

**SECRET GARDEN PARTY, ABBOTS RIPTON****(Report by Head of Democratic and Central Services)****1. Introduction**

- 1.1 At the meeting held on 27th January 2010, the Committee was informed that a premises licence had been granted in perpetuity for the Secret Garden Party festival at Abbots Ripton for a period of 5 days each year
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to acquaint the Committee with the festival that took place in July and the issues that have arisen with responsible authorities and interested parties.

**2. Event**

- 2.1 The Secret Garden Party's reputation has grown over the years to such an extent that it was mentioned frequently in the national press over the summer as one of the best outdoor festivals to attend.
- 2.2 The event in 2010 extended from Thursday, 22nd to Monday, 26th July inclusive. Licensable activities took place at varying times throughout that period commencing at noon on 22nd and ending at 6.00 a.m. on 26th July. Live music was permitted until 1.00 a.m. on 23rd, 6.00 a.m. on 24th and 25th, and midnight on the 25th. The total number of people permitted to attend was 26,000 of which 17,000 were paying customers.
- 2.3 Conditions are 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.
- 2.4 Officers from the Democratic & Central Services and Environmental & Community Health Divisions were on site for most of the event's duration and both planning and de-briefing meetings were arranged with the event organisers and responsible and other relevant organisations.

**3. Issues**

- 3.1 A post event safety advisory group meeting took place on 24th August which involved representatives of the District Council (Licensing, Environmental & Community Health and Emergency Planning), County Council (Highways and Emergency Planning), Cambridgeshire Constabulary, Cambridgeshire Fire and Rescue Service and Hinchingsbrooke Hospital, together with representatives of the licence holder, land owner and companies contracted to undertake site security and health care during the event.
- 3.2 The issues that arose at that meeting can be summarised as follows –
  - Criminal Activity – A total of 246 incidents were recorded by the Police which is a significant increase on the 49 recorded at the 2009 event. Of those 80 were for theft, most of which were organised thefts of possessions in tents. One of the group involved was apprehended and considerable property recovered. There were 166 drug and alcohol related offences, notwithstanding strict security and dogs being used at

entrances. Some of the drugs seized were prescription drugs which it was thought was being misused.

- Security – This presented a problem with people climbing over and digging under the security fencing and also manufacturing duplicate wristbands. 800 security staff were engaged of which 148 were SIA trained. Problems occurred with long delays at the entrance on the opening day of the festival when an unexpectedly high number of people arrived as opposed to the more steady stream of arrivals over the first 24 hours which had happened in previous years. Security measures meant that some attendees had to wait up to 5 hours for admission.
- Traffic Management – The traffic management plan worked better than in 2009 with vehicles arriving on site rather than queuing on the highway. Complaints were received of vehicles being parked in neighbouring villages which could have been the result of persons entering the festival illegally and leaving their vehicles elsewhere.
- Health and Safety – A concern was raised about access in an emergency to anyone in need of medical attention in the area fronting the main stage which tended to fill quickly when a band was due to appear. Problems arose with the movement of a pontoon bridge over the lake which had to be closed at times
- Medical Care – 510 people were dealt with by the event paramedics of which 36 were referred to Hinchingsbrooke Hospital. 4 people were admitted, of which 2 cases were drugs/alcohol related. Both the hospital and the event paramedics were satisfied with the arrangements made to treat those in need of assistance. The ambulance service dealt with 7 calls for assistance over the course of the weekend.
- Environmental Health – Concern has been raised over the distribution and quality of the water supply at the event and traces of pathogen related illnesses were found in the water samples from the lake resulting in a few cases of rashes and infections. Various food inspections took place which resulted in 2 vendors being ejected by the licence holder.
- Fire – No problems were reported. All tents/marquees supplied by the licence holder were flame retardant and security staff prevented hazardous materials being brought on site. Although the Chinese lanterns released by the festival were biodegradable, some attendees released their own lanterns with wire frames with a potential to damage to farm machinery, injure animals and enter the food chain if they fell in nearby fields.
- Community Issues – In addition to a complaint about parking in a neighbouring village, it is understood that concerns exist locally on the part of some residents but these have not resulted in letters of complaint. No complaints of noise nuisance were received.

#### **4. 2011 Festival**

- 4.1 The licence holders have indicated that it is not their intention to apply for an increase in numbers at the event in 2011 which will mean that there will be no opportunity for the licence conditions to be revisited unless application is made for a review by one of the responsible authorities or interested persons. No indication has been received that such an application will be made.

- 4.2 That said, the licence holder has indicated his intention to address the issues that have been raised in the post-event safety advisory group meeting and will be working with the appropriate authorities to plan for the festival in 2011.

## **5. Conclusion**

- 5.1 This continues to be a well-managed event with a high degree of co-operation on the part of the licence holder with the licensing authority and responsible authorities. It has become well known on the festival calendar and is enjoyed by both local people and visitors to the District who attend.

- 5.2 The Committee is therefore

### **Recommended**

to note the content of this report.

## **Background Papers**

Current premises licence.  
Notes of safety advisory group meetings.

## **Contact Person**

Roy Reeves, Head of Democratic & Central Service  
Tel: (01480) 388003