

CHICHESTER FESTIVAL THEATRE

The Licensing Manager
Licensing Team
House & Environment Services
Chichester District Council
East Pallant House
1 East Pallant
Chichester PO19 1TY

24 December 2019

Dear Sirs,

Licensing Application ref 19/02302/LAPRE

We are writing in response to the Licensing Application by Brand Events TM Ltd for 'Pub in the Park' in Oaklands Park starting on 28 May 2020.

As an organisation dedicated to providing a wide range of entertainment for people of all ages, we welcome and support the idea of an event such as this in Chichester. However, we have two specific concerns regarding the significant and potentially damaging impact on Chichester Festival Theatre and its audiences which these dates and location would inevitably involve.

Firstly, the noise bleed from the live music into the Theatre auditoriums could be hugely disruptive and is highly likely to lead to complaints from our audience and demands for ticket refunds. We note that CDC's Environmental Protection Team has recommended a necessary stipulation that 'At least three calendar months in advance of any event taking place, the Premises Licence Holder shall submit to the Environmental Protection Department a "Noise Management Plan" for prior written approval. Thereafter, any approved "Noise Management Plan" shall be observed and complied with in full.'

It is imperative that CFT is included in, and consulted on, site visits for noise management controls, since once the event is on site, it will be impossible to regulate the noise. We have met with Pub in the Park's Operations Manager to discuss this, but remain sceptical that an outdoor 'chart-topping music' festival can be delivered without potentially severe consequences for the plays taking place in the Festival and Minerva Theatres.

Secondly, there will be a huge issue around parking and access through our site. As is well-known, the Northgate car park is full by 11am on a matinee day in the summer, and evening parking is also very tricky. With an additional 3500+ people coming to Oaklands Park, we are

Oaklands Park
Chichester
West Sussex
PO19 6AP
01243 784437
cft.org.uk

very concerned that our patrons will struggle to park. We are aware of suggestions around potential 'park and ride' schemes; nevertheless, there is no mechanism to prevent Pub in the Park visitors from parking at Northgate and thereby forcing our patrons – many of whom are elderly – to park further afield. We view Pub in the Park's assertion (at a recent focus group meeting) that "most people will walk" as simply not credible in a city with a population as small as Chichester's. This situation can only be exacerbated by the Cathedral's Festival of Flowers taking place the same weekend.

In addition, the road through CFT's site is an access route for emergency vehicles which needs to be kept clear. If this licensing application is granted, CFT will have to restrict the number of people passing through our site, as this is a health and safety issue for us.

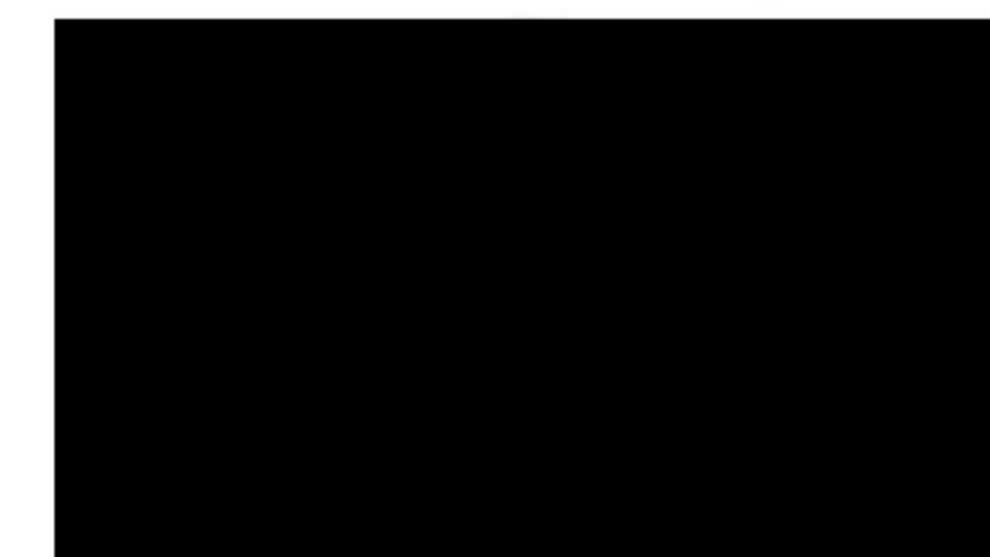
In conclusion, the impact on the Theatre is so great that we have to consider whether we should cancel performances altogether over that weekend, representing a loss of earnings of approximately £175,000 over the three days. As a charity, we cannot afford to miss out on this income, which represents the greater part of the £187,500 annual grant from CDC.

We are further concerned that the Licensing Application is not simply for three days in 2020 but 'for an event to take place yearly and on an on-going basis.' CFT is already unable to mount performances for three days a year due to the Sloe Fair taking place in Northgate car park; we are very concerned about losing further performances every year due to another external event taking place on our doorstep.

It is of enormous regret that neither the event organisers nor the Council consulted us earlier about the proposed dates. We have asked Pub in the Park if it is possible to move the event to the previous weekend (when they do not have a festival programmed anywhere) since the Theatre does not have performances scheduled then, thus having far less of an impact on us – but they have yet to respond.

Once again, we wish to reiterate that our opposition is not to the event taking place at all – quite the contrary. Pub in the Park sounds like a fabulous addition to the Chichester year. However, we have to consider the interests of our loyal audiences who have supported CFT for so many years, so that their experience isn't thoughtlessly sacrificed. We implore the Council to consider alternative dates and locations.

Yours faithfully,



Kathy Bourne
Executive Director