

TEMPORARY PREMISES LICENCE APPLICATION

DEVAUDEN FESTIVAL 23/05/25 - 25/05/25

RESPONSE TO OBJECTIONS

We fully understand the concerns that local residents may have about our festival at Upper Meend Farm / Humble by Nature and are keen to reassure everyone that the festival will not have the negative impacts that have been suggested. We have had a total of four objections and some of the concerns raised have been very specific, others indicating a more general concern. It is the intention of the festival organisers to be as open and transparent as possible, so we have grouped our answers below and offer them to all four objectors as a comprehensive response. If anyone requires further clarification or information, we would be very happy to meet and discuss the festival.

BACKGROUND

It is important first to offer some context. Devauden Festival was started in 2010 in order to raise money for Hood Memorial Hall in Devauden. It was conceived as a family friendly event in line with the ethos and aims of the charity that runs the hall. It remains a family-oriented event that provides a safe and enjoyable experience for attendees and a professional performance environment for emerging and established artists. It has experienced no significant disorder or illegal behaviour in its 15 year history and every year, the police offer guidance on how the event should be managed safely, which the organisers follow to the letter.

Every year we survey visitors after the event and here are two comments we received from attendees in their responses to the 2024 survey:

"As a first timer it was a lovely atmosphere. We trialled somewhere in 2023 which labelled themselves as family friendly - it really wasn't, whereas this year with you it was fantastic, relaxed, safe and comfortable."

"It was our first festival as a family with young children - and we all really enjoyed it! It felt safe and welcoming and relaxed."

The organisers are volunteers, some of whom are trustees of the charity, and they have many years' experience in running large events, taking a robust approach to managing risks and any issues that arise and ensuring the safety of all attendees of the festival. Although the festival is led, managed and staffed by volunteers, it is supplemented by professionals such as paramedics, security staff, qualified event electricians, lighting engineers and sound engineers.

We work with Monmouthshire County Council's Event Safety Advisory Group (ESAG), including submitting an event management plan, noise management plan, general risk assessment, fire risk assessment and fire plan for each festival and reviewing these with the ESAG. We also do a post-event review with the ESAG after each festival to capture lessons learned to feed into our future event management. Our event management has been rated as "the gold standard" by the ESAG leadership and the festival directors have presented at an event organised by the Gwent ESAGs on large event management.

There has been some unfortunate misinformation circulating about the 2024 event and problems in the village of Devauden, which we need to correct. Our intention here is purely to clear up misunderstandings as they create a false picture. We can categorically state that:

- it is not true to say that Devauden Community Council (the DCC) does not wish the festival to take place in Devauden
- the festival organisers were not responsible for waste tanks left by the roadside after the event. We submitted clear written evidence to the DCC and Monmouthshire County Council (MCC) on this issue
- noise levels are always monitored throughout the festival and are kept within the limits set by MCC. Power to amplifiers is switched off to prevent any disturbance to local residents at 11pm. There were no infringements of our licence in 2024
- the organisers had a two and a half hour meeting with the volunteers who raised issues and have taken on board their valid concerns in this year's planning
- all volunteers were asked for their feedback which was collated and shared with the organising committee
- we are unable to stage the festival in Devauden in 2025 because the fields previously used for camping and car parking are not available. There is no other reason for the move.

ACCESS / TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT

This is naturally a major area of planning for festival organisers. We have consulted with the MCC Highways team and have retained a highly experienced professional traffic management company to advise on the issue. Our aim is to provide trouble free access to and from the festival site for visitors without impacting adversely on local residents and road users.

Detailed plans are being laid now and local residents will have the opportunity to comment and to assist using their local knowledge. In outline, we anticipate the plan is likely to include at least the following elements.

- A one way system set up and signposted for all traffic wishing to enter the festival during the peak period. Outside of that period and once the majority of traffic has entered the site, the one-way system will be replaced by directional signs with different suggested routes for Monmouth and Chepstow traffic .
- On Sunday evening (when high traffic levels exiting the Festival are expected), we will reverse the one-way system and exit all Chepstow and Monmouth traffic via separate designated routes. This one-way system will

remain in place until noon on Monday, when most of the exiting traffic will have left.

- During high traffic flow periods, we will provide Police accredited traffic marshals at key junctions to maintain optimum traffic flow
- There are several minor roads in the vicinity that would be unsuitable for festival traffic. These will have "No Devauden Festival traffic" signs added at the junctions with significant roads.

Local knowledge and local authority guidance will help us refine our draft plans to enable traffic is not a problem area for the festival and local residents.

LACK OF LOCAL SHOPS MAY CREATE TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS

Devauden Festival has taken place in the village of Devauden since 2010 (interrupted by COVID in 2020 and 2021). Devauden has one very small village shop which does not have a large range of goods suitable for campers and closes at 5pm on Friday and 12pm during the weekend. It does not open on Bank Holiday Monday. Festival visitors are used to bringing supplies with them to most similar events, but certainly to Devauden. We have had an application from a trader who runs the equivalent of a corner shop from a mobile unit, which would cater for any forgotten provisions. We are also working with Newport Transport to provide a regular and cost-effective enhanced bus service for the Festival weekend; we will be actively encouraging its use by Festival attendees, further mitigating private vehicle movements.

NOISE

We have a noise management plan for each festival. We take measurements of noise levels and we follow MCC Environmental Health noise guidelines. Our noise management approach includes ensuring all stages are shut down by 11pm (and if necessary our chief electrician will turn off the electricity supply to a stage to enforce this). MCC Environmental Health also monitors noise levels and in our review session with them for the 2024 festival they confirmed we did not exceed guideline noise levels after 11pm.

