

Application Ref: LAPREM/15625/21

**Premises Licence for Bass Therapy Inc
Poplars Farm, Denchworth Road, Charney Bassett, Oxfordshire**

**Comment by: Charney Bassett Parish Council
Date: 23rd November 2021**

The Parish Council objects to the grant of this application on the following grounds:

1. Prevention of crime and disorder
2. Prevention of public nuisance
3. Public Safety

The relevant minute from the Parish Council meeting of 10th November is attached.

The Application

If approved, the application would allow the following:

- amplified live and recorded music outdoors from 12.00 pm to 12.00 am
- outdoor performances (Comedy, Circus Acts, Dance) from 12.00 pm to 12.00 am
- 'Reduced Noise' fireworks with accompanying music from 08.30 pm to 11.00 pm
- late-night refreshment and alcohol on the premises from 12.00 pm to 12.00 am

at an event spanning two days (Saturday and Sunday) on August Bank Holiday.

Approval of the application will apparently allow the event to take place not only in 2022 but, on payment of an appropriate fee, in any subsequent year.

Grounds of Objection

Prevention of Crime and Disorder

The Parish Council has been provided with an account from a nearby resident of an incident at the entrance gate to this year's event involving stewards. The account is as follows:

Late afternoon on the day of the event in the area of the entrance there was a lot of noise which clearly came from several young men supposedly controlling the incoming traffic and giving guidance on where to park etc. This noise continued to escalate so much so I decided to walk to [personal detail omitted] and look along the lane to see what was going on.

I was greeted by 4 people who were staying at the Manor who said “if that’s what is going on at the entrance, we don’t want to go into the Fest” nothing more was said. When I looked up the Lane I could see 2 of the stewards actually in the Lane clearly worse for wear having drunk too much and horsing around. Another Resident (detail omitted) did say at the PC meeting this week that there was a “fight”, but you would need to verify this with her.

Following this disturbance we had 6 cars come into our drive looking for the Fest and in the mid evening hours traffic control from the event was clearly not being managed. We also had 2 people in the river late in the evening [detail omitted].

The resident who is referred to as witnessing a fight has not corroborated the account, but has confirmed that 11.00 pm when driving past the site there were “security guards at the gate with glasses in their hands that contained a drink that resembled beer or cider.”

The Parish Council believes these reports should be brought to the Vale Council’s attention as they appear relevant when considering the safe and proper organisation of future events by the company.

Prevention of Public Nuisance

Music noise from this year’s event could be clearly heard widely in the village. The type of music played was dominated by heavy bass and drum, and vibration through the ground could be readily felt¹. As the company name suggests, this type of music can be expected to dominate in future events. The noise was continuous throughout the day and late evening, with little interval. People’s tolerance to noise and vibration does of course vary, but many residents have reported to Councillors concern at this year’s event and are concerned that this is now to be extended to a second day – and at a time of year that most will want to relax and enjoy their gardens. Noise that can be heard and that continues over a period of 12 hours will irritate and, in cases can become insufferable.

The venue is being moved a little further from the village, but in the flat landscape of the river Ock this will make very little difference – especially with a prevailing southerly wind. To illustrate this, when the wind is from the north traffic noise from the A420 (appx 1 ½ miles away) can be heard in the village. Directing the speakers so they are not facing the village (or Lyford) is a worthy attempt at mitigation, but this step was taken this year and it is clear that this alone will not prevent noise being a nuisance – hour by hour throughout two bank holiday days – in an otherwise quiet part of the Vale. Night time noise will be added to by organised firework displays².

Public Safety

On this issue the Vale Council’s policy advises:

The public safety objective is concerned with the physical safety of anyone using or adjacent to licensed premises

¹¹ Whilst tidying the graveyard at St Peter’s Church, a resident reported that vibration could be all too easily felt through the headstones.

² Poplars Farm is a pastoral enterprise and the animals there will surely be affected as are various horses and pets in the vicinity.

Although a matter primarily for the County Council as Highway Authority, the Parish Council is concerned at the impact of a concentrated number of vehicles to and from the site on a narrow country lane with no footpaths. This additional vehicular traffic will be brought into conflict with other road users which in this area are typically cyclists and horse riders. The use of the country lanes in the flat Vale by cyclists and horse riders increases significantly at weekends and can be expected to peak at Bank Holiday. The additional vehicular traffic to the event will increase the risk of personal accident.

In addition, with the event spread over two days there is a likelihood of traffic to and from the site not being limited to arrivals and departures from the event. It appears camping will be on offer and traffic is likely to leave and return to the site for food shopping or simply a change of scenery. Attendees may well wish to leave the site on foot to visit the village for a break or general interest. These will mix with vehicular traffic as there are no footpaths from the site along Denchworth Road (and no street lighting). All of this again increases the risk of personal accident for both attendees and users of the adjoining road.

General

Despite the qualms of many residents, the Parish Council decided to raise no objection to the event this year – it was put forward as a ‘one-off’ to celebrate the life of a cherished family member with proceeds going to charity. Unfortunately, the fears of many that the event would be repeated have already been realised, with every prospect that it could increase yet further in scale in future years. We wish the organisers well in their aspiration, but respectfully feel this is not the area for such events and that they should search elsewhere for a more appropriate location.

Decision makers generally have to judge a proposal on its merits, but the obvious point has been made by many that after just one year the event has doubled its length and increased its size (the limit appears to be up to 5,000 people) and that if it is allowed to gain traction, further expansion can be expected. We feel the current proposal to be objectionable but, if granted, further incremental expansion will prove difficult to resist. It would be wrong not to point this out.

Trevor Brown
(Clerk) Charney Bassett Parish Council

parishclerk@charneybassett.org.uk

ANNEX

Extract from draft minutes of meeting

Charney Bassett Parish Council: Wednesday 10th November 2021

21/83 LAPREM/15625/21: Premises Licence – Poplars Farm

Details of the proposal had been circulated to residents on Monday. Those present were against a Licence being granted for various reasons. Two drew attention to reported bad behaviour at this year's event at and around the site entrance and which appeared to be linked to alcohol. Councillors were aware of some support being expressed on Facebook, but felt more residents were concerned at the disruption likely to be caused if a fresh Licence was granted. The Clerk emphasised that objections can only relate to one or more of the four licensing objectives, viz:

- Prevention of crime and disorder
- Prevention of public nuisance
- Protection of children from harm
- Public safety.

Councillors agreed that the Parish Council should object to the proposal on grounds of public nuisance (noise/vibration from amplified music/performance) and public safety (increased vehicle movements mixing with pedestrian and other non-vehicular traffic). Subject to verification from witness(es) to this year's event, also on grounds of crime and disorder (as above).