

Scrutiny Committee – Communities – 30th October 2024 – Public Questions

Name of person submitting	Annexe A – Public Questions Question
Nick Hall	<p>My name is Nick Hall. Although I am a Pilton Parish Councillor, I am making this statement in a personal capacity.</p> <p>A. Comments and Questions on Glastonbury Festival Debrief Report (Oct 2024)</p> <p>As this report was only made available to the public on 22 Oct 2024, there has been limited time to prepare comments and questions ahead of the 5pm deadline on 24 Oct 2024.</p> <p>It is a good step forward to have a single Debrief Report which brings together the activities of Traffic Management Team, Public Health and Civil Contingencies with those of Licensing and Environmental Health. Does this mean that questions on all Glastonbury Festival activities can now be addressed to this Scrutiny Committee?</p> <p>Sections 4.4 to 4.6 describe the obligations and process by which the Licensee, GFEL, promotes the Licensing objectives and complies with the Premises License. GFEL prepares an Event Management Plan (EMP) which is “deemed satisfactorily submitted by the Licensing Authority”. What is the process by which Somerset Council signs off the sections of the EMP reflecting ‘Prevention of Public Nuisance’? Has the Licensing Authority consulted our community, Parish Council or even our Division Member on the effectiveness of the EMP with respect to the impact on our community?</p> <p>Given the woefully small License fee and the pressure on Council budgets it is not surprising that cost reductions have been sought. The Council should be congratulated on making some genuine cost saving. However is this evidence of a new ‘light touch regulatory environment? Should we be concerned about the ceasing of some monitoring functions? What has been stopped? Can these resources be re-directed into other areas such as overnight noise monitoring?</p>

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Section 7.2 refers to “some minor areas of improvement/advice...to GFEL”. Please can you provide further details of these areas and what GFEL has done to address them?

Section 7.3 states that there was a significant decrease in noise complaints when compared to 2023. That is not the experience of residents in Pilton. Noise limits were breached on Thursday evening and overnight (after the midnight curfew). Please can you provide details of the noise complaints for 2023 and 2024?

Why is there no reference to the noise nuisance (and risk) from the helicopters and the helicopter landing sites (HLS) that serviced the Festival? I counted 50 helicopters on the morning of Monday 1st July. It was reported that 85 helicopters landed on the Saturday. Why weren't helicopters and their associated landing sites considered as part of the recent planning permission? Why doesn't the EMP refer to helicopters? More importantly why hasn't there been consultation with the parishes around the Festival site ahead of the growth of this mode of transport to the Festival? Perhaps the Traffic Management team needs to include helicopters in their statement about 'Method of Arrival'?

Given the breaches of noise limits the statement in 8.1 rings hollow. You can only identify breaches if activities are monitored and measured. If Somerset Council won't or can't monitor overnight noise, then I can only assume that a third party needs to do it in 2025?

Regarding the work of the Traffic Management Team:

- As already indicated there needs to be greater involvement from SC's Traffic Management in consulting the communities around the Festival site before they approve the TMP.
- It is a valuable initiative to conduct vehicle volume counts on Pylle Road and Copse Lane. It is the intention of SC to share with information with our community?

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The 2023 Debrief report, presented to the Scrutiny committee in December 2023, made three recommendations on nuisance prevention:

6.1 “Continue to invest in the work on the communications plan with GFEL/SC Liaison for intercepting and management of complaints”

6.2 “SC to continue the vital work with the audit monitoring arrangements that allow for officers to assess the event and address legitimate complaints during night-time hours....”

6.3 “SC to explore with GFEL potential proactive further measures or restrictions to help address excessive loudness and low frequency noise where it may cause adverse impact on the community.”

Please can we have a progress report on these recommendations?

Also there don't seem to be any recommendations for the 2025 Festival and yet the Council's mantra is “continuous improvement”. Does the Council believe everything is satisfactory?

Why is there no reference to Off-site campsites/events some of which only exist because they receive guaranteed tickets from GFEL? Last year's debrief report stated that additional Council resources are required to prevent nuisances to our community. Were additional resources deployed? Will Somerset Council take responsibility for the cumulative effect from these campsites/events which only pay £24 for a Temporary Event Notice?

Why is no discussion about the effectiveness of Community Consultation when clearly there has been feedback that the present model is broken and not fit-for-purpose?

B. Moving to a Fit-for-purpose Community Consultation model

The present model is GFEL led. GFEL are selective in the feedback they consider to the point where dissenting voices are put down. Their meeting notes are one-sided and not open to comment. Even if actions are agreed they are not tracked to completion. Somerset Council and other agencies are reactive.

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An updated and fit-for-purpose Community Consultation model is now long overdue because:

- Since the 2018 License approval the number adults on the site has increased to 210,000;
- There has been a growth in offsite campsites/events;
- Increased likelihood of virus epidemics;
- Emergence of Live Nation as the event organiser;
- Expansion of the festival site under the 2023 Planning Approval;
- Somerset Council now responsible for all aspects of the Festival;

It is clear that communities close to other Festival sites have similar problems with Festival operators including Live Nation. Has Somerset Council approached other relevant councils to find out what is best practice for community consultation?

One effective solution might be to have Somerset Council led Community meetings which would offer:

- An independent Chair
- Accurate minutes
- Action tracking
- Real dialogue based on building mutual trust
- Meaningful input from SC officers and other key agencies.

GFEL (and Live Nation) will resist any consideration of a new model for fear of losing control. Everyone, including GFEL, will benefit from a fit-for-purpose community consultation model.

We believe that the onus is on Somerset Council to replace the existing model. Please can this Scrutiny Committee assist in guiding this process of change so that community relationships are placed on a stronger and sustainable footing?