

Noise Management Plan for Place St Maur, Bognor Regis

1. Background

Place St Maur is an area of predominantly hard landscaped open space in Bognor Regis. It is owned and managed by Arun District Council. It is bounded on the east by the Alexandra Theatre and The Regis public house/restaurant, both of which are tall two storey buildings, on the west by 4 ground floor commercial units with 4 storeys of residential apartments above that (Mountbatten Court), to the south by the pavement and highway of The Esplanade, and to the north by the pavement and highway of Belmont Street.

Place St Maur is in an exposed location with strong predominantly SW winds which can carry sound away downwind. There is also often the noise of the sea on the shingle and traffic noise from The Esplanade and Belmont Street as background sounds.

Until a couple of years ago Place St Maur was the site of a thrice-weekly market which was on site with vans early in the morning and had traders shouting loudly through the day, however it has been lightly used for temporary events such as a seasonal ice rink and Christmas stalls and intermittent commercial activity such as an ice cream van over the last 2 years.

Place St Maur is part of the wider Regis Centre strategic development site however the planned redevelopment of this area is potentially 7-10 years from commencement. The planning use for this area is being changed to regularise its existing use for markets and a variety of different types of events and commercial operations. It is also planned to increase the use of Place St Maur as it is a key strategic link between the town centre and the seafront, and activity is needed to draw people from town to seafront and vice versa.

Although it is anticipated that many of the activities on Place St Maur will not require any consideration of noise issues, this Noise Management Plan takes account of such activities that will, and provides guidance for activity operators about how to plan and mitigate for the impact of noise.

As there is no fixed and permanent use for this area, each different use/activity needs to be mindful of the adjacent residential and business activity and assess the noise impact of what they do and how they do it on their “neighbours”. The vast majority of the activity happening on Place St Maur are actively managed via existing Arun District Council processes, for example Property and Estates licensed commercial activity (concession), Events Management process and Street Trading Licensing. These processes all provide a rigorous operating and management framework to ensure activity is fully planned, well-managed and controlled. If noise is still a concern, the monitoring and enforcement powers held by Arun DC Environmental Health can be invoked, however adherence to this Noise Management Plan should mean this action will never be required.

2. Aim of the Noise Management Plan

The aim of the Noise Management Plan is to consider, plan for, mitigate and manage the impact of noise generated by activity on Place St Maur on the adjacent residents and businesses. Each activity needs to consider the following:

- Actual noise level (not measuring the decibel level specifically but is any particular event going to be quiet, moderate or really loud!)
- What the noise is (music, people noise, generator noise, doors banging, set up/close down of events, delivery vans etc).
- Where the noise source is located in relation to the “neighbours” (i.e. is the generator right underneath their balcony, or at the other end of the site). For Place St Maur, the most noise sensitive “neighbours” live in Mountbatten Court, a low-rise residential building to the west of the site, however there are also adjacent businesses.
- Timings (i.e. opening to closing time) and in the case of sustained noisy activity, the planned breaks in that activity.
- Duration (how long is the event going to be there – hours, days, weeks?)

- Frequency – if there is going to be a loud event, how often are we going to hold it per year? People will be more tolerant of something that disturbs them one weekend a year, but be justifiably worried if the same event happens every fortnight.

3. Specific procedures

3.1 General

Planning for the activity must specifically consider the level of noise generated, and how to reduce and mitigate for noise nuisance. For example, when planning the site layout, locate items that emit noise day and night such as a generator as far away from residential accommodation as possible, chose a silent running model and enclose with noise attenuating materials, arrange noisy rubbish collections like bottle-bin emptying within daytime hours when the noise will not wake up people living nearby, ensure outdoor furniture has rubber feet etc.

Ensure that all activity organisers and their operatives are aware of the criteria set down in this Plan, and commit for their activity to work within the criteria set out in the Plan. For example, a market operator would need to communicate to stallholders that it is not permitted to shout about their wares or leave vehicles onto Place St Maur.

