

LJ/2021/Severn Park

Events & Christmas Committee

28th July 2021

Guidance and Matters for Consideration Upon Receipt of an Application to Hire Severn Park on a Commercial Basis

Introduction

At a meeting of the Events & Christmas Committee on 27th July, the Town Clerk was asked to document some guidance and matters that are taken into consideration upon receipt of an application to hire Severn Park.

Severn Park is a green and relatively open space that at differing times can be used for a wide range of activities. The hire of large parts of the park for a commercial activity lasting for more than a day might likely be one of those wide range of activities. However, the application might have an impact on the ability of other activities being able to take place or on its neighbours. Each application will likely need to be considered with due regard to a wide range of competing (or complimentary) demands. The following looks to provide a non-exhaustive list of the items that we would generally consider.

Considerations

Length of Stay – An appreciation that there is some time required to set up and dismantle an event however, that should be kept to a bare minimum (so that the park is not seen as lorry park).

Scale of activity – The size of an activity will need to be considered a small funfair with several young children's activities will take up less space and create less noise than a full-blown fair with dodgems, a ferris wheel and a waltzer. An activity aimed at young children will more likely see its activity peak in the late afternoon or early evening whereas an adult targeted event might well see its peak later in the evening and be more prone to causing a nuisance to neighbours. Half a dozen large arctic trucks appearing on site or 100 Morris Minors are more likely to cause damage to the ground than a rally of tandem bicycles. Will the activity require additional toilet cleaning?

Detail of any accompanying documents – Does the application provide:

- a detailed proposed site plan
- a thorough risk and / or method statement
- a waste management plan
- a noise impact statement

so that the event can be imagined with ease.

Impact on the environment – Some assessment of the amount and type of litter that an event might create needs some thought along with any arrangements that the would-be hirer is planning to take to remove waste from site. We don't want lots of polystyrene cups floating down the river or have the Council incur significant additional costs to litter pick. Some thought needed to the amount of machinery operating at any one time that might throw out fuel residue.

Who is benefitting? - Is the event something that the residents or the Council are extremely keen to have (e.g. does it compliment the Town). Is the event more likely to see money spent and retained in the Town or is it more likely for money be taken directly out of the Town.

Existing Users – What impact does it have on other users of the park:

- Access to slip way for rowers
- Picnickers
- Use of car park
- Access to playground and green gym
- Dog walkers
- Walkers and runners
- Use of Rugby pitches

Impact on concessions – We have a number of concessions that trade under licence for a considerable annual fee; does the activity compliment them or hinder their trade and to what extent. Will reduced income for concessions effect the likely licence fee that concessions are willing to pay in the future and in turn reduce income for the Town Council.

Previous similar events – Has the Council received comments about similar activities in the past. Has the applicant got a good track record of complying with terms and conditions.

Town Council staff involvement - Is the activity dependent upon significant council staff involvement that detracts from normal business or leads to significant overtime costs.

Date of event – When is the event? Early spring or Autumn might increase the chance of rain and create soft ground that is more prone to damage by vehicles and increased repair costs. Mobile toilets are generally only on sight April thru' September.

Overnight camping – Activities that encourage overnight camping or people staying on site are not generally considered to be appropriate.

Enforcing Terms & Conditions – How easy is it to enforce the Council's terms and conditions? If a roller disco is operating and it is meant to close down at 8pm what is the impact if it decides to continue beyond that time? How easily can the Council close down an activity that transgresses?

Notice given – Is there time to consult with the neighbours / residents/ the Council and advise other potential ongoing users of the park ?

Other Bookings – The number of other bookings in a given period might affect the thoughts on a particular application, successive or close to each other weekends are considered to be inappropriate. Any more than a couple of large-scale commercial events might detract from the ability of residents to use the park as a versatile and largely unregulated venue. Note that there is a likelihood of a Town Carnival taking place on Severn park each year.

Summary

It is felt that a very prescriptive list of terms and conditions that seek to capture every eventuality would be difficult to produce. From time-to-time different considerations will have different weight to the suitability of an event. The comments above are designed to demonstrate some of the thinking involved in considering whether to approve an event or not. Going forward, officers of the Council can discuss applications with the Chair and/or Deputy Chair of the Events & Christmas Committee to appreciate or challenge a decision. The Committee can review the Terms & Conditions at regular intervals.

Lee Jakeman
Town Clerk