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Corporate Plan Output: SummerTimes, Special Events	

The purpose of this report is to respond to a petition concerning noise from events in North Hagley Park.

#### **BACKGROUND**

At its March meeting the Council received a petition from residents of the Bishopspark Retirement Complex complaining of the noise levels coming from ‘music’ functions in North Hagley Park. The petitioners were particularly concerned about noise generated by rock bands and especially the thumping boom of the bass.

The petition was signed by 37 residents of the Bishopspark Retirement Complex.

#### **EVENTS IN NORTH HAGLEY PARK**

North Hagley Park has been used as a location for events for many years. The Council’s SummerTimes festival has been using North Hagley Park for the last twenty years.

North Hagley Park is identified as an Entertainment Zone in the Hagley Park Reserve Management Plan (published in 1991) and the Proposed City Plan clearly anticipates the area being used for outdoor amplified music concerts and events.

In addition to the Council’s own use of North Hagley Park for events it is also hired out to other organisations wishing to stage events.

Over the last year the following events that have involved amplified music have been staged at North Hagley Park:

- Blues Brews and Barbecues
- Gardenz
- Sport’n’Action
- Summer Down Under
- Wine and Food Festival
- Christmas in the Park
- Strawberry Fields
- Candlelight Opera
- Summer Rock
- Classical Sparks

When bookings are received for what are believed to be major or noisy events, liaison takes place between the Leisure Unit and the Environmental Services Unit. This enables the relevant information concerning noise restrictions to be sent out to those booking the area and makes sure the Environmental Services Unit is aware of any significant events.

The Council's Events Team carries out a letter drop prior to the commencement of SummerTimes to advise all residents in the area of the events scheduled, with a name and telephone number for residents to contact with any concerns.

#### **REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT**

The City Plan clearly identifies North Hagley Park as an area in which it is likely and appropriate for outdoor concerts to take place. The Proposed City Plan specifically exempts North Hagley Park from the noise restrictions that would ordinarily apply to the Open Space 2 zone.

The Plan establishes noise performance levels of 85 dBALmax, and 65dBA L10, for concerts at North Hagley Park on up to 80 occasions per calendar year. Events not able to comply with these levels would require resource consents. Compliance with the levels will reduce, but will not eliminate, audible noise effects on residential occupants in the vicinity.

The noise levels and the numbers of days allowed by this exception may be changed by the Council's decision on submissions to the Proposed City Plan, which will be published 8 May 1999.

The Hagley Park Reserve Management Plan contains no policies on noise effects or provision for mitigation for the North Hagley Park area.

The numbers of complaints arising from amplified music events in the Park have generally been small.

The pattern of noise complaints over recent years is as follows:

1996	6
1997	10
1998	16
1999 to mid April	11

Typically a large proportion of the complaints arise from one or two events rather than being spread evenly across all the events at North Hagley Park. The complaints are generally from residents close to the Park. There is no record of any previous complaints from the residents of Bishopspark.

Noise monitoring by the Environmental Services Unit has been undertaken from time to time beyond the Park boundaries. The Council's SummerTimes Events were last monitored in 1997 and found to conform to the City Plan levels. The Council's Events Team monitors noise levels at source during its events to try to ensure that the regulations are met.

#### **POSSIBLE ALTERNATIVE LOCATIONS FOR EVENTS**

The petition suggested the possibility of relocating events to either South Hagley Park or QEII to alleviate the problems at North Hagley Park.

The suggestion of using South Hagley Park is not favoured for a number of reasons:

- It is not identified as an entertainment area in the Hagley Park Reserve Management Plan. This plan was prepared with considerable consultation and altering it significantly would undermine the Reserve Management planning process.
- There is no exemption to the noise requirements for the Open Space 2 Zone in the Proposed City Plan for South Hagley Park.
- There would be operational difficulties in organising events in South Hagley Park associated with the need for infrastructure related to power, toilets etc. These have been gradually developed in North Hagley Park over the years.
- There would be conflict with other users of South Hagley Park. The South Hagley area includes the Canterbury Horticultural Society Hall, The Canterbury Netball Centre and numerous sports fields. Previous experience has demonstrated the problems of using sports fields for events activities with the heavy vehicles involved often causing considerable damage to playing surfaces.
- The vehicular and pedestrian access to South Hagley Park is inferior to that at North Hagley Park.
- Relocation of the event site to South Hagley Park could transfer disturbance to another residential area and also to Christchurch Hospital. The effects of such relocation would need to be considered in relation to other entertainment noise sources in the inner City such as licensed bars and the Arts Centre. A report is being submitted to the May meeting of the Environment Committee on this topic.

The suggestion of QEII is also not favoured for the following reasons:

- Many of the events staged in North Hagley Park are free community events and not arena/enclosed pay events.
- QEII does not have the ease of access that North Hagley Park has.
- There is provision for relaxed noise levels (similar to those in North Hagley Park) for only three events per year in the Proposed City Plan.

## CONCLUSION

Hagley Park has been used to stage events for many years and is identified as an area suitable for this type of activity in several significant planning documents.

The number of events each year using amplified music on North Hagley Park each year is modest but provide enjoyment to many people. It is appreciated that not all events appeal to all people.

Noise levels in North Hagley Park are regulated and are generally monitored in response to complaints. The level of complaints received about events in North Hagley Park in recent years has been modest. Given that this petition has been received, events at North Hagley Park will be monitored more closely by the Environmental Services Unit and the Leisure Unit to assess compliance with the requirements of the Proposed City Plan.

The suggestions to relocate events to either South Hagley Park or QEII are not considered practical.

**Recommendation:** That the Environmental Services Unit, in conjunction with the Leisure Unit, carry out regular monitoring of events noise levels from North Hagley Park, and that this be done in close liaison with the residents of the Bishopspark Retirement Complex.