The activity organiser is responsible for communication, engagement and liaison with residential and business “neighbours” in the event of an activity that could potentially impact on neighbours. Something like a Trading Standards gazebo, the Macmillan Cancer support roadshow or a one day kids art project would not require this, but a longer or noisier event would. Details must be circulated in advance of the activity, and include what the activity/event is, when it is being held including set-up and clear away times, opening hours etc, together with contact details for the event organiser. A “charm offensive” approach also works well – remember you are the visitors here – so things like the offer of free tickets or other freebies, or offers of joint working with businesses may also help to maintain positive relationships. Staff must be briefed on the potential for noise nuisance and how to manage customers to minimise disruption.

Staff must also be briefed on how to record, deal with and action any calls or complaints about noise. Staff must be advised to arrive and leave quietly as they are likely to come and go outside of the hours when noisy activity is permitted.

3.2 Activities with music/PA

For activities with a sustained duration of music/PA use (i.e. more than 4 hours), an organiser’s contact phone number is to be made available to neighbours, and Arun DC’s Environmental Health department be made aware of the activity in advance of its commencement (which would happen automatically as part of the Event Application process which such activities would need to complete).

Planning for the activity must specifically consider how to reduce and mitigate for music/PA noise nuisance, for example, orientate speakers away from residential accommodation, use of volume control limiters etc.

For short-term events (say a weekend) with loud music/PA activity, no music or PA use is allowed before 10am or after 10pm. An example could be a weekend-long Oktoberfest Festival with bands and music playing; if the activity was taking place on a week-day, consideration should be given to an earlier finish. For longer-term activity with music/PA activity, no music or PA use before 10am or after 9pm, for example the seasonal ice rink, food/drink stalls and children’s rides open for 6 weeks with background Christmas music, or a roller rink with background music for every weekend between May and October.

3.3 Noise generated by people

Activities can become noisy with children screaming, people talking and laughing etc. This is great because we want people to enjoy themselves, but this can have a negative impact on neighbours at anti-social times of day. Accordingly this type of activity is restricted to after 10am and before 10pm.

3.4 Alcohol sales

Activities that include alcohol sales can become noisy as the alcohol affects peoples’ volume control. Accordingly this type of activity is restricted to after 10am and before 10pm and may be subject to a licence condition requiring the use of SIA registered staff to control customers if this is deemed necessary.

Late night exits and egress routes should be directed away from residential areas where possible, and if relevant, notices placed by exits advising customers to be quiet when leaving the premises.

Music/PA must be reduced in volume 30 minutes prior to the end of alcohol sales, then silenced promptly at the end of alcohol sales. This will assist staff to manage the exit of customers in a controlled and dignified manner to minimise disturbance to surrounding residents. Customers can be encouraged to wait inside the licensed premises for their taxi to arrive for the same reason.

3.5 Vehicles

No vehicles are allowed to drive or park on Place St Maur apart from those licensed by Arun District Council to operate commercially there, for example an ice cream van.

The only other vehicles allowed to drive or temporarily park are for deliveries, construction works such as landscaping and the erection of temporary buildings such as marquees.

No vehicular activity to take place before 8am or after 9pm except in emergency.

3.6 Construction of temporary structures

This covers the setting up and clearing down of structures and temporary buildings for activities, for example, erecting market stalls, building marquees etc. This activity can be noisy and can therefore only occur after 8am and before 6pm.

3.7 Equipment

Equipment required to service activities can sometimes be noisy and the quietest available equipment should be chosen, for example a silent running generator.

Such equipment should be sited as far away from the residential accommodation as possible.

The part of the equipment emitting noise should be pointed away from the residential accommodation, for example a fan used to blow up inflatables should point away from Mountbatten Court.

If equipment noise is still intrusive, noise baffling should be deployed to reduce the impact of the noise generated by the equipment.

Equipment making a noise should be turned off if possible overnight. Where this is not possible, for example food fridges, generator keeping the ice rink frozen etc, noise baffling must be used to suppress noise. This is especially important as it is much quieter at night and even low levels of noise can have an impact on neighbours.

Additional waste collections for specific activities on Place St Maur can be noisy with operatives talking, vehicles lifting and shaking bins, and noisy bottle collection. Bins should be located away from the residential accommodation if possible, and collections programmed to take place after 8am and before 6pm.

4. Review of Noise Management Plan

The Council will review procedures where appropriate in the light of any observations or complaints to refine procedures for the future.

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