

Somerset Council
Scrutiny Committee
– Communities 13th December 2023



Licence Monitoring De-brief Report - Glastonbury Festival 2023

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1. Summary

1.1. This de-brief document is an informative report for the Communities Scrutiny Committee about Regulatory Services monitoring of conditions covered by the Glastonbury Festival Premises Licence (PRL767). The Licence was originally issued by Mendip District Council, as the Licensing Authority at the time of grant, and remains valid for Somerset Council. Additionally, the report reviews matters related to the other statutory duties undertaken by Regulatory Services within Somerset Council. This report comprises an overview of the work carried out by the Council and a summary of compliance with the licensing objectives and other statutory requirements. Included also is:

- Appendix 1 - Feedback on the 2022 Recommendations
- Appendix 2 - Officer Recommendations for 2024

The monitoring duties undertaken by officers of Somerset Council cover the following areas:

- Alcohol, Bars and Taxi Provision
- Camping
- Crowd Monitoring
- Food Hygiene
- Health & Safety and Structure Safety
- Nuisance Prevention - Noise Control, Pilton Village & Surrounds
- Sanitation
- Security
- Taxi Rank
- Water Supply
- Waste & Sustainability

Note: Work activities undertaken by The Libraries Service, Public Health, Highways, Trading Standards and Civil Contingencies are outside the scope of this report.

1.2. Link to [Council Plan](#) - *A Flourishing and Resilient Somerset* working with business to bring innovation and investment into Somerset.

- 1.3.** The cost of the planning and monitoring carried out by Somerset Council staff is partly offset by an annual licence fee of £32,350 plus any additional ancillary licensing fees. Unfortunately, the licence is a statutory fee and is not based on the actual costs committed to resource the process. Other statutory duties undertaken by the Council in connection with the event are not offset by the licencing income, but the impact is greatly reduced as Glastonbury Festival Events Limited (GFEL) now undertake equivalent compliance checks as agreed by the Event Management Plan (EMP). Somerset officers in the main now only audit the work of GFEL to ensure standards are being met and the EMP is being followed. Staffing costs budgeted at circa £28,500 make up most of the costs with an additional £8,700 spend on equipment and vehicle hire.

The event though brings revenue to the area through charity donations, tourism, and employment.

Work will be undertaken in the run up to the 2024 event to review costs and identify areas where efficiencies can be made in monitoring the event and any efficiencies as result of operating as Somerset Council.

2. Issues for consideration / Recommendations

- 2.1.** Scrutiny Committee is asked to:

1. Note the report.
2. Support the officer recommendations.
3. Request a written response to the recommendations from the Licensee.

3. Background

- 3.1.** The Glastonbury Festival Premises Licence authorises one event per calendar year that allows access to public ticket holders for no more than 6 days. A new licence was applied for in 2018 which increased the attendance from 203,000 to 210,000. These figures include all public weekend tickets and Sunday-only tickets for those who are 13 years old or above, as well as staff, volunteers, complimentary and performer passes. Despite the increased numbers being agreed in 2018 there was no increase in attendees in 2019 as attendance remained at 203,000. In preparation for the 2020 event GFEL expressed a desire to raise numbers to the full capacity of the licence, however, due to the COVID Pandemic neither the 2020 nor 2021 event took place.

In December 2021 GFEL submitted plans for the 2022 event and again requested an increase in number to the maximum 210,000 attendees as per the licence. Authority for this increase was dependant on amendments to the Event Management Plans and the Licensing Authority and Responsible Authorities being satisfied the proposals met the Licensing Objectives. The increase was formally agreed in May 2022. There was no change in the capacity for the 2023 event.

When considering a licence, the Licensing Authority, has to ensure that the four Licensing objectives are promoted in the decision-making process. These objectives are as follows:

- **Prevention of crime and disorder**
- **Public safety**
- **Prevention of public nuisance**
- **Protection of children from harm**

On issue of the Licence there is an obligation on the part of the Licensee that they will promote the Licensing Objectives in the way that the event is managed. Therefore, the primary aim of the Licensing Authority relates to the issuing, monitoring and, if required, enforcement of the Premises Licence Conditions.

- 3.2.** This licence comprises an Operating Schedule (OS), which, states the manner in which the applicant will promote the licensing objectives (and in effect sets out the conditions of the Premises Licence). The conditions of licence are not subject to change without the submission, and approval by the Licensing Authority, of a variation or minor variation to the original application.

