- Friday 8th June
09:00 – 15:00 system set-up
15:00 – 18:00 system testing
 - The reality was that not only did loud music commence at 09:00, the music started again at 20:00 for ½ hour and again intermittently at 22:00. This was 4 hours after the music should have stopped.
 - Saturday 9th June
10:00 – 11:00 propagation testing
11:00 – 12:00 sound checks
 - The reality was that the music started around 08:00, albeit it was not too loud at that time so we did not complain or register this time in our noise log. However, the really loud music started at 09:30 and continued intermittently until the commencement of the event, and then throughout the event, which meant about 14 hours of loud music.
3. Paragraph 4.4 states that there will be 'relatively low level noise' for set up and testing on Friday 8th June between 09:00 and 15:00 and then at 'concert level for an hour' between 15:00 and 18:00. However, the noise was at concert level intermittently between 20:00 and 22:00, up to 4 hours after the noise should have ceased.

4. Paragraph 4.6 on page 14 states 'after the starting levels have been established, checks will be made at the noise sensitive locations, to ensure compliance'.
- In documentation Rossco had stated NSL2 would be to the west of the stage, but on the accompanying plan to the document, NSL2 was incorrectly identified to the east of the stage. This was a significant error.
 - Mr Sharples of Rossco had admitted at the premises licence hearing (when query was raised by an objector that his narrative and plan on the location of the cardinal points did not tally) that he didn't know his points of the compass. He laughed this error off at that time, but crucially he did not change the position of NSL2 on the plan to match the narrative of the document. (It had been pointed out to the organiser at the hearing that the documentation supplied was littered with errors and this was one of the more important errors which were not rectified).
 - Mr Sharples's confusion with east and west led to NSL2 being placed in the wrong position which gave a false reading of the decibel level of noise emanating from the festival because the noise measuring equipment was behind, rather than in front, of the direction of the main stage.
 - At approximately 5pm we walked near to NSL2 and it was quieter than at our house. Bearing in mind the readings taken from our property and the topography of the land, it would have been commonsense to move NSL2 to our land (south west and to the side of the stage) or that of any of our immediate neighbours, rather than the eastern position where it was located.
5. Paragraph 4.8 on page 14 sets out the complaints procedure:
- It states an 0800 number will be issued for complaints. The number given to us in a letter by the organiser was 0800 009 6192. This number did not work, although we tried it several times, so we then used another number given to us, 07507 577607.
 - It states that the control will be manned permanently. We initially rang the 075 number at 12:00 on 10th June and left a voicemail message with our number, requesting a call-back within 10 minutes. We received no call-back. We rang again at 12:45 and a man answered 'patrol'. He said he had no knowledge of our previous call but took our number and said he would get someone to check on the noise. It would appear he did not pass this message on because we eventually had a call-back at 13:15, which was apparently a response to the voicemail message we had left. Matt and Chris eventually arrived at our house at 13:20, an hour after our first call to complain about the noise.
 - As mentioned above:
 - On Friday 8th June the noise started at 09:00 and was intermittent throughout the day until 22:00.
 - On Saturday 9th June there was over 14 hours of noise from 08:00 until 23:00, albeit intermittent initially.
 - On Sunday 10th June the noise started at 10:15 until closure of the event.
 - The reality of these extended periods of music meant a 1 ½ day festival was actually nearly 3 days of very loud music.
 - It should have been made a condition that the complaints phone be available from 09:00 on the morning of Friday 8th June, rather than be active only during the festival hours. Because of the loud noise experienced before the festival on the Friday, Saturday and Sunday we could only ring 101, which we believe is an unnecessary waste of Police resources.
 - The complaints procedure also indicates that the organiser and Mr Sharples/his colleagues will liaise and report incidents in the noise complaint log book. As has been stated, the noise recorded at our house was 'way over 70dB' for a period exceeding 15 minutes. However, as will

be seen later within this submission, this reading is not mentioned within the SAG meeting notes or the FOI noise reports which we requested from NHDC.

