

Licensing Application 113402

Prosecco in the Park, Christchurch Meadows

Dated 27-May-2019

Objection on behalf of the Caversham and District Residents Association (CADRA)

INTRODUCTION

CADRA notes that Arena Sports Live Limited are seeking to hold an annual event during August for 5000 people, in Christchurch Meadows. While there is no objection in principle to such an event, from the information provided we have concerns about how the event will be managed in order to prevent crime and disorder, ensure public safety and prevent public nuisance. The very mixed reviews from previous events do not inspire confidence.

An event of this scale requires experienced, proven management to maintain safety and security, both within the site and the surrounding area. It requires substantial advance planning in conjunction with other agencies. However, the applicant has only stated very broad and high-level objectives and does not provide specific numbers, so it is hard to judge how effectively they can manage the event.

Christchurch Meadows is a very well used public facility, particularly in school holidays, with residential properties on its perimeter. The applicant should ensure that local people and other members of the public, who are not attending the event will still be able to enjoy the existing facilities of Christchurch Meadows and its surroundings, and that damage to the park and grass surface does not spoil future enjoyment.

OBJECTIONS

CADRA's specific comments relate to the Operating Schedule and the four Licensing Objectives of the application as follows:

Operating Schedule

The application states that the "Operating days would be 2, events days would be 3". It is not clear what this means. It seems to imply that two days are required to set up and clear up the site. We question whether this is realistic. The applicant should commit to all costs associated with restoring the site to its original condition.

The application is for holding an annual event, between May and September. Whilst the license is requested from the 8 August 2019, the specific date for this year has not been provided, although the event is advertised as 9 August. Given the run up to Reading Festival, the precise date is important. We favour a license limited to one year for a new untried event of this scale.

The prevention of public nuisance

- 1) There is no assessment of how people will flow to and from the site, or the impact on local roads and parking by event traffic. As this is a family event people will want to park close to the event. These issues require very careful advance planning and take account of the experience from other large events. Inadequate provision will cause substantial public nuisance with traffic congestion and parking in residential areas. There is the additional concern that this may overlap with the additional traffic and heavy vehicles as part of preparation for Reading Festival.
- 2) There are no figures for the expected sound levels, so it is difficult to judge how it will impact residents and others using the park: - specifically the cinema sound, but also the bar areas and general noise.

- 3) The applicant has not addressed how they will safeguard, the grass area on and around the event, from damage or reinstate it afterwards. Such damage has been a problem in the past at similar events.
- 4) There is no explanation of the site clean-up. Litter around a festival site is a well-recognised issue. There is no provision for measures to deal with this or prevent litter from entering the river.

The protection of children from harm

A summer event is likely to have children of all ages present until the evening. 15+ Rated films are to be shown from 17:00, which is early. Simply publishing the films and announcing the age rating is insufficient to prevent young children being exposed to adult material.

CONCLUSION

Events of this scale and in such a location require expertise, experience and careful planning. The nature and scale of the organisation, as shown at Companies House, gives no indication of adequate capacity within the organisation for the required expertise and experience, and reviews of previous events elsewhere do not inspire confidence.

Careful liaison with statutory agencies and local groups is needed, so that the lessons learned elsewhere in relation to safety and prevention of nuisance can be identified and appropriate measures put in place. Without these measures in place, the application should not be granted.

27 May 2019