Supporting the OS is an Event Management Plan (EMP). This describes how the event organiser will comply with the conditions of the Operating Schedule. To balance the requirements of the Licensing Authority, Responsible Authorities, and the event organiser, the EMP can be varied to a degree, for each event to enable continuous improvement. However, the EMP and associated documentation must be deemed satisfactorily submitted by the Licensing Authority and the other Responsible Authorities prior to each event commencing.

- 3.3.** As part of the event planning GFEL submitted a minor variation prior to the 2023 event to include rewording of Conditions PN3 and PN6 which related to Low Frequency Noise measures that contribute to tackling off site noise effects after main venue curfews. This was accepted by the Licensing Team following consultation with the Environmental Protection team and the Licence amended.
- 3.4.** The EMP was submitted as detailed by the OS and this, plus associated documents, were scrutinised by members of the Multi-Agency Partnership (MAP).

Membership of the MAP comprises experienced and competent representatives from the following and is chaired by the Service Director of Regulatory and Operational Services.

- Glastonbury Festival Events Limited (GFEL)
- Somerset Council (Environmental Health and Licensing)*
- Avon and Somerset Constabulary*
- Devon and Somerset Fire & Rescue Service*
- Heart of the South West Trading Standards Service*
- South Western Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust
- NHS England South West
- UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA)
- Somerset Council – Civil Contingencies Unit
- Somerset Council – Public Health*

- Somerset Council – Traffic Management
- Somerset Council – Children’s Social Care*
- Festival Medical Services

* ‘Designated as Responsible Authorities’ under the Licensing Act 2003

Others: *By invitation or by topic:-*

- Security Industry Authority
- Somerset Council – Lead Local Flood Authority
- Environment Agency
- Health and Safety Executive

By early June all EMP and supporting documents had been presented to the Multi Agency Partnership (MAP), scrutinised and formally accepted as relevant submissions in accordance with the conditions of the licence. This was confirmed in writing by the Licensing Authority.

Thanks must also go to those representatives of all the organisations involved for their assistance and continued support as the co-operation between the multi-agency partners is very important and along with GFEL it is recognised that as agencies we must all seek continual improvement.

4. Report – Event Monitoring in 2023

- 4.1.** Glastonbury Festival has a worldwide reputation and as such this means that the Council as Licensing Authority and other relevant officers of the Council have a huge responsibility scrutinising the management plans, auditing and then monitoring the event to ensure compliance with the licence, the licensing objectives and other regulations.

As in previous years there are many officers involved with the planning and monitoring of the Festival. The majority of the work is undertaken by the Environmental Health and Licensing team but there is the need for significant support from other areas of the Council, including enforcement officers, Media Liaison, Corporate Support, Fleet Maintenance and Transport, Legal and Democratic Services. Thanks must be extended to all the Council officers for their commitment to the operation, with many of them working very unsociable hours and under conditions far removed from a normal working environment. In addition, notwithstanding the unfamiliar working hours and environment they are expected to conduct themselves with professionalism.

Although we utilise as many professional staff as possible from within the authority we rely heavily on help and assistance from volunteer Environmental Health Officers and Licensing Officers from across Somerset, some other Local Authorities and more general volunteers, they are remunerated for expenses only. This year we encouraged the shadowing, volunteering and onboarding of colleagues from across the County as we became one Somerset Council in April. GFEL supported us to achieve this and on behalf of the staff of Somerset gratitude is extended to all the volunteers for their assistance.

- 4.2.** The Glastonbury Festival was once again well planned and managed, and the majority of recommendations made by officers after the 2022 event were acted upon (see summary in Appendix 1). Work with regards to noise after the main stages close and crowd distribution continues to be work in progress and remain the priority for continual improvement in 2024. See full Recommendations for 2024 in Appendix 2.

The priority improvements requested after the 2022 debrief exercise were:

a. Further exploration of measures or restrictions to help address excessive loudness and low frequency noise.

