



Friday, 3rd February 2023

Ross O'Neil
Public Protection Officer – Specialist
Transactional Management and Licensing Team
Shropshire Council
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Dear Ross,

Licensing - 22/04161/LPREM - Ludlow Rugby Football Club, Linney, Ludlow, SY8 1EE

Thank you for the hearing invite, notice, procedure, agent letter, additional agreed conditions and new reduced licensable plan. There are issues arising from the pack, which are covered below:-

The solicitor's letter claims merit further examination.

"The main purpose of the current application is to allow the Spring Festival to have their event at the Club, as otherwise it will have to be cancelled".

If this is the main purpose of the application, why does the application cover ten other events? If it was the main purpose, the balance would be different. The application would be for one event.

Where is the supporting evidence from Ludlow Marches Food and Drink Festival that the event will have to be cancelled if it does not happen at the Club?

"This is a valued event that generates income not only for the town, but will also help secure the long term finances of the Club".

While the festival is a valued event, there is no evidence it will contribute the same income to town if it moves out of the Castle to the Rugby Club. Further, I would suggest the Castle is critically important to the festivals; moving them to another location will result in reduced income for the town.

It also suggests the finances of the Club are precarious. This is simply not the case. Company House records show the Club is viable and growing. Over the last five years, the Club's reserves have increased from £246,364 by £66,172 to £313,536. That is a 27 per cent growth or 5 per cent per

annum. The Club has made a profit in every year, including during Covid. The Club is financially secure.

"This is a public event, so the existing Club licence is inappropriate".

While this is true, it also demonstrates a change of use of the site from a sporting ground; therefore, planning permission may be required. Has this been considered?

Festival site safety

The event plan shows an area of approximately 12,230 square meters. For illustration, depending on the people per square meter metric used, suggest between 40,077 (standing spectators) and 6,115 (sports area).

The access from the Linney along the Green Linney to the Rugby Club ground is 4.64 meters wide and 123 meters long. This is the critical pinch point. Applying the fire safety metric of 109 people per minute with ten minutes to evacuate the site suggests the site limit is 5,058 in one direction. However, allowing for people coming in and going out with a half meter separation, reduces the safe limit of 2,256 people.

The HM Government's Fire Risk Safety Assessment "for open-air events and venues states": -

"Every venue should be provided with exits that are sufficient for the number of people present with respect to their width, number and siting".

"When evaluating escape and exit routes, you will normally need to build in a safety factor by discounting the largest exit from your escape plan then determine whether the remaining exits or escape routes will be sufficient to evacuate all the occupants within a reasonable time".

As there is only one access to the site, no other access is possible, building in a safety factor suggests the safe limit is less than 2,256 people. Taking the Fire Risk Safety Assessment literally would suggest the safe limit is zero.

Various documents issued by the Rugby Club and the Ludlow Marches Food and Drink Festival indicate a Transport Festival, and parking will be offered on the site. The HSE guidelines state that people and vehicles must be kept apart. So with a single narrow access to the site, how will that be achieved?

Safety outside the festival site

Another factor that should be considered is the roads leading to and from the Rugby Club.

Ludlow Rugby ground is on the Linney, and there are numerous pinch points, effectively making it a single-track road along its 1km length. The connecting roads at the western end of the Linney also have pinch points.

The number of people will significantly increase in volume, increasing the risk of harm to pedestrians. How are the risks going to be mitigated? Is the risk too great?

How will an emergency vehicle travel along the Linney to or from the Rugby Club ground with the increased number of pedestrians associated with the festival?

Every festival, from set up to take down, is going to have a considerable impact on the residents going about their normal course of business. Is this a consideration?

In summary, while everyone wants to support festivals, the Rugby Football Club grounds and the local access road are unsuitable for the proposed festival.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of James Moore.

James Moore