

Halloween and Bonfire events

We need to look at fact and what can and cannot be done by the Parish Council.

The traffic problem and the state of the roads in and around Heather. This is a County

Council matter and should be referred to the County Council. As for the state of the roads at the weekend of the fireworks I feel the police could/should have helped. I did try to get

through to them but I was number goodness knows what in the queue, as was Virge when

he tried.

The environmental problems, lights on till late, music etc. This is a District matter and that is

where complaints should be referred. I live very close to the Crown public house and I do

not hear the music from there, mostly not a problem. I could hear music from this event at

home, I understand that the music could be heard in Swannington. That is information which

comes to me from the Council offices, an officer in the Licensing department told me this

last week.

It may seem that we, the council, are not prepared to help and unwilling to do anything. This

is not true we have made representation, following complaints, to both the County and

District Councils. And I encourage you to do the same. I have heard the word petition

mentioned. No do not start a petition. One petition is one complaint despite the fact that

there may be 1000 signatures to it. It is still one complaint. 100 letters have more clout.

Write to the County Highways department and environment/licensing at district level.

But what can we do? Let us look at The Licensing Objectives because I think the answer as to

what can be done lies there. There are four objectives

1) The prevention of crime and disorder

2) The protection of children from harm

3) The prevention of Public Nuisance

4) Public Safety.

The last two are where you/we can complain and raise objections to events with the

Council.

Public nuisance. The noise of the music, Traffic congestion and disruption to peoples

lives. Over an hour to get through the village. We all know the trouble the traffic caused,

disruption to lives. Think about all the particulates which descended on the village from

all the stationary traffic with engines running. PM2.5 is a particular dangerous emission

from vehicles. I wish we could have measured the pollutants as I am certain that whilst

queuing the levels of PM2.5 would be exceedingly high. Residents unable to get in and

out of their own drives. I could go on, but you all know from the complaints we have had

just how much annoyance and anger has been generated by the traffic.

As we know very often the busiest night for the Fire and Rescue Service is November the

5th. How an ambulance or fire brigade appliance would have coped with the traffic is

something we cannot answer. Thankfully the need for the emergency services to come

through the village did not arise. However this has to be considered when Cattows'

licence is reviewed. Another aspect of Public Safety is people, families, walking up Normanton Lane the dark where there is no pavement. People dumped their cars anywhere and walked. This is a major safety issue.

Drivers not attending the event but nonetheless stuck in the traffic were turning round in the roads and speeding off away from the village. Drivers were obviously angry and this was shown in the aggressive, bad tempered driving to get away from Heather.

It is no good the holder of the Licence saying the problems caused were not their problem, it is down to the event organiser. Wrong. The problems were and are the responsibility of the holder of the licence. Just the same as if a barman serves an under 18 year old, it is the holder of the licence who is responsible.

What can be done?

We can ask for a review of the licence. To get a review there has to be solid evidence of problems and importantly complaints have to be logged by both District and County. Cattoes have the licence for the licensing part of any event and as such are fully responsible as a landlord in a public house is responsible if one of the bar staff serves under 18s. But and this is big but it is highly unlikely that a review would lead to a loss of licence for the simple reason that the licensing team had not had a single complaint when I spoke to the last week.

The organisers of Glastonbury pay very good compensation to the local residents whose lives are disrupted by the event.

We could ask that a very substantial sum of money be paid into the Parish Council to benefit the village as a whole. The sum I have going round in my head is £5,000 per event.

A balance has to be achieved and by that I mean the residents of Heather have to have an acceptable environment and quality of life.