

STRONGER COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE

Date: Monday 16th March 2020

Title: **Third Party Events:** Upcoming Events & Leys Events – Specific Terms & Condition

Contact Officer: Operations & Estates Officer – John Hickman

BACKGROUND

The purpose of this is to

1. consider some supplementary, temporary changes (and reaffirm particular conditions of hire) to the agreed hire terms & conditions in light of concerns raised by residents of neighbouring properties to the Leys Recreation Ground following the Council's decision to allocate the Sainsbury's side of the Leys as an events field,
2. received an update on the current position on third party events being held on WTC property 2020/21
3. and consider two further requests for events on Council land.

Current situation

The Council currently has 5 in number of events on the Leys for 2020-21 with 1 waiting for confirmation. There are currently no plans to increase the number of events on the site and any new requests will be considered on a case by case basis per the agreed terms and conditions.

Council should be mindful of the types of events that it holds on the Leys in the future and how it can allay concerns of residents. Members may wish to consider supplementary specific restrictions in the agreed terms and conditions which must be adhered to without exception.

Additional/Temporary Specific Restrictions in Agreed Terms and Conditions

In recent years Council Policy (detailed in the Hirers Terms & Conditions) on events at the Leys has been changed every year, and on occasions twice in under 6 months; also Council has

overturned Committee recommendations, as Council has each time tried to address issues/requests/complaints received from organisers.

It has become apparent, that particularly with the success of the Witney Music Festival, residents are becoming very concerned and anxious about the events on the Leys and the Council's recent policy that this area is now designated as an events field. Going forward Members need to be mindful of the impact on the neighbouring properties and their quiet enjoyment of their surroundings so not to impact on their wellbeing. Several complaint letters have been sent to the Leader of the Council, which the Town Clerk is dealing with under the Council's complaints procedures. Part of this report and any resultant recommendations will form part of her investigation and response to the residents.

Members will be aware that the current events policy (which was agreed in consultation with organisers) has only just been agreed by Council on 10th February 20 with new policies having just been sent to all event organisers. Council Standing Orders state that decisions cannot be overturned within 6 months, unless the procedure is invoked to do so. However, given the residents' complaints Officers require this Committee to consider the impact of the decision previously taken has had and sets additional policy in order to address their concerns and give clear direction on what "events on the Leys Recreation Ground" means. It may mean agreeing supplementary specific restrictions in the agreed terms and conditions which must be adhered to without exception.

Allowing event organisers to deviate from the Council's terms and conditions is an unworkable situation going forward because of the affect it has on relationships as well as the impact on Officer time. Also as there are only 6 cycles of meetings and often the requests/issues are last minute, doesn't allow for referral back to Committee causing more issues and angst. This Council needs to ensure that the Policy is robust and is adhered to.

SUPPLEMENTARY & AFFIRMATION OF EXISTING TERMS AND CONDITIONS

Officers suggest the following be considered to formulate policy:

- All medium to large size events should be referred to this committee,
- Restricting the number total of specific types of events held on the Leys site throughout the year
- The Council purchases its own decibel meter and Officers of the Council monitor the noise levels at events – *this would have a resource implication*
- All events were originally required to end at 22:00hrs members should consider reverting back to this for all events on council owned land; OR
- Re-affirming in current terms and conditions that all events finish at 23:00hrs and there are no exceptions – this does not permit after parties etc

- A clear definition of what additional events can be held and what is to be considered as a medium to large event.
- The main stage for all music events to be positioned at the St Marys church end of the field with stage front facing the bottom of the field and the trading Estate.
- No after event parties, the event must end at the policy finish time all attendees and organisers must clear the site by 30 minutes after finish time unless involved in the end of event take down process.
- All organisers letter drops and advertising to direct all noise complaints to WTC by use of email address or WTC Officer monitoring noise levels Mobile contact number -*this would have a resource implication.*
- WTC to carry out own letter drop for each event 2 weeks prior to event, advising of the event and directing all noise complaints direct to WTC.

Members may have additional points to add in aso.

UPDATE ON SCHEDULED EVENTS:

A. MAY FAIR

Hatwells fun fairs have made their application to run this year's May fair on the Leys Recreation Ground Events Field arriving on site from late evening on 10th May 20 with the Fair opening on Wednesday 13th May 20 closing on Sunday 17th May 20 and leaving site by midday on Monday 18th May 20. An annual charge of £1,500 is made for this event. Plus, a £1,000 damages deposit.

B. PAINT RUN

This event is being held at West Witney Sports Ground by West Witney Primary School Nursery PTA on 17th May 20 09:00 – 14:00. A charge of £140 is being made for this event.

C. WITNEY MUSIC FESTIVAL 2020

The Witney Music Festival dates this year are expected to be 10th June 20 until Tuesday 15th June 20 however an event application and full deposit is still to be received from the WMF.

D. LIBFEST 2020

An application has been made for LibFest 2020 Friday 26th June 20 until Monday 28th June with the event itself on Saturday 27th June 20.

E. WITNEY CARNIVAL 2020

An application has been received from Witney Carnival 20 to hold the Carnival on from 16:00 on Friday 10th July 20 to 19:00 Saturday 11th July 20. The event itself would be held on the Leys recreation Ground. In previous years the Leys would be handed over to the organisers at 08:30 on the Friday and handed back to WTC on the Monday at 09:00, even then artists would

arrive on the Leys on the Thursday night and some of the equipment did not get removed from site until after 09:00 hand back to WTC on the Monday.

