

## Foodies Festival 2021 - Public comment received by or forwarded to Environmental Health

*The below are copies of the "Your Winchester" feedback plus responses to an email asking for clarification of issues experienced where this had not been provided*

Hello,

My wife forwarded this to me as I am also complaining about the noise from the Rec. I will answer your questions.

- 1/ The noise continued unabated from the start of the festival until 30-40 minutes after the supposed finish time on each day.
- 2/ I am willing to give a written statement and attend a hearing.
- 3/ We received no notification of the event.
- 4/ Since no hotline was provided it was impossible to call the organiser.

I have actual recordings of the noise measured with a noise meter. I am attaching links.

Today we have a similar amount of noise (not as bad so far), and of course we had no warning, no notices and no hotline.

I personally feel that the Rec is not a suitable place for such events, PS the full effect of the noise cannot be heard without good headphones or good speakers.

I am a neighbour of [redacted] and live in [redacted] Hyde. I spoke with her over the weekend about the loud music at the Food Festival. I certainly don't wish to stop people enjoying themselves and I like events such as this, however, I had no idea that we were going to have a 'rock concert' in North Walls Recreation Grounds last weekend. The incessant beat of the bass was enough to drive one crazy! I went over to the Food Festival on the Saturday and spoke with one of the security team; she said she would take my request, to turn the noise level down, to the people on the stage and someone in charge. The music, however, remained at the same volume for the rest of the day and became much louder in the evening. I then phoned the Out of Hours Council phone line and I left a message but was not able to contact anyone directly over the weekend. I had a phone call yesterday from a lady at the Council asking for more information about my complaint – I'm afraid I was in the Swimming Pool changing area and had no pen/paper, so have forgotten her name – she said that if asked I should say I'd spoken with a lady whose name was difficult to pronounce (I think she was American or Canadian). She said that a meeting with the Food Festival organisers was being set up and people's concerns about the noise levels would be raised.

In the past we had concerns about the noise levels from 'Boomtown' and contacted our MP who contacted the Council on our behalf; things were much better in subsequent years – to the point that I could hardly hear anything from 'Boomtown' the last year it was on.

I understand that the North Walls Recreation Grounds are going to be used regularly for events; as residents close to this area we need to be able to contact someone who can take quick action to sort any problems out at the time, rather than having to talk about it afterwards.

Regards

1. When were you disturbed and was the noise better/worse at particular times that you noted?  
Friday evening, all day Saturday and Sunday, so throughout the event. The noise was probably worst Saturday afternoon and evening until c.19.40; there was very loud music from lunchtime onwards, with a presenter shouting "Come on let's make some noise" and "Louder" at regular intervals.

2. Would you be willing to provide a written witness statement and attend a licensing review hearing if requested to do so?  
Yes, if I know what it's intended to achieve.

3. Did you receive a hand delivered letter from the event organiser through your door prior to the event?  
No. No communications from the event organiser received.

4. Did you call the event organiser on their complaint hotline and if so what happened?  
No, I wasn't aware that there was a complaint hotline. There was no complaint hotline publicised in any way. And I walk around the area and consume local media. I called the Council, who told me that it would be a matter for the police post-12pm, or I could fill out a form.

Thank you for your assistance regarding this matter and please be assured we are taking this matter seriously.

Thanks for your email. I'm glad to hear there is an investigation into this. I am very concerned that this area (the recreation ground adjacent to Winnall Moors nature reserve) has been more and more frequently used to hold events. Only this weekend there has been the cheese and chilli festival. Which I didn't know was happening until I wandered over there to see what the noisy PA

system was bleating on about. I have also heard that the residents in the Hyde area are getting complementary invites to some of these events?! If this is true then this is a blatant case of elitism. The nature reserve may screen Winnall from sight but it doesn't provide any sound barrier at all. If it were the other way around and there was a music event happening in Winnall there would be an outcry.

In answer to your questions:

1. I have been disturbed all weekend (on several weekends lately). I have felt that I need to keep my patio doors shut in order to escape the cheesy, middle of the road dross and chattering PA systems. The noise has been loud and continuous.

