

To Councillors

I am sorry that the Councillors time is being taken up with one resident's over reaction to purely administrative actions by the Clerk in relation to the organisation of a commercial public event. This is a time of considerable restrictions on such events due to the Covid-19 pandemic (which has already claimed the lives of over 46,000 UK residents).

To be clear, no decision has been asked of, or made by the Parish Council regarding this event. The inference that it has is simply incorrect.

It is likely that any event to be held on the School Field would also impinge on the section managed by the Parish Council, if only for entrance / exits via the village hall car park. I therefore asked the organiser for minimum documentation for any activity on council-controlled premises or land, i.e. proof of insurance cover, risk assessments (including Covid-19 security provisions) and method statements, none of these were provided.

I also offered to assist several concerned residents to contact the local enforcement authorities (PCSO) to inform them of the event – which was publicly advertised. The aim of this being to assure the residents that the event was being held in a safe manner as under the current guidelines it is against the law for groups of more than 30 people to gather in a private home or outside space, unless planned by an organisation in compliance with coronavirus guidelines (“Keeping Workers and audiences safe during covid-19, it is a 40 page document). This role of assisting local residents contact local authorities such as Mendip District Council or Somerset County Council departments, Utility Companies, etc. is one I consider a normal part of the Clerks role.

I do accept that with the benefit of hindsight, given the awkward personal relationship between myself the organiser following events earlier in the year, it would have been less inflammatory to have passed the PCSO contact details directly to the residents, rather than forwarding on the information myself in my capacity as Clerk..

However, I do not consider advising the local authority of the holding of a publicly advertised event to be an “attempt to sabotage” that event.

Such a conclusion can only be drawn if it is assumed that once aware of the event, the authorities would consider it as illegal or unsafe. If all proper permissions and procedures are in place then this is not a likely outcome.

In the end the event went ahead, apparently successfully. Parish Council controlled land was used (without permission being sought or granted). Assuming no further action is taken by the enforcement authorities, than it would appear that sufficient procedures were put in place. Hopefully time will not show otherwise.

In conclusion, while I am sorry to be the cause of additional workload of the Councillors, I do not feel my actions were anything other than would be expected of the Proper Officer of a Local Authority faced with notice of a public event to be held within their jurisdiction.

Yours

Kate Egan  
Parish Clerk  
Croscombe Parish Council