

MEMORANDUM

To:	Supt. Mat Shaer
cc:	Insp. Noeleen Murrin PC Abdool Rohomon PC Ben Reader Cllr Waseem Zaffar Jan Kimber
From:	Jesse Gerald, Chairperson, Simmer Down CIC
Date:	25th May 2017
Subject:	Simmer Down Festival Licence Application

Background:

Simmer Down Festival CIC has applied for a licence to hold a family festival in Handsworth Park on Sunday 23rd July 2017. The organisers have worked closely with Highways, Events Management, Parks and Health and Safety staff at Birmingham City Council to ensure the proposals for the 2017 Festival meet all the necessary requirements in terms of public safety, environmental issues and traffic management. The plans for the 2017 Festival incorporated the issues raised in the de-brief following the 2015 Festival. West Midlands Police have raised a number of additional concerns through the BWC Planning and Licensing Section.

It should be noted that Simmer Down Festival did not take place in 2016. Comments that have been made about 'last year's festival' do not relate to Simmer Down Festival. Jamfest was held in Handsworth Park in 2016. This was not organised by Simmer Down Festival CIC, it is run on a very different basis to Simmer Down and should not be compared to Simmer Down Festival which is a free family festival.

Summary:

The information below provides responses to questions raised by PC Rohomon on 23rd May 2017. This information together with the amended Event Manual is intended to fully cover all the issues raised by PC Rohomon.

1) **Gates on Holly Road**

PC Rohomon's query:

The entrance gates – I have looked at Google maps and can see 3 entrances of Holy Road, only 2 of these are covered within the manual. The ones that are covered have 1 supervisor, 3 security and a steward on them – this is to do searches, counting, and if necessary implement a 1in 1 out policy. What are the widths of these gates and how is it going to be managed, I do not see a barrier plan, and then a potential queue management system.

Response:

Holly Road has two event entrances, the first is the double gates opposite Thornhill Road which is pedestrian only for this year's event, as detailed in the Event Manual.

The second gates are double gates in the middle on Holly Road (these are in between the Thornhill Road entrance and the Leisure Centre entrance) these gates are the reserved entrance/exit point for emergency vehicles only. The gates will be staffed by SIA security and will remain closed at all times, except if emergency vehicles are entering or exiting the site. The smaller pedestrian gate next to the double gates will be kept closed.

The vehicle entrance to the Leisure Centre will be solely for the patrons using the Leisure Centre

who will be the only people allowed through this gate.

As explained elsewhere in the Event Manual, for safety purposes, people entering the park to use the Leisure Centre either in a vehicle or on foot will be counted as attending the event.
(See Pages 37 & 46)

2) Leisure Centre access

PC Rohomon's query:

One of the entrances on Holy Road – is detailed as having a car park entrance for the leisure centre so this would mean vehicles mingling with pedestrians, this needs to be clarified and if it is the case that cars are too allowed into the leisure centre car park how will this be achieved.

Response:

The vehicle entrance to the Leisure Centre will be used solely for the patrons using the leisure centre who will be the only people allowed through this gate. All festival goers approaching from this direction will be directed to the next gate a few metres along Holly Road. The numbers using the Leisure Centre gate will be minimal and there will be no more issues of vehicles and pedestrians 'mingling' than on a normal weekend. This arrangement has been in place for Simmer Down over recent years and there have been no problems.

As explained elsewhere in the Event Manual, for safety purposes, people entering the park to use the Leisure Centre either in a vehicle or on foot will be counted as attending the event.
(See page 46)

3) Barriers on Holly Road

PC Rohomon's query:

I cannot see any detail on vehicle mitigation for Holly Road, which seems to be the main entrance point, are you just putting barriers out or are there other physical measures being implemented?

Response:

Please see the road closure plan that is contained in the Event Manual. The signs, barriers and cones etc, are being provided by Traffix and will be used in accordance with Traffic Regulations. It is not possible or advisable to block off this road with other physical measures as it needs to be accessible for residents who are permit holders, emergency vehicles, and Leisure Centre patrons.
(See pages 51, 52, 53)

4) Width of Entrances

PC Rohomon's query:

The entrances look very wide, there is no mention within the manual on how wide they are, and there is no mention how they will be able to conduct searches as well counting and monitoring flow. I can't see any potential barrier system to help with this and my concern here is that a surge of people will just get in without searching, or counting.

Response:

The specification for barriers and fencing and how and when they will be deployed have been fully detailed in the Event Manual. (See pages 35,36,38,39,40,41.)

It is important to note that this is a family festival held on a Sunday afternoon. It is not a Football Match nor a large Pop Concert. It is also important to realise that the majority of festival goers are from the local community and they arrive on foot or on public transport. There has never been a 'surge' of people arriving and it is highly unlikely this would ever happen at Simmer Down. Searches are carried out if there are reasonable grounds or intelligence has been provided, but this is a family festival and searches have only been necessary on a small number of occasions. The security staff are able to accurately count people entering and leaving using hand-held clickers.

5) Monitoring the number of festival goers

PC Rohomon's query:

The plan for monitoring the numbers I feel needs to be more robust, currently you have stated that the figures will be recorded every hour up to 12,000, in one hour a lot of people could have accessed within an hour and so it could be that you will be above the 12,000 very quickly. I would recommend that they are done every ½ hour, and that increases to 15 minutes after the 12,000 mark. The plan for when you get to 19,999 (although I think this should be done at 18,000 is for a one in one out. There is no plan on how you would do this, what barriers they would need how you would communicate with each other, how you would queue people (do you intend to have just one main entrance point then and close the rest off), there is nothing in the plan. This cannot be implemented when you get to 19,999 as it will take time to sort and so it is likely you will go beyond the 19,999 figure.

