

Supplementary Papers for Licensing Sub-Committee

Date: Wednesday, 27 March 2024



7. **Grooves on the Green, Ashley Cross Park, Parkstone, Poole BH14 0ES**

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Supplementary evidence enclosed from the applicant in response to the representation made by the objector.

This matter is brought before the Sub Committee for determination.

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RESPONSE TO OBJECTION

APPLICATION TO VARY PREMISES LICENCE AT GROOVES ON THE GREEN

Dear Ms Rowley,

I refer to your representation for the extension of Grooves on the Green license to Friday 4-9pm, and Saturday until 9pm dated 5th March.

As the main organiser of the event and someone who lives in and has operated businesses in this area for many years I take your concerns very seriously.

Grooves on the Green was established in 2000, and was an event created for the community. Many residents look forward to this community, family event once a year, and even book their holidays around it. Local businesses participate in it, and it increases the revenue for Ashley Cross, and each year we raise money for a local charity. We consider that all the local businesses, shops, restaurants, and bars, alongside Grooves on the Green, have contributed to the popularity of Ashley Cross.

Originally the event was carried out under a Temporary Event Notice which is a simple application for one-off events with little or no conditions attached to control the organisation and safety of the event.

In more recent years, in consultation with Poole Borough Council (now BCP) and Dorset Police it was decided to operate the event each year under a Premises licence under the Licensing Act 2003.

This decision ensures that ALL responsible authorities and interested parties are consulted and can request conditions to be attached to the licence in relation to the Prevention of Crime and Disorder, Public Safety, Prevention of Public Nuisance and Protection of Children from Harm.

Each year since the implementation of the premises licence procedure both Environmental Health and Dorset Police have ensured that the event is run under very strict conditions.

We have taken all your points on board, and will address each of them individually, as it is regrettable you want the event to be discontinued, as we want to make it an enjoyable weekend for everyone.

This little 'green' at Ashley Cross is far too close to residential buildings which surround all 3 sides of the park including a large sheltered housing building for elderly residents. There must be far better suited sites in and around Poole, Bournemouth or Christchurch where people can actually choose to go to a festival if they want to, rather than have it imposed upon them?

Ashley Cross Green, where Grooves on the Green resides, is on a smaller scale to that of the larger parks, which makes it more contained, manageable, and enjoyable for the residents, rather than attracting people from outside the area. It is an event the locals can walk to. The area is not only residential, but it also consists of bars, restaurants and shops that benefit from the event. In the following pages, please find a map of Baiter Park; which has Poole Harbour Festival on - this has a license until 11pm. Also, a map of Christchurch Quay; this has Christchurch Music Festival on with a license until 10pm, and a map of Party in the Paddock – Wimborne that has a license until 11:30am. As you can see at these events, residential properties are close by.

Over the years there has been consideration for moving the event, but the ethos of the event is Ashley Cross, and community, therefore, this event would not be what or where it is today if it wasn't in Ashley Cross.

The fact that a premises licence has been granted over several years after the necessary 28-day consultation period proves that all authorities and other interest parties are satisfied that the operation and attached conditions are suitable for such a venue.

Some 20 years ago, Grooves on the Green started off as a 1 day event finishing at 6pm.....at some point this stretched to 7pm. About 10 years ago the event organiser, Ms Jan Crump, saw an opportunity to double her revenue and applied to increase the event to a full 2 days (Sat & Sun).

The reason the event has increased in duration is due to the events popularity which the purpose of spreading the spread the crowd over a period of 2/3 days. In 2011, when it was a one-day free event with no fencing and tickets, a large amount of people attended, which made it difficult to manage, so in liaison with the council it was agreed for this event to continue the event would be required to be fenced in and ticketed (to control numbers), and to spread the crowd over a longer duration. It costs a substantial amount to put the event on and it takes a lot of organisation, it is an event created not for profit, but for the community. We have a good response from the community, which enables us to continue the event. The local Reverend even makes an appearance to help at the event.

The reason for the increased duration of the event is due to the increased costs of setting up such as event. Increased costs are making it less viable to continue, but by doing this it allows us to continue it. A lot of events of this type are a minimum of 3 days long.

To be honest, it feels more like 5 days because they spend a day erecting noisy clanging, metal fencing which surrounds and cordons off the park to regular users/dog walkers.....then they spend another day, clanging and banging when they dismantle the fence. Where is this ever going to end?

The introduction of the metal fencing was NOT the decision of the organiser but required by both Poole Borough Council and Dorset Police who felt it was necessary to control numbers and ensure the safety of those attending the event.

