

Glastonbury Festival Feedback Report

11 Letters were received from Pilton Residents.

Their comments are incorporated into the report below.

Traffic

So, overall much better than last time however a resident strongly supports the suggestion made at the last Parish Council/GFL meeting that a working party, including some residents, is formed well before the next festival to discuss solutions to the problem of Neat Lane. Being dry helped keep everyone's spirits up for a good-natured cheerful festival for which everyone should be congratulated for better traffic management etc.

All seemed much calmer within the village itself on the pull-in before and during the festival but it's so often afterwards that can be a problem. The signs saying no HGVs etc were removed on the A361 far too soon, as several times within the last week after the festival ended huge flatbed trucks (that looked as if they would never make it round the bends in the village) coming down Neat Lane and asking builders there for directions...surely they shouldn't be anywhere near it and no doubt were instructed NOT to be?

It was felt that it really needs to be quite clear on their job sheets from whoever ordered them, if not GFL management themselves, to avoid the village if at all possible (this doesn't apply to within-village deliveries and collections, usually from smaller vehicles that *don't* get stuck on bends...).

Plus other vans and vehicles coming off site somewhat noisily through the village the last few days ... think this is litter pickers leaving perhaps?

On the whole the clearer signage definitely helped. But the AA signs only say 'deliveries' - maybe suggest they also need to say '& collections' for afterwards?

The lack of traffic jams on Wednesday and Thursday was remarkable. Several friends from Shepton Mallet commented that they left extra time for journeys only to find that they arrived at their destinations too early!

The Clearway down Bread Street was a big improvement on the last year. It was much easier (and safer) both to drive and to walk between Cumhill and The Long House.

The notes issued before the festival clearly showed that Pylle Road was one-way going east however this was not enforced leading to many confrontations in the narrow part near the Worthy Lane junction. Even if the stewards on the barriers toward Green Car Park had stopped all vehicles, the field opposite Phillip Eavis' house was full of parked cars which could turn in either direction.

“Official Land Rovers” (those with windscreens covered in stickers and usually with SHB on the side – not red half-tilts with white roofs) were noticeably slower and more considerately driven compared to last year; they seemed to go out of their way to give way to residents. Before the festival the only blatant speeding was by locals and some farm vehicles (they didn’t know which farm). During the festival the only vehicles going noticeably faster than advisable were the minibuses carrying stewards – but even they were probably within the speed limit.

The only problem experienced was on the Monday following the festival when a resident found it nearly impossible to get back into Pilton from Shepton Mallet. From the notes issued by Dick they thought they could turn right from the A37 onto the A361 at Beardly Batch but the steward thought otherwise; maybe he couldn’t conceive of a Harley-Davidson owner living in Pilton? (A small point – if you have no windscreen, where are you supposed to put a Residents Permit?)

Sun traffic workers that worked on the stop go board on Conduit Square. Tuesday first thing they turned up and put up the signs the attitude of the worker was shocking, moaning and swearing about not wanting be there, disappearing at 6pm when the traffic was still busy. Wednesday same worker decided that he didn't want to stop the traffic outside of a resident’s gate as it was too hot so took himself off down to the corner and was stopping the traffic on the corner! Leaving vehicles to drive down the pavement, the resident contacted the village office at 8.30am to make them aware, at 11am they were still stopping traffic on the corner, so they phoned the village hotline again, no answer so walked down, to make them aware again, that buses etc were mounting the pavement and that sun traffic were stopping vehicles on the corner, in the wrong place. 11.30 another phone call to the village hotline, 12.30 another phone call to the village hotline! Who then decided to send someone up and move the stop go board back outside of the residents gate.

No stop go boards on the Thursday, Friday, Saturday or Sunday during the day for all the Sunday ticket holders! So traffic was meeting on the corner and mounting the pavement. Sunday they arrived during the evening very helpful as was the worker on the Monday who stayed until 8pm

Totterdown Road was closed to traffic, but Back Lane was not, so any vehicles that could not get up Totterdown were coming up the road and swinging up Back Lane, those that did not swing out wide enough were then backing out onto the main road, or meeting cars coming down Back Lane, and backing out onto the main road!