Response:

We are happy to accept the recommendation to collate the numbers from the different entrances on a more frequent basis and will adjust the Event Manual to reflect this. All Security staff are in constant radio contact with the Event Control Team. If the breach point is reached and the Event Control Team in conjunction with the Police Commander on duty at that time determine it is necessary to implement a one-in-one-out policy this will be applied simultaneously to all gates. Each gate will apply the one-in-one-out policy as this is fair and transparent to the festival goers waiting to come in. Because of the geography of the park, it would not be practical or desirable to close all entrances/exits except one. This would not facilitate people leaving the site. The barriers that will already be in place will be sufficient to manage the process.

It is important to note that the estimated attendance at any one time is not anticipated to be above 15,000. A licence for 20,000 has been applied for though to allow for some headroom on the advice of West Midlands Police.

(See page 16)

6) Use of Roaming Security Teams

PC Rohomon's query:

You have indicated that the roaming teams would support the gates if needed, there are 6 gates and 6 roaming teams if all had to be shut that would leave no roaming teams inside the park to respond to incidents. Please confirm this and what is the plan for inside the park if all the teams are supporting the gates

Response:

In the nine years that Simmer Down has been in operation there has never been an issue of problems at multiple gates. As explained above (point 5) it is not proposed to close all but one gate should the one-in-one-out policy need to be implemented, and the operation of this would be carried out by the security staff on the individual gates. With due respect, the scenario PC Rohomon describes above is highly unlikely, however should this be the case, the single pedestrian gate 3 on Grove Lane could be locked in the event of incidents at other gates thereby allowing for the redeployment of these staff to assist as necessary at another location.

7) Provison of car parking

PC Rohomon's query:

Car parking – you have catered for 700 cars, the national average for occupancy for events is 2.5 persons per car which works out at 1,750 people out of a potential 15,000 (if we take the mean of expected occupancy). That is a lot of people that will not be catered for and so where will they park.

Response:

The majority of festival goers are from the local community and will walk to the park from the surrounding areas. Our marketing materials are also encouraging people to use public transport. We have also had approval from Handsworth Wood Girls Academy to use the school car park.

(See page 52.)

8) On street parking

PC Rohomon's query:

Street parking, if I remember correctly the event 2 years ago you had paid for the council enforcement team, that did not work 2 years ago and yet it is the same proposal they are recommending this year, so what has changed to make this work this time when it didn't last time?

Response:

As stated in the Event Manual and explained in detail at the SAG meeting, in 2015 we had 2 Parking Enforcement Officers covering Hinstock Road, 1 for Grove lane, and 1 for Hamstead Road. This was the amount recommended by Birmingham City Council. This year we have doubled the provision, there will be 4 Parking Enforcement Officers for Hinstock Road, 2 for Grove lane and 2 for Hamstead Road.

The Parking Enforcement Officers worked extremely hard in 2015 and had a big impact, it is unfair to say 'it didn't work', however the increase in Officers will have a marked impact on traffic management and will particularly benefit the residents in Hinstock Road. Simmer Down is predominantly a local community festival and the organisers have sought to mitigate the impact on local residents as much as possible. The closure of Holly Road (expect for residents) has been effective in the past and the proposed closure of Philip Victor Road is anticipated to not only alleviate traffic problems but also parking problems too.

It is important to note that the suggestion made by PC Rohomon in the past, to close Hinstock Road, has been carefully considered by the organisers. However the advice of Birmingham City Council's District Highways Engineer is that this would put undue pressure on surrounding roads and increase not decrease traffic problems. On the basis of this advice it is not proposed to close Hinstock Road.

(See page 54.)

9) Deployment of Security Staff

PC Rohomon's query:

Security – the plan shows 78 security SIA staff, 16 stewards and a team for road closures. Your license application states there will be 6 security staff from 8/12, 50 from 12/16, 100 from 16/20.30 and then 14 from 20.30/22 (I think the last number has been upped to 20+).

Response:

The deployment plan has now been updated to reflect times on duty.

(See pages 43,44,45.)

10) Deployment of Security Staff

PC Rohomon's query:

The manual does not show 100 security staff – stewards are not classed as security, it does not show also how the staff would get in, how would they park – as another 50 coming at 4pm how will they get there parking etc. That leaves you vulnerable. It says they are all briefed but not when and I don't see how this could be done on the day.

The plan of 78 in the manual does not show what times they would be on from or to, and in that plan they only have 2 as a contingency, this needs to be properly documented in the plan.

Response:

The deployment plan has now been updated to reflect times on duty. It is common practice for some Security Staff to arrive mid-way through an event to take account of higher demand. Transportation to and from the site is managed by the Security Company and all staff attend a briefing before commencing their duties, this is normal practice and has been successfully undertaken in previous years.

(See pages 43,44,45.)

10) Incorrect quotation of legislation

PC Rohomon's query:

You also need to make sure that the manual reflects this event, there is contradiction between what you say in terms of audience numbers and what St Johns have documented, and you also need to make sure that all legislation that is quoted is correct, as you have indicated there is the Public Entertainment (misuse of drugs) there is no such act in force currently as it all sits within the Licensing Act 2003.

Response:

The legislation has been correctly referenced. St John's Ambulance will be providing updated information and this will be inserted as an Appendix to the Second Draft of the Events Manual that accompanies this Memo. This will be provided before the SAG on 1st June 2017. As is normal practice, the Final Events Manual will be prepared three weeks before the event and will contain the updated information, from St John Ambulance, any additional recommendations following the SAG, the full plan of stall-holders and any additional requirements recommended by the Police in the light of the tragedy in Manchester.