



The Licensing Team,
London Borough of Merton,
14th Floor, Civic Centre,
London Road,
Morden SM4 5DX

Your ref: Application Reference WK/201803623

Dear Sir / Madam,

I am writing to object to the licence application by Dynamic Festival / MJMK Limited for a New Premises Licence for Morden Park Open Space on Saturday 8th September 2018, on the following grounds:

1. The prevention of crime and disorder.

I experienced the behaviour of festival goes first hand, on the day of the Eastern Electric festival in 2017, and I witnessed drug-related activity, disorder, drunkenness and anti-social behaviour at a level not normally seen in this area.

Many people arriving at the festival had already drunk a lot of alcohol. Many people were still drinking as they passed the consecrated grounds of St Lawrence churchyard, and they threw their vodka and other spirit bottles into the churchyard (as well as onto the pavement). There was widespread drunkenness amongst the people on London Road as they approached the festival.

Some people passing by the driveway to the Rectory were disorderly and abusive to those trying to safeguard the property.

A group of women trespassed onto the Rectory drive and urinated onto our driveway. They were abusive when challenged.

During the day we found used condoms behind the porch of the Church entrance. I remind you that the Church and churchyard are consecrated ground and have been a place of prayer, worship and dignity in this community for centuries.

After the event the street and churchyard were littered with NO bottles, which is evidence of drug-related disorder directly attributable to the festival event.

I fear for my own safety at the Church and Rectory during festival events, and for the safety of those wishing to visit the churchyard and attend church services, since I am aware that many young people today carry knives. This year we are having to organise volunteer stewards in our churchyard during the festival in August, and we would have to do the same for this festival. This will inevitably put those volunteers at risk, but it is clear that neither the festival organisers, the council nor the police are capable of ensuring the safety and security of the church grounds – unless this licence is rejected.

Someone might ask why the police have no reports of this disorder? It is because ordinary people like me have learnt that reporting it is pointless. Are we to call the police when abused by festival goers passing by? The most we expect is to be given a reference number, and so we do not bother. The disorderly behaviour happens, but the police are unaware.

Are the council unaware? They claim that the Eastern Electric festival in 2017 happened with no problems, but they have ignored my own report to them of the difficulties we faced at St Lawrence Church on the day. All we hear from the council is “ah, but they are paying us £50,000”, and that seems to trump everything, even the licensing committee’s deliberations.

If you allow this licence, you will be promoting crime and disorder on the streets of Merton, and on the private property of its residents and churches. There is clear evidence of drug-related activity, disorder, drunkenness and anti-social behaviour which can be attributed directly to the presence of large music festivals in the park. There is every reason to suggest that the Diynamic festival will be just as bad, and the licence should be rejected.

2. Public safety

Whilst apparently some effort has gone into ensuring the safety of those inside the park, little effort or thought has been put into the safety of local residents living on the routes approaching the park. The crime and disorder I referred to in 1. directly affects their safety.

In particular for this event there seem to be no plans for safe arrival and drop-off by car. In 2017 at the Eastern Electric festival we experienced dangerous driving and abuse from drivers approaching the event to drop people off – public safety was compromised, and it was just by luck that there were no accidents. There is every reason to expect the same behaviour at this festival.

The licence should be rejected on the grounds of public safety.

3. The prevention of public nuisance

A lot of litter will be left by those arriving at the festival. Perhaps the organisers will claim that they will clear the park up, but why should we have to clear our consecrated churchyard of half-empty booze bottles and used condoms? Last year at EE no litter was moved outside the church until 5pm, and even then it was just collected into bags and left on the path. More litter was left at the end of the festival, and was still in the street on the Sunday morning.

This is a public nuisance, and the licence should be rejected because of this. It is pointless asking the organisers: “will you stop the litter from happening?” – they will just say “of course” and make ineffective plans that leave us to pick up the mess.

The noise level experienced by those living near the festival is appalling. Yes the gadget measures a number within limits, but those limits were designed to protect us from Concorde flying overhead, not this kind of music, which has a never-stopping, all-pervading thud thud thud disturbing everything you try to do.

This particular festival falls at exactly the same time as my daughter’s wedding reception, which we are holding in our garden, which is directly adjacent to Morden Park Open Space, and within metres of the festival boundary. We will hardly be able to hear ourselves speak at the reception, which will be ruined. Guests leaving our reception are likely to be subject to abuse by some of those leaving the festival. There will be problems with parking and public transport. This is a definite public nuisance, and the licence should be rejected.

4. The protection of children from harm

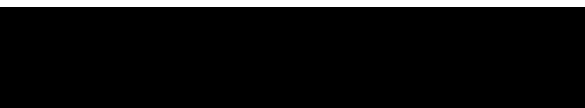
There is no guarantee of safety for any children who are pedestrians in the area while people are arriving at and leaving the festival. Why should children have to see people urinating in public? Why should they have to hear the abuse of the drunken festival goers? What if a child picked up and drunk from a half-empty vodka bottle? It would be wise for parents to keep their children well away. But why should they have to?

The licence should be rejected on the grounds of protecting children from harm, in particular moral harm.

By the time this comes to the Licensing Committee for consideration I expect that we will have had further experience of the kind of problems I have described, at the 2018 Eastern Electrics festival on 4-5th August. I expect to be able to present more evidence at that stage.

Throughout I have referred to the Eastern Electric festival, as this is a comparable festival to the Diynamic festival. I note that they have different organisers, and the Diynamic festival is slightly smaller. The nature of the music and the festival goes is nevertheless very similar, and the scale of the Diynamic festival is still very large.

Yours sincerely,



David Heath-Whyte
Team Rector, Church of England Parish of Morden



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