

LUDDESDOWN PARISH COUNCIL

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Sarah Manston,
Marketing & Licensing Officer,
Kent County Council,
Registration of Births, Deaths, Marriages and Partnerships,
Invicta House,
County Hall,
Maidstone,
Kent,
ME14 1XX

30th January 2012

Your ref: GRA 119

Dear Ms Manston

Re: The Lost Village of Dode, Great Buckland, Luddesdown, Kent

Thank you for your letter of 17th January advising of the application by Mr Douglas Chapman for the renewal of the grant of approval of the above premises as a venue for the Solemnization of Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships. It is noted that Mr Chapman has requested that the current restriction of 42 ceremonies a year and also the days on which ceremonies can be performed be changed to unrestricted.

Luddesdown Parish Council considered this matter at its meeting on 23rd January 2012. The unanimous decision made at the meeting is that Luddesdown Parish Council strongly opposes any removal of any of the current restrictions and conditions relating to the use of The Lost Village of Dode as a venue for the Solemnization of Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships.

You may recall that before restrictions and conditions were imposed, the use of The Lost Village of Dode as a venue for ceremonies caused considerable nuisance to the residents of Great Buckland. It was as a response to dealing with this nuisance that various conditions and restrictions were attached to the granting of the licence. It is the view of the Council that the reasons for imposing these conditions and restrictions are as relevant today as they were when the conditions and restrictions were first imposed. The use of the venue for ceremonies still causes nuisance to the residents of

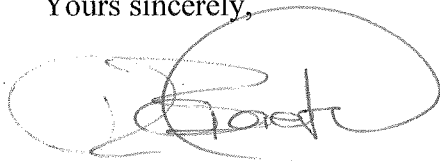
Great Buckland. The conditions and restrictions imposed are a compromise that limits the impact of the nuisance but does not eradicate it. Consequently to relax the conditions and restrictions in any way will upset the balance of interests achieved with the compromise and will have an adverse effect on the residents of this Parish.

The nuisance caused by the use of The Lost Village of Dode for ceremonies falls into two main categories, traffic and noise. In the narrow lanes in Great Buckland, all of which are single track, it is difficult for vehicles coming in opposite directions to get past one another. It is important that traffic is kept to a minimum on these roads to avoid accidents, limit damage to the verges and to reduce disruption to residents and other road users passing through the area. Having to get round a convoy of vehicles coming in the opposite direction on a single track road can be particularly daunting for elderly drivers. The current restrictions on the number of ceremonies that can be held during the year and the months in which they can be held is important in reducing the impact of traffic nuisance. In particular, restrictions prohibiting ceremonies being held during the winter months when the verges are very wet and easily damaged by traffic driving on them to get round oncoming vehicles are particularly important.

Great Buckland is situated in a designated area of outstanding natural beauty and as there are few houses in the area it is naturally very quiet and peaceful. Preserving the tranquillity of the area is fundamental to protecting it as an AONB. As one of the reasons for preserving AONBs is to provide areas where people can have quiet enjoyment of the countryside, it is vitally important that there should be effective control of the nuisance caused by noise from people using The Lost Village of Dode for ceremonies. It has been reported to this Parish Council that some of the wedding parties do get very noisy. It is extremely important both to the residents of Great Buckland and also in order to protect the area as an AONB that there should be many months during the year and also not less than four days each week throughout the year when no ceremonies take place so that the area is completely free of the disruption and noise caused by them. The current position of there being only just over four months of the year when ceremonies are not taking place at The Lost Village of Dode is weighted very much in Mr Chapman's favour. It would be very unfair to the residents of Great Buckland and also would be in conflict with the status of the area as an AONB to allow any more ceremonies to take place during each year at The Lost Village of Dode than are currently permitted.

I can therefore advise you that Luddesdown Parish Council does not oppose the renewal of the grant of approval to the use of The Lost Village of Dode as a venue for the Solemnization of Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships provided that the licence is re-issued with all of the current restrictions and conditions.

Yours sincerely,



Marian Beresford
Clerk
Luddesdown Parish Council