Post Event Noise Management Report prepared by Rossco (PEN)

1. Page 1 of this report states 'noise levels measured at noise sensitive locations and at other locations around the festival site are within the agreed guidelines and criteria'. This is an incorrect statement because readings from our property were stated to be 'way over 70dB' by Rossco's own sound engineers.
2. It also states 'all noise complaints were responded to in good time, catalogued and addressed with appropriate actions'.
 - This statement is incorrect. It took 1 hour for the sound engineers to attend our house on the first occasion.
 - On the first attendance of the sound engineers Chris, one of those engineers, was sent back to sit on the mixer desk for the remainder of the day to ensure that the bass was not turned up again. This clearly did not work because the next reading was over 70dB.
 - Matt explained that he didn't know how the bass had been turned up because he had advised us 'they know we are watching them so I don't know why they keeping turning it back up again'. Irrespective of being watched, Rossco apparently had no control over the sound because those operating the equipment set the levels as they wished.
3. Paragraph 3 on page 3 of the PEN incorrectly states that NSL2 was located 425m to the west of the festival site. However, Appendix 1 within the PEN has marked the position of NSL2 to the east of the festival site.
 - The measuring equipment was physically placed to the east of the site and not the west so this statement within the PEN is incorrect.
 - As will be noted from the comments above, Mr Sharples had agreed at the premises licence hearing that he did not know the points of the compass, yet he did not take the opportunity to amend his plans and the reading for NSL2 was taken in the wrong position, giving a false impression of the noise level for the event.
 - Mr Sharples Ignorance as to the cardinal points, of which he was made fully aware by objectors at the licensing hearing, was followed by him:
 - Not amending his SMP;
 - Not ensuring the measuring equipment was in the correct place, and
 - Compounded by repeating his mistake in the PEN.

This is not one, but three serious errors by Mr Sharples on one basic point.
4. Page 2 of Appendix C is misleading because it sets out the erroneous readings taken at NSL2 because these readings should have taken place in the west, rather than the quieter east.
5. Page 3 of Appendix C sets out the position with regard to the noise readings taken from our house as 'C7 Rowbury' (should read Roebury).
 - Reading taken at 13:25 – The notes state that they did not have our telephone number; this is incorrect because we left our telephone number twice and they called us back to arrange to visit. The reading is stated in the PEN as being 'over 50dB' and we agree the reading of 53dB.
 - Reading taken at 15:40 – The reading stated in the PEN of 53dB is fictitious and Rossco should produce the actual hard copy printout taken from their sound level meter. We were told unequivocally by Matt the sound engineer that the reading was 'way over 70dB'.

- The notes on page 3 indicate that 'subjectively and objectively' the bass was 'booming', which ties in with the comments from the sound engineer Matt that we were experiencing the kick drum and electric bass. However, within the PEN and other documents the effect of the bass appears to be played down by Rossco as insignificant. Bass is an integral part of music and it is not just heard, it is felt by the body through the ground by way of vibration. Matt the sound engineer volunteered the information that he could feel the bass through his feet when he was at our house. The vibration of the bass also made our house and windows vibrate so that plaster and sand fell down the walls inside the house onto floors and window ledges and we have many new cracks inside the house where walls join ceilings.
- As will be seen later in this submission, our noise log was sent to NHDC before the SAG meeting and we trust that the erroneous nature of the PEN noise reading was pointed out to the organiser by NHDC, although we cannot see that this is the case.

Safety Advisory Group Debrief Meeting (SAG)

1. Pages 2 and 3 of the minutes mention that people were waiting about outside for collection and more taxis were used than anticipated. When Matt the sound engineer was at our house on Sunday 10th June taking a reading he told us that the previous evening he had left the event at 23.45pm in the direction of Hitchin and there were crowds of people walking down the road in the same direction, trying to thumb a lift. He offered the thought that there appeared to be lots of cabs there picking people up, but he ventured the opinion that there were clearly not enough to cope.
2. Page 3 of the minutes expresses the concern of Hertfordshire Police with regard to the number of people congregating outside the event and in the road, together with the 'potential for an accident'; this related to the situation on the evening of Saturday 9th June. We drove past the venue at 23:20 on our way home (a few hundred yards from the entrance to Poplars Farm) and there were hundreds of people outside and dozens walking/staggering down the middle of the road trying to thumb a lift. Sandon has no street lights, no footpaths and no public transport so the sight of so many people (potentially the worse for drink/drugs) heading down the hill in the middle of the road towards the Baldock direction was worrying. At the bottom of the hill is a 'T' junction with banks about 6' high in all directions which means that there is nowhere to go if a vehicle is approaching; and this concern was compounded by the fact that all event traffic was directed down this hill.
3. Concern had been expressed at the premises licence hearing by objectors that there would be crowds of people wandering around the roads and general locality of the festival site. Assurance had been given by the organiser at the hearing that only local people would be allowed to leave the site on foot and everyone else would be required to wait inside for a taxi or mini bus. The reality is that the single track access over the green to the site meant queues of cars waiting to enter the venue from both directions to collect people and hence the crowds dispersed onto Roe Green and the road. On Saturday 9th June we had to wait in a queue of traffic when we left our house at 12:15 and also when we returned home at 23:20.
4. At the bottom of page 3 it states 'SC advised SAG on behalf of RC in that he has reviewed the sound report and can confirm there were no sound breaches recorded':
 - There is no mention within the SAG minutes that anyone, on behalf of NHDC, brought to the attention of the meeting or the organiser our noise log, which was sent to NHDC prior to the SAG.