2. Yes I would be willing to provide a written statement and attend a licensing review hearing.

3. No I haven't received any letters for any of these events.

4. No I didn't contact the organisers for these events because I had no warning and didn't know what they were.

I do appreciate you getting in touch about this and I look forward to hearing more from you soon.  
Best wishes,

What do you think we did wrong or didn't do?  
I'd like to complain about the volume of the music coming from the recreation ground behind Winnal Moors. I don't know what the event is and I've had absolutely no warning about it. I live at [REDACTED] it's Sunday evening and the music has been going on all weekend. I like a party as much as the next person but this is a residential area and I've had enough of it. I really hope that it finishes soon, I've got a very early morning tomorrow and this is making feel so cross!

How has the issue affected you or anyone else?

It has affected me and I'd be very surprised if no one else has complained

What do you think we should do to rectify the situation?

Let residents know in future, don't carry it on, on a Sunday evening

Your name

[REDACTED]

What is the statutory nuisance you would like to report?

Noise

Information Box

Until the event closed, and throughout today (Saturday 17 July) whilst sat in my garden at my property on [REDACTED] it has been possible to hear music and PA system broadcast from North Wall Food Festival. Whilst I very much support such cultural events, I do not believe that they should cause disturbance to the community, certainly one which is over 1km away. I would like to raise this matter with the organisers and with your licensing body, such that future events are better able to assess the positioning of their PA systems to minimise disturbances to the wider community.

Source of complaint

Parcel of land

Please use this section to provide any evidence you think would be useful for the investigating officer such as correspondence, photographs or videos

Details of your feedback

Complaint

What do you think we did wrong or didn't do?

Host a food festival with no advance warning to local residents for THREE DAYS, this was badged as a food festival and was A LOUD MUSIC FESTIVAL while I understand everyone wants some relief after COVID, so do local residents.

How has the issue affected you or anyone else?

Yes, it was an intrusive and lengthy Unnecessary LOUD distraction on locals in the Hyde Area.

What do you think we should do to rectify the situation?

If you insist on holding these kind of events they need to finish at an early hour to give residents some respite from the noise or hold these events outside the city centre.

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I am writing to complain in the strongest possible terms about the "sound stage" you allowed at the Festival in the Recreation Ground.

It shows a blatant disregard for those of us living in range of the noise which must include the majority of people living in Winchester city. We have had this din for three consecutive evenings totally preventing us from **peacefully enjoying** our homes and gardens.

In case you are in any doubt as to the scale of the noise, we live 1 mile from the Rec. and we have recorded peaks of sound up to 70 decibels. Which is 30-40 over the normal ambient sound.

I do have a recording with a sound meter in case you are interested.

Is it too much to ask that you show the smallest amount of responsibility and consideration before allowing people to set up ridiculously powerful sound stages (that would not be out of place at a festival such as Boomtown!) In the very heart of the city!

And to add to the issue **right next to the Nature Reserve!** I don't think I have to tell you that loud noises can cause flight reflexes in wild animals as well as distress. We have seen deer on our side of the river in the evenings as this racket as been going on, obviously feeling safer next to the houses and after crossing the river than they do in their usual habitat.

I think this shows an equal degree of irresponsibility in regards of the safety and well being for the precious wildlife that have only that sanctuary.

I am also sending this as an open letter to the Hampshire Chronicle

Yours etc

I want to complain in the strongest possible terms over the unbearably loud music we're having to endure this weekend from the food festival.

I live in [REDACTED] a good distance from the North Walls recreation ground where the festival is taking place yet the music is so loud that on this very hot weekend we've had to keep windows and doors firmly shut.

I work all week and look forward to resting at the weekend and this weekend it's been impossible. Why have local residents not been informed, let alone been consulted about this event? And why does a food festival need such loud live music? We have a right to the quiet enjoyment of our homes, especially during these stressful times. I don't object to live music but the decibel levels of this event are such that the music can still be heard through double glazing and the walls of my house are vibrating.

It is completely unacceptable to have this 3 days in a row in a populated area. Noise levels like this should be restricted to rock concerts in remote fields.

Dear Councillors

I want to complain about the music festival being held in our residential area, Hyde, for 3 days, and would like you to ensure this type of event isn't repeated.

