

The letter dated 21/11/2022 from the applicant's agent Haydn Morris is another masterclass in obfuscation. Pages of it are given over to stating that Tournerbury Farm's gradual change from a conventional agricultural farm in 1987 to mixed use diversification in 2022 has in some way aggravated the amenity problems at Tournerbury Farm, and that the "context" of amenity would have been different had the farming operations remained as they were in 1987! What an extraordinary idea. The fact remains that the homes and bedrooms of the Tournerbury Farm owners and other residents, who suffer the worst disruption from the wedding business, are in exactly the same spot as they were in 1987. People still go to bed at night, and should be able to reasonably expect 7 hours of peace and quiet while they sleep, regardless of whether their day ended after hard agricultural work, or hard mixed use work, or both. All the important factors at the heart of the matter have been overlooked in this letter, nor are there any concrete proposals as to how to address the problem, given that the easy and obvious solution has been unilaterally discarded.

In a nutshell, the sole cause of the present amenity issue is due to the nature and volume of *wedding* traffic specifically, and how the protocols of weddings themselves have evolved over the past 25 years. No person present at the signing of the 1987 sale contract for Tournerbury Woods, however far-sighted, could possibly have anticipated the major changes that were to take place in the wedding industry decades later.

1. Weddings then and now

Back in the 1980's most weddings in the UK were daylight affairs only, with all the different elements, the marriage ceremony, wedding breakfast, speeches, champagne, dancing, joy and merriment, taking place between late morning and 6 pm on average when almost everyone, bar a very few close family members, would leave and go home. Nowadays additional evening celebrations are the norm. Whole groups of new guests arrive and mingle with day time guests staying on, whilst other day time guests leave the venue. The early evening changeover generates additional traffic, especially when new catering arrangements and different music or entertainment have to be laid on as well. Traffic movements during the evening sessions are also often at high levels, as different guests, staff and service vehicles leave and arrive throughout the evening at random times, unlike the daytime celebrations when most people stay put. Inevitably the highest traffic levels are at the end of the party when everyone leaves, but this can stretch over several hours on some days, and is always unpredictable in advance.

2. Alcohol

Whilst the consumption of alcohol is an awkward subject to address, there can be no argument that for a high proportion of guests who may have travelled huge distances to celebrate their friends' extra special day, the consumption of large quantities of alcohol is an essential part of the fun. Not everyone ends up drunk, but a significant number do, at every wedding. Many will have catered for this eventuality by allocating a car driver who doesn't drink alcohol, or by booking taxis. Nevertheless it is a subsection of this population who contribute to a very high proportion of the noise, loud music, shouting, rudeness and abuse regularly suffered by the Phillips very late at night, on any day of the week. On numerous occasions taxis arrive when the Phillips have finally fallen asleep and ring their doorbell to discover where they should go and/or wait, completely unaware of the disturbance and anxiety it causes. Alcohol is why inebriated guests smoking cigarettes while waiting for taxis in or close to hay barns are so dangerous. All sense of responsibility and self control is lost until the alcoholic effects wear off, and in between, the risk has to be managed by those who are sober but who would much prefer to be asleep.

3. Wedding bookings and timetabling

Many years ago nearly everyone in Britain married on a Saturday, but new demands and working arrangements have extended the days chosen to sometimes include every day of the week, although Tuesday and Wednesday are less common. In addition, couples prefer not only the summer months, but the peak months of June and July when they have the best chance of guaranteeing good weather. When demand is particularly high at Tournerbury, as was the case in 2021 when missed weddings from the 2020

lockdown had to be slotted in, a new wedding every day is booked in on a back to back basis from 8 am to 8 am precisely. As anyone who has ever been involved in setting up weddings will know, this extremely quick turn round is exceptionally demanding and requires precision timing for the delivery of supplies, tableware, flowers, decorations and exotic novelties. Attempting to get everything ready and perfect in a very short number of hours before the guests arrive, then dismantling everything at the end and removing all traces by 8 am for the handover, has inevitably led to a 24 hour a day industry involving dozens of vehicles, personnel and activity all day and all night long. Many weddings nowadays add extra amusements for their guests, including bouncy castles, fairground type attractions and photo booths. These too have to be transported in, set up, dismantled and transported out again within the 24 hour window. Last summer there were several consecutive weeks with 5 days of bookings concertina's in one after the other with very few breaks in the traffic. Intense periods like this contribute heavily to the loss of amenity for the Tournerbury Farm residents. The pressure will certainly continue to be particularly bad if 65 weddings a year are authorised, as this number is higher than in any other year since the Tournerbury Woods wedding venue started up. There have never been 100 to 200 weddings in previous years – this was merely a theoretical pipe dream to be aspired to in the previous planning application, now refused.

4. Fallback position

The applicant has stated that if APP/21/01310 is rejected on 1 December 2022, then alternative uses will have be found to keep Tournerbury Woods afloat economically. It has been suggested that renting out Woods Cottage for holiday lets, and the resumption of forestry and agricultural operations, will lead to “dramatically more traffic”. It is difficult to believe that this will be the case. Woods Cottage can only accommodate a smallish number of guests, certainly under 20, and there is a significant chance that they will choose not to drive back and forth through Tournerbury Farm in the evenings or very late at night. There are only limited forestry and agricultural activities that can take place within the SSSI, and it is very unlikely that these will take place in the middle of the night, or at weekends, or that the drivers will have been drinking.

I would be grateful if you could post this letter on the portal so that the members of the Planning Committee can see this situation from a different perspective to that put forward by the applicant. My premise is that the volume, type, timing and nature of wedding traffic to which Tournerbury Farm is subjected nowadays is not a function of the specific type of working activities that the occupants engage in. Wedding traffic has its own momentum, and will continue to destroy the amenity of Tournerbury Farm residents until it is stopped. Thank you in advance.