

**SECRET GARDEN PARTY, ABBOTS RIPTON  
(REPORT BY HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC AND CENTRAL SERVICES)**

**1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 The Committee will be aware that, in recent years, a large open air event under the name of the Secret Garden Party has been held annually at Abbots Ripton. The event requires a premises licence from the Council as the licensing authority under the Licensing Act 2003. Arising from representations from interested parties, the application has necessitated a hearing each year by a Licensing Sub Committee which has usually extended to a full day's duration. As a result of those representations, the licences granted have been subject to various conditions, including a limitation for one year only.
- 2.1 An application submitted in November 2009 for a licence in perpetuity for an annual event has not attracted any representations, either from responsible authorities or interested parties. As a result, the licence has been granted with conditions consistent with the operating schedule that accompanied the application. There will be no further need for the organisers to apply for a licence in future years and the only way in which the licence can now be varied is by application by the organisers or as a result of a review triggered by a representation from a responsible authority or interested party.
- 2.3 Numbers for the event in 2010 have been increased again to the extent that, over the weekend in question, this will become the largest community in terms of population in Huntingdonshire.
- 2.4 Given the scale of the event and the fact that a hearing will no longer be necessary (unless representations are received to an application for a variation or for a review), this report apprises the Committee of the steps that will be taken by the authority to minimise its impact.

**2.0 Previous Events**

- 2.1 The event has grown in scale in successive years from less than 1,000 initially to last year's event when the licence permitted a fee paying attendance of 12,500 and a maximum on site of 17,000.
- 2.2 As the event has grown, the measures taken by the licensing authority in conjunction with responsible authorities and others have similarly become more extensive. For major events of this nature, safety advisory group meetings, chaired by the Licensing Manager, are now held in advance of the event and de-briefing meetings after the event has concluded. The authorities represented at the meetings with the event organisers now include representatives of the licensing section; environmental and community health, police, fire and county council trading standards as responsible authorities; and county council highways and emergency management, NHS ambulance service, Hinchingbrooke Hospital and NHS Cambridgeshire as relevant bodies. Further more specialised meetings are held between representatives of the responsible authorities and companies contracted by the event organisers to deal with issues such as sound management, site security, health care etc.

2.3 In the lead up to the event, officers from the Licensing Section and the Environmental and Community Health Division make regular visits to the site to ensure that the arrangements being made comply with the licence conditions. While the event is taking place, officers from those teams will be on site for a large proportion of the weekend until the early hours of the morning each day. Officers from Cambridgeshire Constabulary will also be on site throughout the event.

2.4 The event itself is well managed and creates relatively little impact on the locality given its scale. Nevertheless as might be expected from an event of this size, issues do arise which are resolved wherever possible by the representatives of the licensing authority and responsible authorities on site and reviewed in the subsequent de-brief meeting. Those dealt with at the de-briefing for the 2009 event can be summarised as –

Traffic Management – queues forming on the highway as vehicles arrived on site which caused traffic congestion locally (to be addressed in the traffic management plan for the 2010 event)

Medical Provision – 49 visits to accident and emergency at Hinchingbrooke, of which 9 were admitted and 2 treated in the intensive care unit (to be addressed in separate discussions between the hospital and the event paramedics to improve medical cover at the event)

Noise – two noise complaints received from members of the public (exacerbated by atmospheric conditions over the weekend)

Security – two arrests on site for anti-social behaviour (security issues to be addressed by improved perimeter fencing, better on site communication links and alterations to the admission arrangements to ensure the effective use of the passive drugs dog)

Food Hygiene and Health & Safety – improvements in hygiene facilities and lifeguarding welcomed (copies of electrical and structural certificates to be provided to environmental and community health staff in future, accident reporting measures to be improved and investigation into the possibility of a food safety consultant to address food hygiene standards)

Police – 49 crimes recorded, 2 of which involved drugs but no disorder and no complaints from local residents (improved police presence at entrances when admissions being made at start of event and better security on site on last day as large numbers had yet to leave).

### **3.0 Permanent Licence**

3.1 The licence granted will be based on the application submitted for the 2010 event for a period of 5 days in each calendar year. The site forms part of and adjoins the grounds of Abbots Ripton Hall with a maximum attendance on site at any one time of 26,000 people of whom no more than 17,000 will be the paying public and guests.

3.2 Six months' notice will be given to the licensing authority and responsible authorities prior to the date of the event each year. The event in 2010 will be held from Thursday, 22<sup>nd</sup> to Monday, 26<sup>th</sup> July inclusive. Licensable activities will take place at varying times throughout that period commencing at noon on 22<sup>nd</sup> and ending at 6.00 a.m. on 26<sup>th</sup> July. Live music will cease at 1.00 a.m. on 23<sup>rd</sup>, 6.00 a.m. on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup>, and midnight on the 25<sup>th</sup>.

3.3 Conditions will be attached to the licence to regulate the hours of the various forms of entertainment, numbers, sound management, site security, police presence, sale of alcohol, drugs control, litter and waste disposal, sanitation, health and safety, water safety, risk management, traffic management, food hygiene and medical care.

3.4 Officers from the Licensing Section and Environmental and Community Health Division will be on site again at the current year's event for most of its duration and will be holding planning and de-briefing meetings with the event organisers and responsible and other relevant organisations.

#### **4.0 Conclusion**

4.1 The Secret Garden Party has become an event of national renown which makes a major contribution to the local economy and local community. It is well managed with good co-operation between the event organisers and the licensing authority and other responsible authorities and relevant bodies. Nevertheless, the event does have an impact on resources within the Democratic & Central Services and Environmental & Community Health Divisions with staff working into the early hours of the morning for the duration of the event.

#### **5.0 Recommendation**

the Committee is invited to note the content of this report.

#### **Background Papers**

Licences previously granted by the Council.  
Application submitted for premises licence in perpetuity.

#### **Contact Person**

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