Residents are permitted onto the green. A letter is sent inviting residents to the event, with free tickets. If any residents wish to walk their dog, all security personnel are briefed to allow residents onto the green during the event.

There is outer sections of the green left for dog walkers, but this year, due to the increased duration of the event, there will be an increased green space for dog walkers outside of the fence line.

The fencing company is professional and do endeavour to put up and dismantle the fence within a short period of time and will take a few hours but not a whole day, and we have not heard of anyone else reporting this noise to be an issue. There is more noticeable clanging of fences when they are on the back of the truck coming to and from the event, which is very short lived, but we will address this with the company and see if this noise can be reduced.

Nuisance and noise factor: The loud booming music all day is too much. You can actually feel the base vibrating in your chest, it can make you feel sick. It is too loud to be able to listen to the radio or tv or even allow you the simple pleasure of enjoying a good book.

As is the requirement of our premises licence we record the sound volumes every hour in 2 locations, to ensure we are keeping to acceptable noise levels, and will adjust the noise levels if

necessary. Sounds recordings have been taken prior to the event, and the noise levels of traffic was louder than the event. We have checked the sound volumes in other commercial and residential properties surrounding the green over the years, and it has not been reported to be alarmingly loud. However, we are more than happy to visit your premises to observe the noise levels, as we can address this by bringing noise levels down to a satisfactory level.

A condition on the license has already been agreed with Environmental Health, should the variation be granted, that a contact number of one of the organisers on site at the event is to be provided for all residents surrounding the green, in order that the residents can liaise with us should they have any concerns during the event.

Criminal damage: Last year at the Grooves on the Green event, someone thought it would be great fun to remove the sign post in the park which read 'Ashley Cross Green'. It remains missing, no one has bothered to replace it. Also, whilst the event has cleaners that tidy the park afterwards, the event organisers do nothing for the state of the immediate local area in the wake of 3 days of mayhem.

Our security personnel and marshals monitor the site and surrounding areas, to ensure that the area is clean, tidy, safe, and controlled at all times. The sign was not ripped off during the event, it would be extremely difficult for someone to do this whilst at our event, as the area where the sign was is where most of the security, marshals, and event staff are positioned, as this is the main entrance. The sign was ripped off prior to our event. We take videos, and pictures of Ashley Cross Green prior to the event – for this reason so we are not liable for damage that has occurred prior to the event. We pay a large deposit to the council to cover for any damage whilst on the green, and they have never had to use it as there has never been any damage from the event since 2000. For example, over the years there has been streetlights hanging down, and a large number of potholes on the green (which is a health and safety risk) and it is addressed with the council. It is frustrating that the sign had been ripped off, and it has been addressed with the council, and they will be replacing the signage in due course.

Since the event has been fenced in, it makes it easier to manage people, in and outside of the event. We have security, marshals and event staff continually monitoring the vicinity. With security being present, this minimises incidents. I keep records of the more recent Grooves on the Greens, and we haven't had one incident of crime and disorder for at least 7+ years. It is so far back it is difficult to recall. This re-iterates the type of people we have at this event.

Our security company are willing to do a report containing such information if that helps reassure you? We keep records from the most recent events, and any substantial incidents are reported to the police who also keep a record. Our security company, alongside Health & Safety advisers for the event, report that there are not many 'community feel good' 'safe' events like this.

Safety factor: As this event draws on, you see more and more people just walking into the road, stopping traffic, they think they are invincible.

Since the event has had fencing, it makes it much more manageable to direct pedestrians safely towards traffic lights and pedestrian crossings that reside in this area. With increased security and marshals ensuring that people move on and off the premises safely it is now controlled better than ever. We never have an influx of people at any one time, they tend to come and go throughout the day, so the increase in time / days allows us to increase pedestrian safety. There is a taxi rank, train station, bus stops, local bars, restaurants and shops, and people tend to disperse in different directions using the crossings in Ashley Cross with no issues.

I certainly do not feel that having this event right in the midst of this built up residential area is safe. I certainly don't feel okay taking my dog for a walk whilst this event is on.

We would like to invite you to the event. Our track record of having no incidents over several years, suggests that it is a safe event, and not something to be considered as being unsafe. Many people bring their dogs and we have never had any issues – pictures attached.

For 3 days, it is like living in the middle of a pub. It is only a matter of time before someone really gets hurt due to drinking and partying all day long. I feel that many people are making a small fortune out of this festival but the ones that really pay the highest price are the immediate, local residents who have to endure this madness every single year. It really is intolerable.

