

Remenham Farm Residents Association (RFRA)

The above association is composed of:

Mr John Halsall, Cherwell, Remenham Lane 40 years

Mr Ronald Emerson, The Reeds, Remenham Lane 28 years

Mr Michael Dudley, The Reach, Remenham Lane 25 years

Nigel Gray, Remenham Farm Remenham Lane 23 years

Neil Brown Old School House Remenham Lane 14 years

Anthony West Remenham Manor Remenham Lane 52 years

Michael Williams Remenham Barn Remenham Lane 15 years

David Law Barn Cottage Remenham Lane 44 years

Rewind Festival Limited, licence number PR0 462

We, the RFRA, wish to call for a review of the above licence, on the grounds that **all the licensing objectives are being undermined.**

Reviews are a key protection for the community where problems associated with the licensing objectives occur after the grant or variation of a premises licence (s 182 Guidance, para 11.1). It is well established as a matter of law and policy that licensing decisions are made in the wider public interest (see *R (oao Hope & Glory Public House) v Westminster Magistrates' Court & Ors* [2011] EWCA Civ 31 [41][42] and the s 182 Guidance at paras 1.5, 9.38, 11.1, 11.26).

The Rewind Festival Licence (PR0462) provides authorisation for a single 2-3 day event with a permitted daily capacity of 23,000. The total capacity over the two main days of the event exceeds 45,000.

Remenham Overview:

Remenham in Berkshire is a rural Parish extending along the Thames from Wargrave to Aston. It includes the stretch of the Thames downstream from the Henley Bridge which contains the villages of Remenham and Aston. This part of Remenham Parish has long been a venue for licensed sporting and social events. Most of the events take place on Greenfield sites. In addition to attendees, all equipment and infrastructure for these events, even the waste disposal, are transported by road, access being along three single lane roads. The number and size of events

have increased dramatically in recent years, with a direct and adverse impact on the local community. And while the size of most events has increased, and the scale of building and taking down operations has also increased, the local infrastructure (three effectively single-track roads, the river and the Thames Path) which provides access to most events and to the villages, has not.

The parish of Remenham has a population of 500 residents which is impacted by a series of events and festivals from as early as May, mid / late June until late September each year – the most famous of which is the Henley Royal Regatta – in 2021 this was a period of 187 days in effect every summer weekend. In 2022 there were some 138 days of events from June to September, again, every weekend throughout the summer. The scale of the events dwarfs the population of the village; the maximum capacity for the Heleny Festival is 25,000 and for Rewind it is 46,000.

The 1-mile stretch between Henley Bridge and Temple Island hosts three major annual events; Henley Royal Regatta “HRR” (since 1839, total attendance of 300,000 in 2019); Henley Festival “HF” (since 1983, total attendance of 25,000 in 2019) and the Rewind Festival “RF” (since 2009, total attendance 46,000 in 2019). In total, these three events deposit the equivalent of the entire population of Coventry or Cardiff on this tiny piece of geography; more than the populations of Newcastle or Southampton.

Given the rural character of Remenham and its very limited infrastructure, every event held compromised local residents’ access to and quiet enjoyment of their properties. Major events **(especially in Temple Island Meadows)** and simultaneous or overlapping events, seriously impacted both, to the extent that residents quiet enjoyment was impacted and/or they were effectively deprived of the normal use of their homes for much of this period. However, it is not only local residents who are impacted. This area is enjoyed by the general public throughout the year as a place of tranquility. The area from Remenham village to Hambleden lock a is covered by a National Trust covenant in order to” protect the rural character of the area” Clearly, this only limits any permanent development but when implemented it was probably not thought possible that this rural character could be destroyed by temporary events. The fact is that the availability of this area for escape for the general population has also been seriously compromised.

The Rewind Festival:

The Premises Licence makes provision for an Event Safety Management Plan (?) (“ESMP”), and Event Liaison Team (“ELT”) and a Safety Advisory Group (“SAG”) – there is little or no formal community representative on the ELT or SAG.

The Premises Licence makes provision for prior and after community liaison meetings to ‘discuss the event with local residents’ (Condition 15, page 7/15). This does not occur. The previous owners did a good job here with meetings held with residents in the village hall. The only contact with the new owners was the attendance of a single person at a RPC meeting where WBC officials

and the Copas family met to discuss a range of problems, of which Rewind was mentioned. The representative made little contribution. They have made no attempt to contact us following last year's event. We met with Kieran Hinchliffe, Ed Day, and Ed Shaylor of WBC to voice our concerns and they said they would arrange a meeting early this year with Rewind management to discuss these concerns. We do not know if this has been followed up.

