

Back in February 2022. Newent Onion fayre requested permission to use the Arboretum to hold a summer event, (original document included in the meeting papers) the council agreed to this in principle but asked for some clarification on a few concerns.

Information included below.

1. Extract from the minutes of full council meeting held on 27.02.2023
2. Questions that were addressed to the Onion fayre regarding the event.
3. A response from Newent Onion Fayre addressing concerns.

1. Minutes from full Council Meeting 21.02.2023

Newent Onion Fayre Event 2023

9.1 To approve permission for the Newent Onion Fayre Committee to use the arboretum as the main venue for a weekend event, either the first or second weekend in September 2023.

As discussion occurred regarding Item 9, and an amendment to the original item was proposed as follows:

“To approve in principle permission for the Newent Onion Fayre Committee to use the arboretum as the main venue for a weekend event, either the first or second weekend in September 2024 and for the clerk to contact the Onion Fayre Committee to discuss council concerns and for the Onion Fayre Committee to come back with answers to those concerns”.

The council resolved by a majority decision to approve in principle permission for the Newent Onion Fayre Committee to use the arboretum as the main venue for a weekend event, either the first or second weekend in September 2024 and for the clerk to contact the Onion Fayre Committee to discuss council concerns and for the Onion Fayre Committee to come back with answers to those concerns.

2. Questions/concerns from the Council to the Onion fayre regarding the event.

I am contacting you regarding the concerns that have been raised by council and am requesting a response, on behalf of the town council.

1. Have you considered other venues, and not the arboretum for this event?
 - a. Which ones?
 - b. Why were they not suitable?
2. Would the use by the Onion Fayre close the public space for the time of usage, in effect not allowing the public to use the space, only those who had purchased tickets to the event?
3. How do you plan to alleviate public concerns regarding use of the space, if they are unable to use it for the weekend period?
4. What other precedents have there been regarding closing public space for this type of event?

3 Response from Newent Onion Fayre addressing concerns

1. We were looking for a venue that:
 - could provide a special atmosphere.
 - have adjacent areas available for parking and camping.
 - be relatively easily accessible with as little disruption as possible for local traffic.
 - be within walking distance of the town, with safe pedestrian access routes available
 - able to be fenced and made secure for crowd management
 - would allow noise management to cause as little disturbance as possible.
 - low potential for damage due to high footfall over the ground.

The arboretum ticks all of those boxes.

The park and lake scores on the first and fourth point, but is not suitable as it cannot satisfy all other requirements.

Open fields out of town were considered,

- they would not provide us with anything to make the event 'different', so scores zero on our first requirement.
- routes to town would not have been safe
- distance from town would have encouraged more driving, which would be undesirable and create more potential problems
- noise management would be more difficult

We had considered other venues, but the Arboretum was by far the most attractive.

2. Access to the event would be for ticket holders only. We are mindful of others who would normally be using the arboretum, so therefore during set up and breakdown we would endeavour to maintain as much public access as possible, any areas closed off would be for health and safety/security reasons. If it is logistically possible to allow some of the arboretum to be available for general use while the event is on we would try to do this.

3. We are hoping that local people will come and enjoy the event. The ticket prices will be set at a level that local families can afford, and they can come and enjoy the added attractions that our event will bring to the site. It will be for one weekend in September, and will provide as much enjoyment for local people as the Onion Fayre used to, with less disruption to the town.

4. Battersea Park has a long history of hosting ticketed events, from the Festival of Britain Pleasure Gardens to Formula E motor races.

Cornwall Council allow ticketed events to occur on public open spaces with permission.

Closer to home Cheltenham Borough Council advertises that permission can be given for ticketed events to take place in parks in the town.

Item 10 Newent Onion fayre 2024

Huntingdon Council state in their Events Policy for Parks and Open Spaces that permitted events include ..."Private hire, that is defined as an event to which admission is by ticket only.."These are a few examples of the many councils that permit use of their parks and grounds for ticketed events.