

Representation regarding Forbidden Forest licensing application – R and A Pape

1. This letter supports our representation regarding the licence application for future Forbidden Forest events at Belvoir Castle. It is based on our actual experience during the July 2022 Forbidden Forest event.

2. As is now well understood, unfortunately Denton Parish Council and other authorities and citizens in Lincolnshire were not informed or consulted on the 2022 event and hence our concerns were not taken into account. We trust that this does not mean that our concerns will be treated any less seriously than those of other parishes, authorities and citizens who were consulted for the 2022 event.

Excessive traffic – public safety and prevention of public nuisance

3. Denton is a quiet village. The traffic management plan for the 2022 event used the road through Denton as a major access route instead of directing all traffic via the A52 and Belvoir Road Bottesford, which avoids all villages. Instead of signage to protect Denton from event traffic, like other villages, signage directed traffic straight through Denton.

4. The licence application is for 15,000 people camping. The Forbidden Forest website says that 25,000 people are expected for the event so we assume this means 10,000 day visitors. Hence many thousands of vehicles would be accessing the site every day.

5. Our concerns about traffic cover three aspects:

- Volume of traffic through Denton throughout the event (Friday afternoon to Monday noon). Traffic was near-continuous for hours on end during the 2022 event.

- Night-time traffic. On Saturday night traffic was very heavy until about 1am and continued sporadically thereafter. On Sunday night the traffic was very heavy until about midnight and continued at a lower level thereafter.

- HGVs delivering staging and equipment during the two weeks before the event and collecting it afterwards. Large numbers of HGVs used the route through Denton instead of the A52 route, routinely ignoring the 7.5 tonne weight limit sign on Belvoir Road.

6. The road through Denton is totally unsuitable for heavy traffic for the following reasons:

- Footpaths are too narrow for wheelchairs, children's buggys or for an adult to walk alongside a child, vulnerable person or dog. The paths are so narrow in places that, even walking in single file, pedestrians are dangerously close to traffic.

- On the main street there is only a path on one side of the road but it changes sides half way along, so pedestrians are forced to either cross the road or walk on the road

- The road is popular with cyclists and walkers, not just residents

- Not all properties have driveways so some residents' vehicles are parked on the road

- There are dangerous blind bends as the road passes through the village.

7. Our suggested solution to the above issues is to require a traffic management plan which ensures that all event traffic is excluded from Denton during, before and after the event. This plan must be agreed not only with Leicestershire authorities but also with Lincolnshire Constabulary and Lincolnshire County Council, in consultation with Denton Parish Council. It should cover contractors' vehicles as well as event attendees.

8. Given that SatNavs might direct traffic through Denton to Belvoir Castle, preventing event traffic from driving through Denton would be difficult. It would require the organisers to be very clear in setting out the route to the event for both attendees and contractors, with appropriate signage protecting Denton. However, without some form of enforcement the extent to which these measures would reduce traffic is not clear and risks to public safety and public nuisance would remain.

9. One option is to close the road between Denton and Belvoir during all, or at least significant parts, of the event weekend. Given that this road was closed for about a fortnight earlier in 2022 for road works, it would not be unreasonable to close it from say noon on Friday until noon on Monday at places which would prevent traffic entering Denton on its way to or from the event. Provided sufficient notice were given, residents would be able to plan to use alternative routes, as we did during the road works.

10. Brown tourist information signs for Belvoir Castle direct visitors through Denton. This should not be seen as an excuse for using Denton as a route for event traffic. There is no comparison between some tourists visiting a stately home during its opening hours on the one hand, and literally thousands of vehicles driving through a quiet village, both day and night, on the other.

11. If the organisers cannot agree with the authorities on a traffic management plan which excludes all event traffic from Denton, then we suggest that Belvoir Castle is not a suitable venue for this event.

Noise – prevention of public nuisance

12. During the 2022 event we experienced pulsating low frequency pressure waves from the event music continuously for 11 hours on Saturday and 10 hours on Sunday. In the Noise Management Plan this is referred to as the "bass beat". Even inside the house, with good quality double glazing and all windows closed, we could not only hear but feel the pressure waves. As well as being a serious public nuisance, we believe that continuous exposure to this level of noise pressure represents a health hazard.

13. We note that the Noise Management Plan makes no mention of Denton. It says that villages ("Noise Sensitive Receptors") would benefit from the "inherent directivity of the sound systems" if stages are oriented away from the villages to reduce noise levels. However, from the site plan it appears that two out of the four stages are oriented almost directly towards Denton (broadly in an Easterly direction) and a third is oriented obliquely towards Denton. If these stages were re-oriented towards the West then, while the noise level might still cause a public nuisance, according to the organiser's experts the noise levels would be reduced in Denton.

14. We understand that in 2022 noise levels were monitored in a number of villages but were not monitored in Denton, towards which stages and hence noise had been oriented.

15. If the organisers are unable or unwilling to change the orientation of stages so that all stages and their associated sound systems are oriented generally westwards rather than eastwards, then we suggest that Belvoir Castle is not a suitable venue for this event.

16. In summary, we believe that Belvoir Castle is not an appropriate venue for an event of this nature, given the quantity of traffic it generates and the noise produced. Belvoir Castle is surrounded by quiet villages and is only accessible on unclassified roads. With the exception of the route from the A52 via Belvoir Road Bottesford, all roads pass through villages.

17. We ask that the Licensing Authority takes account of our concerns in its decision on whether to permit a licence for Forbidden Forest at Belvoir Castle and, if the event were to be granted a licence, that appropriate conditions be imposed and enforced to address our concerns.

R and A Pape

12 September 2022

Document file name: Pape letter re Forbidden Forest representation.doc