



C/o Alland Nurseries  
Botloes Green  
Newent  
Glos  
GL18 1DW

## *In Celebration of the Noble Onion*

Town Clerk  
Newent Town Council  
Newent Community Centre  
Ross Road  
Newent  
Glos GL18 1BD

22nd January 2024

Dear Neil

### **Onion in the Wood Festival**

On behalf of the committee, I write to inform you that, with great regret, Newent Onion Fayre Committee have had to make the decision to cancel their plans for the new 'Onion in the Wood' Festival this year.

For over twelve months now, the committee have been investing a lot of their own time and effort into trying to get this event off the ground, not to mention the expenses that have already been incurred by the committee, so this has not been a decision taken lightly.

We are grateful for the support we have received from Newent Town Council, and the confidence held by the council that the Onion Fayre Committee have the skills and ability to run this event. Therefore it is only right and proper that we give an explanation for our decision.

Following correct and proper procedures, we first obtained permission from all the landowners involved, and then set about obtaining the necessary licences to be able to run the event, which we have now successfully achieved.

Unfortunately, during this process it became apparent, that a small number of people objected to the proposed event, and gained a significant amount of social media support. The fans were flamed with a quantity of unfounded, factually incorrect, untrue and, quite frankly, several libellous comments flying around on Facebook.

The delay, caused by the need for the licence application to go to a hearing, has delayed our ability to be able sell tickets by 2 months.

The negative publicity has had an impact on our ability to attract local sponsors, although, some of those who know us have still remained steadfastly supportive.



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The objectors continue to campaign and try to put obstacles in our way. Threats of direct action have been made, so even if it does not happen, we have to commit planning and expense towards that possibility.

The Onion Fayre Committee set out with the best intentions, to create a community event with the spirit and atmosphere of the old Onion Fayre. The position now is that we have a divided community. Continuing as we are will only deepen the divisions.

We also realise that the Town Council and individual councillors are facing increasing pressure from those against the festival, which at the minimum distracts from more pressing community issues such as the proposed parking charge increase being considered by the District Council.

The Onion Fayre Committee have taken on board some of the representations made by objectors and accordingly, plan to make alterations to the layout in due course. This adds yet another uncertainty.

The next three months would require us to commit to significant expenditure, including deposits to secure further band bookings (a task already delayed due to the uncertainties of waiting for the licence), and reserve infrastructure equipment.

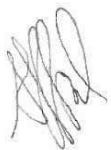
The financial risks of continuing this year are now too high to be considered acceptable, which is why we have been forced to make the sad decision to cancel.

This will allow time for the Town Council and other involved landowners to consider our amended plans, and time for final completion of the details of the agreement between the Onion Fayre and the Town Council to remove any uncertainties for the future event.

We do now, of course, hold the premises licence, which although would need a variation, gives us confidence on that front.

I trust that you understand the reasons behind our decision, and the disappointment that we feel in not being able to announce that Toploader would be performing in Newent as our Friday night headline this year!

Yours sincerely



Andy Offord  
Chairman,  
Newent Onion Fayre Committee



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