The Premises Licence requires that the 'organiser will employ the services of a dedicated traffic management company to undertake a survey of potential traffic impact and produce a Traffic Management Plan (TMP) that details measures to put in place what will minimise the impact. The TMP must be shared with the Licensing Authority one month prior to the Event. They will ensure the smooth ingress, egress and where appropriate emergency movement of festival attendee vehicles.' (Condition 14, page 11/15).

There is also a condition that requires: 'A dedicated blue route will be indicated in the Traffic Management and Emergency Plan and be kept clear for access by emergency vehicles at all times.' (Condition 11, page 9/15).

This license was granted to stage The Rewind Festival in Remenham, annually in August. As part of the authorisation, a Traffic Management Plan was put in place, principally to ensure that the very significant work involved in setting up and taking down of this event over a two-week period, which is attended by around 46,000 people, involves a minimum of disruption in the local community. Given the event is served by single track lanes this is vital, with much of the vehicular traffic being large articulated lorries. [Map]

A copy of the TMP should be with the council.

This TMP was not implemented in 2022. Though traffic signs were put in place before the event, together with limited, but frequently ineffective marshalling during the event. (The problem here is that with a TMP marshals have no authority to redirect traffic if there are breaches of the plan rules, unlike a Traffic Order.), All of this ceased immediately after the event finished. All traffic signs were removed, together with marshalling, which resulted in traffic chaos during the following week. As one example, on the Monday after the event finished, the whole of Remenham Lane was in gridlock for the one mile stretch from the church to Henley Bridge due to articulated lorries traveling against a counter flow of traffic from the event site in direct contravention of the TMP

(photograph attached). Given the single-track nature of the lane it is impossible for vehicles of this sort to turn around. I asked Mr Steve Porter, the manager of the site, why he was allowing vehicles to travel in all directions and he said he did not have the manpower to manage it. Seemingly, unable or unwilling to implement a TMP that they are required by law to fulfil: this is an obvious breach of conditions and a confirmation of poor management and evidence of the causal approach to adherence to licence conditions given they were not prepared to put in place adequate resources to manage traffic in accordance with the TMP.

This is simply unacceptable at any level. The organisers were in breach of the TMP, their premises licence and consequently failing to promote the licensing objectives. Apart from many factors, including our legal rights to access our homes, if emergency vehicles had been required to attend any of the homes along the lane this would have been impossible, with potentially major consequences, for which we believe the organisers would be liable.

The new owners and organisers of this event reflect a similarly mismanagement of traffic when it was launched some years ago. It was then sold to alternative owners who did a reasonable job of managing this problem. Since it reverted to the new owners two years ago, they have demonstrated the same casual disregard for the licence objectives and the concerns of the local community and, on that basis, we believe the licence should be reviewed and, as a minimum, a Traffic Order put in place for the 2023 event.

There is evidence of environmental damage caused by this major event being staged in a totally unsuitable rural location. Trees have been felled in Remenham Lane to allow Rewind vehicles to pass, and there is evidence of damage to the habitat for wildlife. We also believe consideration should be given to the enormous carbon footprint created by these two weeks of vehicular movements, plus the 46,000 people who attend. WBC has a Climate Emergency Policy which states that all events staged in the borough should have a “calculated” carbon footprint assessment, not a “judgemental” one. A recent example of councils taking this into account is Sunderland Council banning a long-standing and very popular annual air show due to the carbon impact. Will WBC also show leadership in this way?

I have attached a sample set of photographs that show the scale of the event and the kind of gridlock traffic problems that are a regular consequence of this event.

What do we seek?

[1] A condition requiring a full Environmental Assessment for the Rewind Festival.

WBC, in conjunction with the licence holder, shall undertake an annual Environmental Impact Assessment for all the Environmental Impacts arising from the from the set up for the event, the event itself and get out of the event. The Environmental Impact Assessment must include a consultation with the licensing authority, responsible authorities and local residents and businesses. The EIA must be completed and served on the licensing authority and made available to local residents no later than three months before the start of the set up for the Rewind Festival The premises licence shall not have effect for 2023 until an EIA has been served on the licensing authority and made available to local residents.

[2] The requirement for a full, Traffic Order to cover the entire period of set up. event time, and take down which must include the following (as a minimum):

The premises licence holder will employ the services of a dedicated traffic management company to undertake an annual survey of traffic impacts arising from the set up for the event, the event itself and get out of the event. The traffic management company must consult with local residents, businesses and emergency services. The traffic management company must produce a Traffic Management Plan, and WBC issue a Traffic Order that ensures adherence to the plan throughout the period of this event. . The TMP and TO must be completed and made available to local residents no later than three months before the start of the set up for the Rewind Festival.

[3] That a representative of the RFRA shall be included on the ELT and SAG.

For and on behalf of RFRA:

R V Emerson CBE

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