We have residents that look forward to getting their tickets every year and have done for many years. It has been a successful community event because the residents enjoy coming to it.

It is unfortunate that you find it intolerable, as the vast majority of residents attend and enjoy this event. To put on events like this cost a small fortune, and the event contributes to a local charity – which is another reason we continue to do this event.

Since the inception of Grooves on the Green, it has always supported a local charity. In recent years, Grooves on the Green has supported Diverse Abilities, and have raised in the region of £45,000. They have also supported me with my disabled son, so it is a charity that I know well. They return to Grooves on the Green every year, with carers bringing disabled adults to help at this event. If they felt the event was unsafe – they would not come back every year. For some of them, this event is the highlight of their year (pictures attached). The local army cadets also help at the event, and in turn promote their army cadet facility in Parkstone. We also have a high proportion of families at this event, again, if this event was a health and safety risk, these families would not return year after year (pictures attached). We are also happy to get a report from First Aid – stating that we have no incidents / minimal incidents for many years – the most likely incident occurring is a bee sting.

I understand that the 'Party in the Park' event which used Poole Park was shut down because it was too close to residents.....I ask you again to look at the attached photo, we are FAR closer to the festival than residents at Poole Park ever were and yet we are still tormented with this festival year after year. Please put a stop to this.

Party in the Park was an event in Ashley Cross and did not operate in Poole Park. The event, which had totally different organisers did have a lot of complaints on the last year they operated in Ashley Cross, due to noise, anti-social behaviour and litter. Grooves on the Green will only have easy listening, family bands, that are mainly local, with no heavy rock, or dance music so that it ensures that we attract the right crowd. We even have a band that consists of local doctors and a judge, who are coming back for the second year running because they enjoyed playing at the event so much. Following the complaints, Party in the Park had license conditions placed up them, however, this was not the main reason Party in the Park did not continue, it was because of the increasing costs. There was also another event in Ashley Cross in 2022 but they also found the cost of running such an event in Ashley Cross was too high – so did not come back to Ashley Cross.

People turn up at this event laden with their own cool boxes on wheels, stuffed to the brim full of booze.

It is historically known that you could bring your own alcohol to Grooves on the Green when it was a free event, with no fencing, therefore we had less control over it. Now, due to the numerous stringent conditions the event is and has to be safely controlled with fencing, and security and marshals at the entrance and exit points, our customers have known for several years that we do not accept alcohol or picnics to be brought onto the site. If on the odd occasion someone brings alcohol these will be redeemed by security personnel at the entrance. I do not recall any cooler boxes on wheels in recent years, being redeemed by security personnel, so it is unlikely it is someone coming to or from our event.

It is also to be noted that under the Licensing Act 2003 an event such as this has to have several staff who hold the Level 2 Award for personal Licence Holders together with numerous other staff members with documented 'in-house' alcohol training.

By lunchtime most are drunk and falling about and stumbling into the road to get to one of the many bars BCP has granted licenses to in Ashley Cross of which they are now a great many.

At lunchtime our event has only been open for 1 hour. Our staff are fully trained not to serve anyone who appears to be intoxicated. For many years we have not had any issues with drunkenness at our event. However, I have noticed drunken homeless around Ashley Cross, but they are not associated with our event.

They are loud and rude. Many have been seen urinating in the gardens and car park of the sheltered housing for elderly residents. I have personally had to clear the entrance to my own building where someone had thrown up and on another occasion, I had to confront a man that was urinating right in the entrance of my building.

A lot of our customers from Grooves on the Green are residents and look after their area. Some of the success of the area - including the increase in house prices, is because it is a vibrant area, so people want to live in it and enjoy the vibrancy of it. There are many bars and restaurants in Ashley Cross (or even people have been in residential premises drinking) that can contribute to the fact that there is vomiting or urination in residential premises. We have had no issues from Grooves on the Green reported for many years. This is often from late night premises open until 2am or even people drinking at friends and walking home, so we cannot take responsibility for all the incidents occurring when it is only one weekend a year. Grooves on the Green has a substantial number of toilets on the green, to minimise this from occurring.

Clearing up broken glass and picking up half eaten take away food boxes and other rubbish is a given.

We do not have glass or allow glass at Grooves on the Green. We have plastic glasses. We understand your frustrations, but these will not be from Grooves on the Green. Also, we do not allow food to come into or be taken off the site, so this will not be our takeaway boxes.