We will engage the services of an independent professional noise management company. They will offer advice on the best site layout to reduce noise impact and monitor noise levels on site and at various locations around the festival site and within the locality. We manage sound dynamically in real-time on each stage based on sound level readings to ensure we operate with minimal noise impact on local residents.

We operate line array speaker systems on both our main stages (the largest PA systems). Line array speakers offer significant advantages for noise reduction by providing highly controlled sound dispersion, minimizing sound scattering, and reducing unwanted reflections.

We are also conscious of the noise generated by people leaving the festival, and in Devauden to minimise disturbance to local residents we routed people away from houses

and deployed marshals with signs asking people to be quiet. At the 2024 festival we ran a silent disco on Friday and Saturday nights after the stages closed to stagger people leaving and therefore reduce noise levels.

Our noise management approach also includes actions such as orienting stages/speakers away from residential areas, monitoring stage sound levels and limiting sound power output in response and providing a contact phone number for local residents to call if they wish to complain. Our noise management approach will be adapted for the new site in 2025, and we have already met with MCC Environmental Health on site to discuss this.

CRIME AND DISORDER / SAFETY / BAD BEHAVIOUR / ALCOHOL /PUBLIC NUISANCE

Devauden Festival is unlike many of the events that grab the national headlines. The audience is heavily skewed towards families and comprises a higher percentage of older people than many other similar events. There is a dedicated area called The Wonder Burrow with children's entertainers that attracts and retains that audience.

Volunteer marshals will be supplemented by supervisors licensed with the Security Industry Authority (SIA), and the number of marshals and supervisors will be as specified by the police. This year, we will operate with a ratio of one SIA guard per two hundred attendees, meaning that at peak attendance times, there will be around 22 guards present. We will operate 24-hour security on site covering all Festival areas, including entrances, car parks, camp fields and Festival fields.

The festival operates a central control room that is manned 24 hours a day. This enables all communication, whether off-site or internal radio communication, to be logged and appropriate corrective actions taken immediately.

Evidence of age will be required from anyone requesting alcohol who appears to be under age. A log will be maintained of refusals to serve alcohol. All festival goers must wear wristbands at all times and anyone wearing an "under 18" wristband will not be permitted to buy or consume alcohol. CCTV will be installed at the premises covering any area serving alcohol and images from the CCTV are retained for a period of 31 days. There will be clear signage indicating that CCTV equipment is in use and recording at the premises.

The festival will operate a zero-drug policy, and all staff will be suitably trained on this policy. All crime incidents will be reported to the Police and any disorder will be entered into an Incident Log.

Notices will be posted at the entrance alerting all visitors to the festival rules. This is an extract from the notice posted at the 2024 festival.

We operate a no drugs policy

- Drug dealing will be reported to the police
- You will be asked to leave if you take illicit drugs

Consume alcohol in moderation

- Anyone who is drunk or under the influence of drugs will be asked to leave
- We will not serve alcohol to anyone under the age of 18



CHILD SAFETY

As Devauden Festival is family oriented, child safety is paramount to the organisers and attendees alike, so over the years, we have developed and refined our approach to safety. Marshals carry radios and we have clear protocols in place. For example, Channel 1 is used for regular messages but all emergency communication is via Channel 11 and the codeword Beachley 99 is used when there is a missing child or vulnerable person, to avoid alerting the general audience to the situation. In 2024, any wandering /lost children were taken by marshals to the gazebo staffed by charity SARA (Severn Area Rescue Association) to arrange repatriation to their parents. A similar arrangement will be in place this year.

The Heras fencing that will be installed on the edge of the festival site to prevent illegal access will also serve to prevent children wandering off the site. Marshals at the junction between the car park / campsite and the festival itself will not allow any unaccompanied children to leave the festival site but would enact the lost child protocol to reunite such children with their parents.

ILLEGAL ACCESS

Marshals will check all tickets on entry and issue wristbands. Subsequent entry from the car park or campsite to the festival itself will require everyone to show a valid wristband. During the festival, anyone not clearly displaying a wristband will be challenged by marshals and SIA accredited staff. Fencing will be erected around the festival site perimeter and a dead zone or no man's land created between the fencing and surrounding woodland, so anyone in that area will be clearly visible to the security team.

RAW SEWAGE

Temporary toilets will be provided in the campsite and festival site. These will be provided by a professional company that comes to empty the toilets every morning. Showers will be provided on a similar basis and the grey water drained out for disposal elsewhere. Facilities will be provided for drivers of camper vans and similar to empty their onboard waste tanks and those bulk tanks will be removed by the supplier.

CURLEWS / LAPWINGS / WILDLIFE

The festival is more than a music event and the majority of people attending care deeply about the environment. We have a written environmental policy that reflects the charity's attitude to waste management, use of sustainable materials and protection of wildlife. We can assure interested parties that we will protect from harm any species or habitats that are identified to us. In the specific case of curlews that have been seen in a particular field on the farm, we will not use that field and will erect warning signs to stop any visitors from straying into the area or any activity likely to cause a disturbance.

We hope this information has helped address some misconceptions around Devauden Festival and helps allay the concerns expressed. We would be very happy to meet with anyone who wishes to discuss their concerns. We regret that previous consultation was not possible while discussions were taking place with the owners of Upper Meend Farm due to commercial confidentiality. Our aim is to run a fun event to raise money for charity. It is not a commercial venture, but is volunteer led. That does not mean it will not be professionally planned and managed. Indeed, the festival is in its third year of a grant given by Event Wales, part of the Welsh government, which recognises its professionalism, its volunteer emphasis and its contribution to the cultural and social fabric of Wales.

Festival Organising Team / Trustees of Devauden Hall CIO