[REDACTED]

5. Page 4 mentions the 080 resident hotline phone and false accusation by the organiser that the service was abused because several calls only lasted 20 seconds. Clearly the reason for this is that the number did not work so those of us who rang the number had to hang up and try again because the call cut out at the other end. To most people this would be a clue that the number did not work and there was no abuse of the number. We would like to see the call reports as proof that the phone number was working. In any event, Matt (sound engineer) had admitted to us that the phone number had not been set up properly and did not work and this had caused a lot of frustration from residents when he went to visit them.
6. The anonymised resident complaints on pages 4 and 5 are noted but we cannot see mention is made of the 'over 70dB' noise readings taken from our house. This is totally unacceptable because all relevant parties should have been provided with this information at that meeting by NHDC.

Premises Licence Hearings

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Conclusion

Roe Green, Sandon is an unsuitable location for an event of this nature in view of the very close proximity of neighbouring properties, whose occupants experienced utter hell during the two previous events. The organiser unhelpfully keeps informing one and all that 'it is only 1 day', so presumably he believes we should just put up with it. Pervading noise, of the type experienced by us, caused feelings of high stress, anxiety and

hypertension; to hold an event of this nature a few hundred metres from a largely elderly population is dangerous and selfish.

Regrettably, the organiser has made numerous empty promises to villagers at meetings, in documents and in personal letters sent to us. In one such letter to us he states that he does not 'intend to gridlock roads, leave litter everywhere, damage the local wildlife or tolerate anti social behaviour', but unfortunately all of this has been experienced by us, as well as the interminable noise.

We appreciate that the licence itself remains in perpetuity, but can be revoked by various agencies including NHDC and Hertfordshire Police. All agencies now have objective and quantified data, together with subjective and anecdotal feedback from residents of Roe Green surrounding the event which can be measured against the submissions and promises made by the organiser. We believe that the event does not meet the requirements of the four licensing objectives and in particular the prevention of public nuisance. We believe that Roe Green is totally unsuitable for an event of this nature and would ask that the committee revokes the premises licence at the hearing.

Colin and Lavinia Mitchell
Roebury Cottage
Roe Green
Sandon
SG9 0QG

Dear Ms Sheills

I refer to the premises licence review for Poplars Farm and write as a Sandon villager to register my objection again to this licence [REDACTED].

The location of Sandon Fields set in the grounds of Poplars Farm is very much part of the residential area of Roe Green and totally inappropriate place to hold a music festival with a licence to play music and serve alcohol. This is not a working farm it is a private residential unit flanked on both sides by other dwellings and residents have already had to endure an event for two years with loud music late at night and anti-social behaviour.

Despite all the initial objections, a licence was granted and at each event the licencing objectives have been breached as evidenced on your website, despite the organisers stating that they would ensure they would limit any disturbances.

This is always going to be the case though because it is totally the wrong location to be holding a music festival. The organisers are trying to make it work in Sandon spending effort and money - but why? Whatever measures are put in place by the organisers to try and prevent crime and disorder, prevention of public nuisance, protect public safety, protect children there will always be instances that cause concern and disturbance because of the very nature of the event - why should villagers have to put up with it - it's not an event appropriate for this village.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED] another issue that causes complications in Sandon as there is only access via car down narrow lanes.

Normally the prevailing winds are westerly and the noise impacts on the village - some years we can clearly hear the noise from the Bygrave Music festival, over 5 miles away. Last year the wind was an easterly so didn't affect the village so [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] This is a rural location, not an urban one -
Sandon is not even a large village [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Regards

Gay Ayton
The Six Bells
Sandon
SG9 0QX

Dear sirs,

I wish to object to the granting of a license for the 2019 event on the following basis:

1. Public Nuisance by virtue of the excessive noise levels, based on the experience of the 2018 event
2. Public Nuisance – from excessive litter (empty beer cans and plastics) found on both the common and entrance to our property. This replicates exactly what we also experienced from the 2017 trial event

Yours faithfully,

Karl Judd
Roe Green Barn
Sandon
Herts. SG9 0QE

Dear Ms Shiells

We write to you as the case officer for the above application.