Lorries, buses and even a 100 tonne crane on the pavement in the last month, leading up to and after the festival, the resident believes that this is now damaging the property and that something needs to be done about this. The resident stated that they did suggest to The Parish Council some months ago about requesting some bollards that can be fitted on the pavement edge to stop the vehicles mounting the pavement and asked what has been done about that request. They have permission for a new entrance for their house, but are yet to put this in as they fear that we will be hit by a speeding lorry that is driving down the pavement as they try to leave our property. The dropped kerb that they have paid to put in has been driven over so many times it is breaking up.

A resident wished to extend their thanks to Dick, Ali and Steve, for a great job done. Certainly traffic was much improved on the bend, and there was a noticeable reduction in festival goers with trolleys in the middle of the a361.

The resident expressed that there were continual issues experienced by the residents of Totterdown Lane (and Conduit Square) from the people dropping off, gathering and waiting for hours. Some were waiting from 8 in the morning for the Crown Inn to open, on people's steps, drives etc. Human excrement was left, and other things including drug paraphernalia. Police came several times and arrested drug dealers (who also apparently had knives and other things) in the area of the lane, the car park, the telephone exchange, the site of the house being built, and the field.

There were issues with 3 security people (numbers were sent to Dick and Steve).

The stewards from the carnival club were excellent. They dealt with so much and were helpful, professional and knew what they were doing. They had particular challenges with the Crown landlord who insisted that his customers should be dropped off and picked up in the zone that they couldn't.

A source of which is unknown advised drivers to go via West Compton instead of East Compton. Both the width of the roads and their condition made this thoroughly dangerous both for the local residents in their cars and when walking their dogs. As a result of this there were several accidents one resulting in verbal abuse and demands of any photographs taken to be removed from phones.

Taxis were using the area as a cut through to take festival goers to the site. Blatantly ignoring all signs. Although when the sign was removed from the Ridge Lane Dick Hamilton was asked to have it replaced and he said he had checked and there were no more available. Consequently this left that road open to anybody.

A resident went down to the junction of Totterdown Lane by the Crown Inn and asked the gentleman who was from North Petherton carnival club why he was letting cars through, he replied he was too scared to stop them on his own and they were travelling too fast for him to see if they had a pass and if they had what sort it was. They then went to speak to the four security people standing at the gate of the Crown Inn to ask what they were doing about it, to be told two of them were walking patrol apparently waiting for new batteries for their phones and the others were on duty at the gate. The question was asked 'Why the Crown Inn gate should be more important than the junction beggars belief'.

A resident of West Compton for 36 years wrote to state that have seen the Festival grow from small beginnings into the juggernaut that it is now. They would like to know why this year the Festival maps are directing people to approach Pilton through their tiny little hamlet. To reach the lanes at all people have driven through THREE No Access signs and the resident has seen the maps they are using which deliberately send them through West Compton. The lanes are very narrow (single track at best and sometimes barely that); there are high banks on both sides of the road surface so there are no verges, no pull-ins, no passing places. The hamlet lies in a deep dip so there are steep slopes down into the hamlet and an even steeper slope to get up and out towards Burford Cross and thence to Pilton. People have come off the main road from Wells to Shepton Mallet (at Church Hill). There is a No Access sign here.

There is another at Nashette Cottage and a third at Stump Cross. It is as if people are using the No Access signs specifically to get to our hamlet. One man came through on Thursday and was towing a caravan (behind a car which didn't look as if it had the power to do so.) The lane was so narrow and the vertical banks so high that he was scraping both sides of the caravan as he attempted to manoeuvre it. To get to where he was seen it was felt he must have slid down the hill from Stump Cross, then he had to negotiate the bends in the hamlet, and then he had to get his waggon up Winter's Hill: very steep and with four ninety-degree bends. Then the road goes down again to Burford, then up again and finally down to Totterdown Lane and into Pilton.