This is completely unsuitable for this area. My garden is intolerably noisy, meaning staying in with the windows closed on the hottest weekend of the year.

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There is an established suitable site for music festivals - Boomtown is held there. Or Bar End/ Garrison Ground are more suitable, and the Council could obtain the revenue from those sites instead without making Winchester residents pay the price in a ruined weekend.

Loud music from lunchtime onwards until the evening, with amplified presenters shouting "Come on let's make some noise" and "Louder" at regular intervals.

There was a planning application posted on North Walls Rec for a "food festival". This is not a food festival, food festivals are about food, not loud music from well known bands. Residents were misled. Was the Council?

I would welcome your comments, and would like your reassurance that:  
Music festivals will not be held on the Rec in future.

Any other events will have an agreed decibel limit, and that is monitored during the event and the Council will take responsibility for ensuring it is adhered to. I have phoned the out-of-hours number and the person said it would be a matter for the police post 12pm, otherwise I could fill in a form.

Please ensure the Council prioritises its residents, not visitors.

I am a resident of Hyde living in [REDACTED]. I have lived here over 45 years and over that time obviously the use of the North Walls Recreation Grounds has changed but there have always been events. However, I feel I must complain bitterly over the level of noise that the recent Food Festival 16,17,18 July subjected the residents in this area to, some residents in Saxon Road were also severely affected, I understand! This was unacceptable, and given it was supposed to be a food festival why was there such a volume to the music, especially on Sunday, again totally unacceptable. This festival came hot on the heels of the Hat Fair which was also staged in the far field but as I have said we accept a certain amount of events but they are becoming increasingly intrusive especially when loud music is being constantly jacked up. We now await the Cheese and Cilli Festival in a couple of weeks with trepidation. I appreciate this issue is probably not dealt with by yourself but cannot find an appropriate department to direct this complaint to, the out of service hours telephone for complaints to the Winchester council is not fit for purpose. Can you direct me to the appropriate department but also if you can deal with this issue that would be good, given that you also live in Hyde and must have been affected by the last weekend.

Regards

Your MP, Steve Brine, has recently contacted the Chief Executive of the council, Laura Taylor, after you complained to him about the noise generated by the Foodies Festival held at North Walls Recreation Ground earlier this month. She has asked to me look into the matter and respond to the issue you have highlighted.

Firstly, I am sorry to learn that music at the festival caused a problem for you and I understand that you are not the only resident to raise the matter. Our Environmental Health team has been looking into event as a result.

The festival was marketed as a food event with some music and was held under a premises licence. This permitted live music from 1100-2100 from Friday to Sunday.

As with all licensed events, consideration is given to ensure that there is an appropriate balance of interests between the delivery of a successful event and the prevention of public nuisance.

The licence, which included conditions relating to noise management, was considered to represent an appropriate balance. The impact beyond the site would have been limited therefore providing the event organiser managed the festival in accordance with all the licence conditions.

The licence conditions included the requirement for a Noise Management Plan. It was expected that the event organiser would carry out noise checks to ensure that the volume was at an acceptable level and was not causing disturbance to residents. The licence also required details of the sound system to be used and information to be provided to local residents about the event, including a noise 'hotline number,' that people could call if they were being disturbed.

However, from our initial investigations, it would appear that they didn't comply with all of their licence conditions and, given the number of noise reports received from local residents, it seems that they did not manage noise as they were expected to do.

As a result, our Environmental Health Team are currently investigating further, and have requested a debrief meeting with the event organiser, following which they will determine the most appropriate course of action to prevent a recurrence in the future. This could include an application to review the licence for this event. However, it is too early to say what action is appropriate, and we will want to provide an opportunity for the organiser to respond to these matters, and to review all the information that has come in regarding the impact of the festival.

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We will be shortly writing to all of the affected residents to ask if we can use their reports (including name and address where possible) as evidence for any forthcoming licence review. As you contacted us directly about the event you should receive a further communication shortly in this regard.

I hope that this clarifies the current situation but please do get in touch if you have any questions.

Regards,

**Simon Finch**  
Corporate Head of Regulatory