The Leys will need to be handed over to the Carnival organisers as previous years with artists not arriving before 09:00 on the Friday and the Leys not being accepted back until all the equipment used at the event including skips temporary toilets and litter bins have been cleared from the field.

Witney Carnival has by tradition held a Donkey Derby and Donkey Rides, council's current policy states no animal performances. Members should consider if it is appropriate to still allow this type of attraction to continue. All animal Donkey welfare groups would not endorse Donkey Rides and Donkey Derby's.

F. OXFORDSHIRE PLAYING FIELD ASSOCIATION PLAY DAY

The Witney Play day run by the Oxfordshire Playing Fields Association will be held on Oxlease Field this year on Thursday 6th August.

G. WITNEY FEAST 2020

Application form still to be received for this event. The Fair is expected to start to arrive on sight on Tuesday 8th September 20 approx. 12:00, the fair is expected to leave by Thursday 17th September 20 09:00. The fair is expected to operate on Monday 14th September 20 and 15th September 20 but does have the option to run on the Saturday the 12th September provided they pay an additional charge of £500.

Witney Feast is charged £1,000 deposit, £8,000 ground Rent with an additional £500 if they operate on the Sunday as well.

EVENT REQUESTS FOR CONSIDERATION:

A. WITNEY PRIDE 2020

Members are asked to consider an application has been received from Witney Pride to hold a picnic on the Leys Recreation Ground Events Field on Saturday 25th July 20 from 12:00 until 19:00, a charge of £160 has been agreed for use of 1 acre for the day with a £335 deposit as they are only using 1/3 of 3 acre field.

It should be noted that in the initial email it states (We are now planning the 2nd Witney Pride for Saturday 25th July 2020 and have attended the SAG meeting last week to discuss and develop our ideas. It was suggested that The Leys would be a better location to establish and grow our event. As a volunteer run small community group we have very limited resources but we do want the event to reflect the needs of the local community.) They intend to include a small procession to the alcohol-free friendly Pride Picnic event that features fun traditional sports day activities, community stalls and some local entertainment.

It is clear the intention is to grow this event on the Leys into a larger event in future.

B. COLOUR CHAOS AND SANTA RUNS BY THE RAF ASSOCIATION (the RAF Charity)

An initial request has been received by the RAF Association with the backing of Park Run to hold a colour chaos run on either the 18th or 25th July in place of the normal Park Run and also a Santa Run in November/December again in place of the normal Park Run both events using the Run course and subject to gaining other land owners permission.

ROUND UP OF TOTAL CURRENT EVENT REQUESTS

If the Witney Pride event is agreed by council, we will have 6 events on the Leys this year at present with 4 of those events being held within in a 6 week period in June and July. There would be an event on the Leys every other weekend during June and July.

There is one agreed event currently for West Witney and 2 requests for further events. In total 7 events are agreed with 2 others waiting of confirmation for 2020.

Information regarding the Leys availability dates was already been distributed to the American Circus and interest has been shown to hold a Winter Wonderland on the Leys site.

The Leys is a very popular area for those wishing to hold events as it is so close to the centre of Town, it should be expected that it is liable to receive regular request for events of various types.

As council has found out previously organisers are very Leys Recreation Ground orientated for events. Council has tried to move events previously to other WTC locations however users are only interested in the Leys. Charges are all of WTC's other recreation facilities are half of those at the Leys and were free at King Georges Field however organisers still wish to use the Leys.

Event requests have previously fallen through when organisers are told they cannot use the Leys but must use one of WTC's other Recreation Grounds.

GROUND RE-INSTATEMENT AND MAINTENANCE BUDGET.

Councillors are requested to set up a Leys Events repair/maintenance/renovation budget of a minimum of £5,000 to ensure funds are available to carry out any required repairs/maintenance/renovation works required to keep the events field in a safe condition and to carry out any remedial repairs required following each event annually. Spare budget to rolled over annually to ensure funds available for upgrades to field etc. in the future.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Having declared a Climate Change Emergency at its Council meeting on 26 June 2019 – with this in mind Councillors should have due regard to the environmental impact of any decisions they make with regard to its facilities and services it operates.

Council needs to consider noise/light pollution and waste impact. Including the impact if any on local residents.

Consideration should be given to the use of Donkeys for rides and racing.

RISK

In decision making Councillors should give consideration to any risks to the Council and any action it can take to limit or negate its liability.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Associated cost to purchase 1 x Decibel meter.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Member are invited to note the report and consider the following:

1. Supplementary T&Cs for events on the Leys Recreation Ground in particular as detailed above;
2. The request from Witney Pride to hold their picnic on the Leys Events Field;
3. The Request by the RAF Association to hold Colour Chaos run and Santa run at West Witney Sports Ground.
4. Setting up an annual Leys Events Field repair/maintenance/renovation budget of £5,000 or more per annum, any spare budget to be rolled annual to form field upgrade fund.
5. Council to request WMF provide application and outstanding deposit for this year's event.
6. Consider the Donkey Derby/Donkey rides traditionally held on the Leys Recreation Ground.