The crowds become louder and more intimidating as the day grows long extending the hours to 9pm will only worsen our purgatory.

The crowd noise is not reported as being an issue at Grooves on the Green. We have put in the 9pm this year due to increasing costs including set up costs and staff costs etc, as it does allow us to gain more revenue to cover the event costs. Many other events locally operate much later than ours, so we consider 9pm to be reasonable for one weekend a year, with the Sunday being

the usual 7pm. A lot of our customers work in the day, and come later, so this way they can enjoy more of the event with the extended hours.

I would like to add, when this little piece of land was gifted to the council, it was done so on the basis that the land should never be built upon - just as important that it would always remain free and accessible to the general public for their leisure time and for their well being . So how then, does fencing off 100% the park and denying access to anyone who refuses to pay £10, £20 or £30 at their makeshift entrance work? It is quite unlawful to charge people to walk in this park and just as unlawful to deny local people access to this park.....FREE of charge! So who is liable for these breaches,..... BCP council or the events person Ms Jan Crump?

We do not deny any resident entry onto the green during set up or during the event. The security team and marshals are aware of this, and if you would like free entry into the park, you are more than welcome to come along and enjoy this event for one weekend only.

The organisation of Grooves on the Green is a complex operation and is carried out in close liaison with Poole Police, Poole Borough Council and other relevant authorities. By doing this we are able to ensure that all necessary steps are taken to make it a safe and enjoyable event, and to minimise any incidents or disruption.

The cost of the entrance fee covers for the safety measures we have in place, and for the event itself. This includes security, gate staff, marshals, event staff, first aid, firefighting staff and fire fighting equipment, health and safety staff, toilets, fencing, information point and staff for this, dedicated lost children's staff, the infrastructure including the stages, bins, children's entertainment, bands etc. It is an extensive list, and we try to cater for everyone from young to old, so that families are encouraged. Please see attached pictures of Grooves on the Green and crowd.

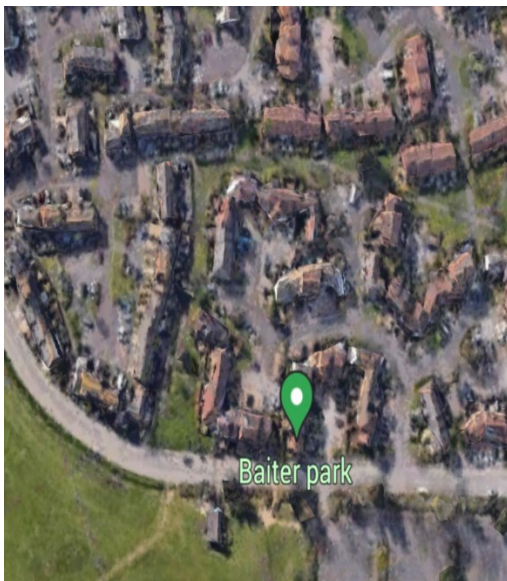
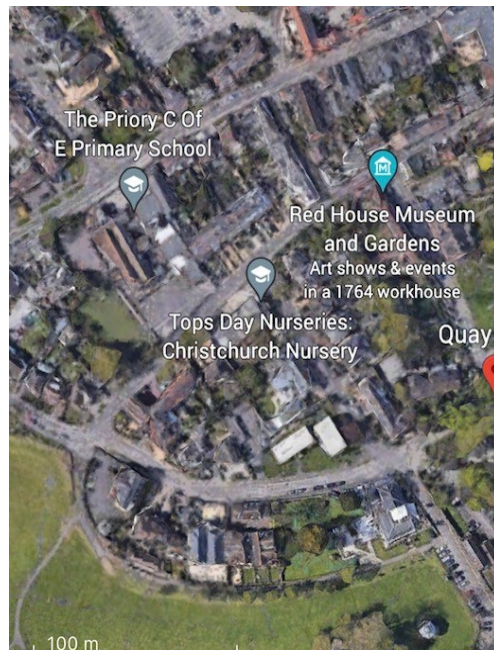
I hope that my comments give you a bit more understanding of the efforts we have taken to ensure that the event operates in a safe and responsible manner giving due consideration to the local residents, many of these decisions in partnership with BCP council and Dorset Police.

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to discuss the matter.

Yours sincerely

Janice Crump

Locations of Nearby Events



Pictures Showing the Wide Demographics of Grooves on the Green – Including Event Staff, Diverse Abilities, Army Cadets, Dogs & Children



