

SOLSTICE EVENTS 2020: WHAT SHOULD WE DO?

1. This paper:

- Summarises comments made at APC's meeting on 2 July
- Suggests ways forward for 2020.

Comments made at APC's meeting 2 July

2. APC's draft minutes noted councillors' comments to the effect that:

- There appeared to have been less trouble than the previous year and from a business perspective solstice had been successful
- Graffiti on a NT gate and the tree with roots had been reported to the NT and also a piano that had been placed next to the stones
- Ms Byatt had had feedback from a resident in Green Street who had subsequently written to both the PC and NT outlining her concerns, including the large numbers of vehicles and visitors using Green Street as a car park, campsite and toilet
- There had been a family friendly atmosphere on the evening of solstice, especially for the King's Drummers, but illicit parking had been pervasive along Green Street
- The police had been visible and had made four arrests
- Closing the High Street had worked well although one resident had been blocked in temporarily
- There had been some problems with the permit system for residents who did not know their visitors' car registration number but businesses and other organizations in the village had responded well and obtained the information
- Fencing off the nursery site by the local farmer had worked well although 10-15 vehicles had parked along the highway through Avebury Trusloe and 4-5 vehicles near Windmill Hill but no issues or damage to report
- Residents had been impressed with how the police and NT had managed to maintain order along Ridgeway.

3. The NT's experience was recorded as follows:

- The event: solstice had been a quiet, peaceful and positive experience for all who had worked across the site and attendees had been grateful for hot beverages sold by the NT during nocturnal hours

- The aftermath: clearing the Ridgeway had taken longer than expected; it had been a grim clear up operation with some revellers still in situ on the morning of Sunday 23 June. The NT had been disheartened by the high level of vandalism and heritage crime including graffiti on the Farthings' barn and West Kennett Long Barrow.
4. In discussion it was noted that, although the numbers of people visiting Avebury was not increasing, the potential for damage at solstice in Avebury was considerable compared to Stonehenge because, unlike Avebury, solstice at Stonehenge was actively managed by EH. Great effort had been made by EH to close the byways at Stonehenge and that the same could be done in Avebury.
 5. Both the Clerk and the NT had received a complaint from a disabled person who had found it difficult and cost prohibitive to park their campervan within short walking distance of the Village. It was noted that ASSC provided parking for campervans at £15 but the NT's insurance policy did not allow them to provide overnight parking for campervans.
 6. Members felt that barriers on the Ridgeway byway could have been placed closer to the car park on Overton Hill and there should have been better provision for disabled parking in the village.
 7. It was agreed that the Chairman and / or Ms Service would attend the ASOP debriefing meeting on 8 July and report back to the PC at its next meeting in September.

Ways forward for 2020

Arrangements for 2020 should start from those made for 2019 and previous years and in addition:

- Overnight parking for camper vans should be permitted at the south car park and/or at East Farm
- Gates on the Ridgeway should be positioned to prevent vehicles passing beyond the car park on Overton Hill or accessing AVE5
- Green Street should be subject to the same access restrictions as the High Street
- Parking enforcement should continue.

In the absence of formal management of the event, 'behaviour issues' can be addressed only by the visible presence of staff from the National Trust, the police, and St John's Ambulance.

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