The resident advised that there had been three crashes and many near-misses. They saw two within one minute on Thursday, when Festival Goers were driving too fast to get in and met others driving too fast to get out. They meet on blind bends (with nowhere to swerve into) and don't seem to understand that people have the right to be coming in the opposite direction.

In previous years the police have set up a road block at the Telephone Exchange (Totterdown Lane) and have stopped people entering Pilton at that junction (pub and former shop) because they were considered to be queue-jumping. The police sent them down the tiny 'escape' lane opposite the Exchange and made them re-join the queue and take their turn. This is not happening now and it is causing mayhem in the hamlet.

One reason that the police have kept the lanes free is so that they have an escape route of their own if an incident occurs where they have to get round the traffic queues and road closures to attend the incident. This is impossible this year. On Thursday they saw a police car screaming down Winters Hill (from Pilton towards Shepton), lights on and siren blaring, just to get through the persistent line of Festival Goers who had ignored the No Access signs.

The resident read in the Shepton Mallet Journal that West Compton is named as a place where traffic chaos was expected on the Monday, when everybody was leaving. They felt that there shouldn't be any chaos down here. Nobody can get anywhere and felt if they are making for Shepton, they are going the wrong way. If they are making for Wells, it only needs a hundred cars (out of the thousands) and there will be a clogged, immovable line from the site to the bottom of Church Hill because the main road will be at a standstill and nobody will let those trying to join from the Hill get into the line. What people are supposed to do who have schools to get to and jobs to go to they couldn't imagine.

The resident requested that organisers please ensure that people understand they must NOT come down the lanes to get to the site? Could security be put security on the No Access signs to ensure Festival Goers obey the signs? Otherwise, what is the use of security?

The resident stated that they were there when there was no security at all; it was a free-for-all and Festival Goers could do what they liked and go wherever they pleased. They felt that these last two years have been a return to that state of affairs, with uncontrolled traffic going wherever it wants to and with no regard for those of us who have to live there, 'under siege', during the ten days that Festival Goers were 'haunting' the area.

A resident stated that they thought the overall management of the Festival from a village perspective was very good again this year, however (unusually) there is one small issue they thought organisers might want to be aware of.

They usually enter and leave the village from the Abbots Way exit. This year some of the 'security' personnel were surprisingly unhelpful when it came to ensuring they they could drive past unscathed. They frequently appeared belligerent and slow to move the gate, and then didn't move it sufficiently wide enough to allow us to move through without stress.

On one occasion her husband actually scraped the car on the gate - no real damage done but it was unnecessary. On another occasion the gap was so narrow they were forced to ask for help to turn right out of the village - none was given and they had to drive across stationary on-coming traffic without sight of what was approaching from the other side, at an angle which made the manoeuvre disproportionately difficult. For the most part they were just slower than usual to respond or just weren't looking out for you.

The resident stated that it was sufficiently unusual to be commented on and discussions with other villagers has elicited similar stories from that particular junction.

The Pilton Village passes again worked very well, and we also found it relatively easy to get out of the village to Wells (via Stoodly Lane) even on the busy days, like Monday

Litter

The lanes leading into the village were never included as part of the litter pick and there is a lot of rubbish left in Totterdown, Back Lane and as far as Stoodley.

Neat Lane

One incident concerning a very large truck towing an even larger caravan was reported to Steve and Dick before the festival. This vehicle was trying to get to Winding Lake Farm and had evaded the steward at the top of Neat Lane by arriving two hours after the steward had gone home.

