

Questions from councillors

Question 1 – Councillor Robin Sider BEM

(received 13/6/22 at 18:37)

“The Shepperton Village Fair is the largest community event in the borough attracting a throughput of between eight and nine thousand people each year, and in the past many years ago was the leading event in what was called the Spelthorne Fortnight. The council have insisted on security and a no alcohol policy as a result of an incident which took place some 10 years ago on the river bank two hours after the Fair had closed and was nothing to do with the Fair in any way shape or form. The cost of security is now £2000 which the volunteer Fair committee endeavour to raise. At the Fair this year on the 11th of June, two men were found to be drinking wine in Manor Park close to the main public access corner to the park. They were asked to stop drinking and informed that there was a No Alcohol policy in place and asked to move off site. They refused, and when Security insisted they comply, they showed signs of escalation. They were told that the police would be called but showed no concern. After a further warning, and in consultation with the Chairman of the Fair committee, security called 999 for assistance. At the end of a 15-minute conversation with the police, the police told them that this was nothing to do with them unless public order was breached, that no law had been broken, and it was up to the council to prosecute. Since the Chairman did not wish the incident to escalate to the point of public disorder and possible violence in the middle of families enjoying themselves, he agreed to Security backing off, whereby the men continued drinking. One of the duties of the security company is to monitor any violation of the No Alcohol policy. It now seems that this policy is unenforceable either by the Fairs security contractors who this year were former Gurkhas, or the police, and is a policy which has no impact on anyone who chooses to ignore it.

Will the Leader of this council share my concerns that this incident could well have escalated into public disorder and that police should have attended in the interest of public safety?”

Question 2 – Councillor Robin Sider BEM

(received 20/6/22 at 17:02)

“In an email of the 8th of June 2022, emanating from the Head of Communications at Spelthorne Council, all councillors were advised that on the 9th of June, Ashford Multi Storey Car Park would be closed until further notice because of recent substantial vandalism, that meant that it was now not safe for residents to use. In its communication to residents for such action, the council apologised for such closure, and went on to say ‘ The car park at Church Road has been the subject of targeted and systematic vandalism which has resulted in significant damage to the fire doors, stairs, shutters, barriers and lighting’. In conclusion, a council spokesperson added ‘We are very sorry for the inconvenience that this will cause for some people but hope that everyone will understand that we had no choice in the matter.

In view of the foregoing, can the Leader of the Council inform me what action has been taken by the police to combat such wanton vandalism and destruction of council property?”