We live in Sandon and have done so for almost 25 years. Our house is not located on or around Roe Green, and we are accordingly not as directly affected by some of the issues that have been raised as the more immediate neighbours. We are however close enough to hear the music clearly and witness the increased traffic caused. We are however very much aware of all the difficulties caused by last year's event and wish to support those who seek to avoid those recurring.

In summary we support the application made by Mr and Mrs Dell for the licence for the proposed event in the summer of 2019 to be revoked or substantially amended so as to prevent or at least minimise the impact another event of this sort would have on the village.

It is clear from the note of the debriefing meeting of the Sandon Advisory Group held on 30 August last year that a great many issues were raised by the police, other responsible officers and local residents were recognised as requiring to be dealt with prior to a licence being granted for an event this year.

Uppermost amongst those issues were the wholly inadequate one in one out access route that the police clearly had issues with and which compromised access for emergency services. As far as we are aware this has not been addressed since only one access point is available.

Similarly the underestimate of the number of taxis that drove into and parked in the village caused significant disruption and it is hard to see how this problem can properly be resolved. Significant noise and disturbance late at night seem inevitable.

The low level base noise much complained of cannot be avoided and is extremely intrusive.

Overall the proposed site, which is in the centre of the village and close to much residential property, is inappropriate and if an event is to be held an alternative site well away from the village should be found where the above problems and the others identified by Mr and Mrs Dell could be resolved. This would both satisfy the licensing objectives and minimise the substantial disruption to the village and its residents that another event at Polars Farm would cause.

Yours sincerely
Peter and Helen Laskey
The Old Vicarage, Sandon

Sent from my iPad

I write on behalf of myself and my wife who live at Roe Green House – being the western most house in Roe Green.

We wish to note the following as regards the event in 2018.

1. The Prevention of Crime and Disorder

There was a significant amount of anti-social behaviour, especially after the event. There were attendees reliving themselves in public areas and in gardens as well as the use of drugs (especially smoking marijuana). Groups of young attendees milled about after the event – apparently unsure where to go or how to get there.

2. Public Safety

The event seemed to be somewhat haphazardly organised in that the access and egress was on the same narrow, private driveway to the Farm; this caused back-ups onto the road such that highway traffic was stopped to allow vehicles to enter or leave the premises. It seems to me that if there were to be an emergency then this narrow access would cause great difficulties to the emergency services. In addition the site has a significant slope (and is often very wet) which would hamper any such services from accessing the site – and the nature of the site also causes hazards to attendees.

3. The Prevention of Public Nuisance

Before 1300 hrs on the Saturday the music was very loud – such that my windows were shaking; I tried to ring the reporting line but there was no answer. We then left for the Wallington fete and then went on to London to attend the theatre. On our return at about 2330 hours there were people walking on the roads – singly and in groups. I stopped and picked up one person who was intending to walk to the A505 and then along that road to Baldock; I took him to Baldock (he was a band player from a 'set' at 1800 hrs). There were a number of groups of largely young people milling about Roe Green in the dark – I was told there were no vehicles to return them (to wherever). It seemed to us that the attendees just left in the middle of nowhere having no idea where to go or how to get there. Many of these groups were very loud (especially noticeable as this is a very quiet area). There was also litter left on the Green. The traffic to the event also meant that, at best, the road was often reduced to one lane – at worst the road was blocked.

4. The Protection of Children from Harm

We have no first hand knowledge of threats to children.

We can only reiterate that, in our view, this is a totally unsuitable venue for such events.

Yours,

Richard & Juliet Nall-Cain

Roe Green House

Roe Green

Danyells
Sandon
Buntingford
Herts
SG90RF
18TH February

I write as a resident of Sandon to express my reservations about the scale and scope of the licence for Sandon Fields. The 2018 event showed that this site is unsuitable for an event of this scale and scope. Many of these issues were raised at the Community meeting on 17th July 2018 that PC Ablett attended and so you will have the numerous issues documented. Please incorporate the points raised at the Community event into your deliberations.

Yours Sincerely

James de Uphagh

Dear Ms Sheills

I refer to the application to review the existing Licence for the above property. As a resident of Sandon, I do not believe that Poplars Farm is a suitable location for a music festival and request that the Licence be revoked.

The 2018 event resulted in a significant number of complaints all of which are documented in the minutes from the Post Event Safety Advisory Group meeting, posted on your website. Due to the nature of the location these issues can never be satisfactorily resolved irrespective of what conditions NHDC might impose or how well the event is managed. This year's event is planned for 1 day only, but is still expected to attract 2,000 festival goers. Sandon is not designed to cope with such numbers – it is one of the most rural villages in the county!