The pre-planning liaison for the 2023 event focussed on gaining a better understanding of the evening and night-time noise environment and in particular for GFEL to gain a stronger comprehension of low frequency noise (LFN) generation and their endeavours to minimise offsite impacts. The minor variation was applied for and granted as part of this process. To further assist in controlling overall sound energy, including LFN offsite, GFEL's consultant developed an acoustic model of the Glastonbury festival site, to enable predictions of noise propagation for the 2023 event for both day and night operations. For the 2023 event to achieve suitable management of LFN after curfew of the main venues, the consultant established a stepped reduction of the LFN output of sound systems, at the 63 Hz 1/3 Octave band and all frequencies below, to facilitate the audible and discernible requirement of the festivals licence. This took the form of a **stepped** 6 decibel reduction in frequency bands focused on arenas that drive offsite LFN levels.

b. A strategy to ensure that the densities within the staff/performer camping areas are followed to prevent the risk of fire and reduce the conflict between vehicles and tents.

A review of staff / performer campsites was undertaken to assess available space with specific areas identified for improvement. Actions taken by GFEL include recruitment of additional campsite management staff and making alterations to campsite boundaries / layouts where appropriate. Removal of vehicles in camping areas and designated vehicle routes was undertaken where appropriate.

c. Exploring improvements to crowd distribution across the site.

Williams Green was removed and replaced with Car Henge this year. The crowds that were previously drawn to this area were reduced in numbers and the open plan of the area created a comfortable space for members of the public to view the structures and sit down.

The improvements to the ingress and egress to Arcadia showed a marked improvement. An audit was carried out on the plans in place for a popular artist playing at Arcadia and monitored during the lead up, the performance and the egress from the area and this was found to be accurate and well managed.

The removal of camping at Rowmead and the new pathway behind this area improved the flow of the crowd and created more space for the Pyramid stage crowds.

The redesign and promotion of Silver Hayes was a success, with the venues and the scale of the artists holding crowds in this area, which benefitted crowd movement in other areas across the site.

4.3. Fatality Statistics

A request was made after the 2019 Scrutiny Report that the report be open and transparent and acknowledge any deaths that occur during the Festival period. For 2023 there were two recorded deaths, although tragic, they were not related to the Licensing or work place activities.

4.4. External Campsites

External campsites do not need to be licensed in the same way as The Festival so the Council along with other agencies are unable to limit their number. These sites are organised independently of the festival and place an additional demand on regulatory agency resources which are not offset against any fee income. GFEL have funded a resource who undertook limited liaison with the private campsite organisers to establish safe access for ticket holders, but Somerset Council will need to put additional resource into ensuring these campsites are compliant and do not cause nuisance to local communities in 2024.

This year there were 29 campsites.

Sustainability

In addition to the focus on minimising waste it is hoped that use of fossil fuels can be decreased year on year, by continuing to improve energy efficiency, reduce generator demand, increasing use of renewables and by reviewing the availability of local suppliers and contractors.

5. Summary

- 5.1.** The GFEL management team and all the multi-agency partner organisations should be commended for the hard work put into the planning and delivering a safe event and the commitment they show to continually improve.

With the intention of driving continual improvement, GFEL are required to consider the officer recommendations summarised in Appendix 2 and to also focus on:

- a) **Continue and further develop the measures or restrictions to help address excessive loudness and low frequency noise.**

The management of noise and nuisance impacts for such a large diverse event as the Glastonbury Festival is a complex and challenging task. Through the considerable experience of GFEL, many aspects were well managed in 2023. Music noise impacts did not spill over beyond the 5-day event period. Somerset Councils operation worked well and the liaison arrangements with Glastonbury Festival and their appointed consultant was constructive and effective. However, it should be observed that the positive gains intended and expected, did not unfortunately, in the council officer's

opinion, come to fruition as a perceived reduction of acoustic energy offsite. Further perceived low frequency sound energy remains dominant over other metrics, at times, following curfew and into the late-night entertainment period.

Concern remains that reliance on the existing late night noise condition to promote the licensing objective (after main stage curfew) is not wholly adequate, and additional measures ought to be identified and agreed to help minimise the potential of late-night music noise to adversely affect residents, whether situated nearby or further afield.

b) Crowd distribution.

Glastonbury should develop a communications plan to better inform ticket holders on crowd flows in popular areas and a policy on the use of chairs in high-capacity crowds.

6. Implications

- 6.1.** There are no implications from this report. Scrutiny members are asked to note the information support the officer recommendations and request a written response to the recommendations from the Licensee.

7. Background papers

- 7.1.** The information within this paper has been taken from the individual lead officer summary reports of monitoring the Glastonbury Festival in 2023. For sight of individual background papers please contact the report author.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Feedback on Officer Recommendations from 2022

Appendix 2 – Officer Recommendations for 2024