Stewards

A couple of the Stewards on the main road at the top of Shutwell Lane, who were sometimes more intent in finishing their conversations than letting traffic off the road and into the village, and therefore caused the traffic to build up more than necessary

Stewarding at the A361 junction was greatly improved compared to last year. Firstly, having no workers vehicles entering from the field greatly reduced congestion. Secondly the stewards were generally older, bigger and more intimidating which a resident assumed was responsible for my not seeing anyone using the junction as a "drop-off". In addition, on most occasions when a resident used the junction two of the stewards were acting as an "advance guard" right on the junction which offered the chance to divert vehicles before they turned into Neat Lane or at least gave plenty of warning that there was some sort of entry control. It was also helpful that cones were used to make two distinct lanes. They only witnessed one "near miss" when a white van coming from the east was refused entry and proceeded to do a U-turn on the A361 into the path of a small car also heading east. Due to the bend in the road the van driver could not possibly see if anything was coming and the car was travelling at considerably more than 30mph. Despite that, the extension of the speed limit does seem to be having a beneficial effect.

On only one occasion was the stewarding of a lower standard and that seemed to be due to only two stewards apparently working, the rest being sat on chairs by the barrier having said that I should also say that all the stewards were exceptionally polite and good humoured throughout.

Security

Visible security was very noticeable. The “bag-searchers” at Mary’s Gate were exceptionally patient and good-humoured. However, on Saturday morning as a resident queued to hand in “pass-outs” several people pushed past and continued down Muddy Lane unhindered and with no identity check. The resident assumed that they had arm-bands to make it past the Gate Guard and wanted to point out that it was not really the fault of the staff checking tickets and issuing arm-bands – there just weren’t enough of them to cope with everything that was happening. Given the rumour that fake arm-bands were circulating, this was a little worrying.

Despite the searches and fireworks being banned, red flares were relatively common in front of the Pyramid stage. A rocket and one “Chinese lantern” so there is room for improvement.

Another resident stated that the security was generally excellent. The long term security team (like Lee on Hitchen Hill, Kev on Mary's Gate and Stan on Red Gate) are all excellent, and the fact that they come back year after year means that they can much more easily spot who should and should not be where. In addition, the short term security (e.g. further down Hitchen Hill) seemed very professional.

Parking –

The Village / Staff car park seemed relatively empty this year. I know there is always a restriction on the number of car park tickets offered to us, but I would suggest there is no reason not to issue a few more to local people if they need them. I am not sure if the good weather was a contributory factor, but I am not sure how it would be.

Lighting

The temporary lighting in Bread Street is a very good idea, as there are more people about and also people who don't know their way so well. It also gives peace of mind, as we can see if anyone is acting suspiciously.

Village Liaison - excellent. Dick Hamilton was personable, helpful and quickly and efficiently sorted any issues out . Big thanks to him!

Misc

Despite Dick’s efforts to reduce numbers I was staggered at the number of vehicles in Green Car Park, surely many times more than the population of Pilton and the local area.

Concerns were raised about local organisations who come voluntary to help with local knowledge at road junctions leading into the village.

A member of the Glastonbury Carnival Committee was doing his duty on Thursday June 22nd at Conduit Square. (Totterdown Lane and Westholme Rd) This person had his car parked at Hartley Cottages.

When the Foot Control Security came up to Hartley Cottages and noted that two cars with no

authorised parking tickets were parked at Hartley Cottages, they made enquiries as to who the car's belong to.

The person that was doing duties at Hartley Cottages thought that one of the car's belong to the person that was doing duties at Conduit Square.

The person concerned came up to Hartley Cottages obviously very concerned about his car being towed away following his duties which would have ended at 11pm. The resident contacted the village liaison office for him of which he spoke to someone they were not able to give him a sticker for his car.

The resident offered him parking in their drive which he accepted for that day and his duty on Saturday 24th.

The resident has discussed this with the Glastonbury Carnival Committee Chairman

A resident stated that this was their 5th consecutive year of attendance and felt the overall management continues to improve.

It was probably exaggerated by the good weather which had the maximum numbers out enjoying the Festival, but they sensed that the numbers attending are just slightly too high. They felt that there must be more than are licenced for and that will always be the case but they estimated that there were probably 250,000 total in the site. It was evident that nearly all of the many stages and events attended were a bit too crowded, most were just over-full, by a small percentage. It was probably most obvious when it was necessary to close the John Peel Stage for about a half hour during the Killers surprise appearance.

It is in general a very well run event.