Poplars Farm is located in the village, and the event is proposed to be sited on private grazing land behind the residential property, flanked on both sides by other residential properties and facing the village playground and playing fields. Local residents will therefore be significantly adversely affected by noise and public nuisance from traffic, music and festival goers, as they were last year. At last year's event, the wind was in an easterly direction so the bulk of the music noise was carried into the adjoining woods, [REDACTED]. The prevailing wind is normally south westerly/westerly which will have a much greater impact on the rest of the village, if there is a normal weather pattern when the event is proposed in June this year. The minutes refer to the need for an environmental survey to be carried out for 2019 – I would be interested to see the results of this and what measures could possibly be implemented to protect the welfare of, say, [REDACTED].

This is not a local village or community event, some villagers will of course attend, but they will only represent a fraction of the 2,000 numbers proposed. Nor is it primarily a family-oriented event. The concentration of such numbers arriving en masse for the start of the festival and leaving en masse at the end of the evening – and at late at night – will result in traffic congestion on the village roads and noise and disturbance to residents. With congestion comes delay which in turn leads to frustration – all of which will adversely impact on village residents and especially those at Roe Green.

Last year's event showed that, even with a significant police presence and an event management plan in place, it is impossible to run a music festival without causing substantial public nuisance to local residents, given the nature of this particular location.

Yours sincerely,

Mike Ayton
The Six Bells
Sandon
Buntingford
SG9 0QX

From: K.C. and A.P. Chamberlain

4 Dark Lane Sandon Buntingford Herts SG9 0QT

Re: Sandon Field event 2019

This is to object to the granting of the premises licence for the above.

At the very least I ask for modifications and additional conditions to be attached to the existing licence and these to be enforced.

The North Herts District Council (NHDC) website provides details of incidents that breached the 4 key licencing objectives, evidenced by the police at the 'post event safety advisory group meeting held by NHDC.

The amedments I seek are :- 1 day fixed day event [REDACTED],
suggest September, not in June as the licence permits. [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Security fencing along all adjoining property in place a few days before the event and removed immediately afterwards.

The driveway to and from the event to be enlarged to accommodate 2 way traffic.

A staggered egress from the event to ensure that transport arrangements are adequate and thus avoid public disorder.

At the post event meeting held in the Sandon cricket and pavilion attended by residents and the police, the police agreed wholeheartedly that this site in the centre of a tranquil village setting was unsuitable for the event.

Keith and Anne Chamberlain

Dear Hannah. I write in support of the residents of Roe Green, Sandon who were inconvenienced by last two years events at this venue, which resulted in various problems relating to excess noise, disorder and lack of control by the people attending the event going into the night.

[REDACTED]

Finally I hope it be possible to have a satisfactory review to modify and address the previous problems and incidents which have arisen.

Yours etc Mr Nicholas Cottam Millsted Sandon.
Sent from my iPad

Dear Ms Sheills,

I write in support of the residents of Roe Green who were considerably negatively effected in 2017 and 2018 by the Licenced Music Festival held at the above property, and hereby object to the licence being renewed this year.

Although we live a mile away to the South of the site, on the next high ground , we were amazed how loud the sound was even though the music was situated on a slope facing North. Sound can "jump" in certain weather conditions, a Sound Engineer has told us, but some of those nearby on Roe Green (north side) found their houses were shaking with the vibrations at times.

The village playground is opposite the entrance to the site (which incidently has only one track , so no quick access for an ambulance etc.) so not a good place for the heavy traffic before and after the event , big lorries arriving with equipment and taking it away during the week after, as well as cars arriving/departing from the event.

[REDACTED] Some of the closest houses have children, and the Green in front was full of people trying to get home afterwards - the remote site has no public transport and taxis would have to come from Baldock(7 miles), or Buntingford (5 Miles) or Royston (7 Miles). Groups of festival goers ended up walking along the narrow roads towards these towns afterwards as they could not contact transport, all this from Midnight , with no high-viz clothing, and having been drinking and/or taking drugs all evening.

Some would-be attendees without tickets, were able to get in via a large Wood next door, [REDACTED]

Therefore I would endorse the view that the following licensing objectives have been breached on the two previous occasions, and it would be very difficult , on that site, to avoid doing so again.

1. Prevention of crime and disorder
2. Retention of Public Nuisance
3. Public Safety
4. Protection of Children from harm.

Yours sincerely

Anne Cottam
Millsted
Sandon