

EMAIL REQUESTING the Debrief meeting along with correspondence between Nancy Astley and David Neave

From: Andy Smith [mailto:cllr.andysmith@googlemail.com]

Sent: 03 September 2017 19:11

To: 'Joanna Wilkins'; 'Stella Newman'; Nancy Astley

Cc: 'dave neave'; Andy Smith; cllr.brianpage@gmail.com; Brindley Daryll; Harris Job; Job Harris; andy@adloraine.com

Subject: RE: Fireworks

Dear Joanna, Stella and Nancy,

I have a number of concerns about the planning and implementation of the event this year and was wondering if we can have a debrief at some point. The operational order is a watered down version one I produced when I was the leader of the council and to be clear although it was in places a bit tongue in cheek it made a clear statement about who was in charge a point I will return to. Prior to the 2014 event I asked the then Cllr Alan Sargent who had experience of H&S to review the plan for us and attached are those comments in his memo based on the original plan.

The attached memo confirmed what I already understood to be the case; *'In the event of a serious accident and subsequent prosecution if you can demonstrate that you have followed the guidance this will way in favour of the prosecuted.'* And *'Where as in a corporate situation when a serious accident has occurred the prosecution is normally limited to one or two deemed responsible directors. Unfortunately in the case of a serious accident occurring involving the Council all 13 Telscombe Councillors could be prosecuted which has occurred at other Councils in the past. Therefore the safety aspects of an event such as a firework display must be taken seriously by all Councillors.'*

.....and this is why I am concerned about what I witnessed yesterday evening.

Fireworks events are potentially very dangerous and rigour around planning is important. Some of this commentary may seem critical but when these sorts of events go wrong, how we ran the event gets put under the microscope.

Getting things right by leaning from the things which did not go as well as expected is an important part of improving this process.

Here is an example of what can go wrong;

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-scotland-20211782/firework-rocket-display-goes-wrong> fortunately no one was seriously injured but this is not always the case when these types of events miss fire.

In our case whilst the firework company have to risk assess their display and carry some insurance liability. We are responsible for everything going on outside the cordon. If it comes under scrutiny this would include, the plan its command and control, contingency plans and how we communicate between ourselves and other parties. Having a robust plan with contingencies combined with the quality of briefings is retrospectively the areas which get the most attention when things go wrong (I know this from my personal and professional experience).

The original operational order is attached for comparison, It provides clear lines of responsibility and direction, call signs for radio holders at key sites understanding three key phases of the operation. Previous events were not perfect I admit but in the event of an accident it served the purpose of demonstrating we 'had a plan'.

For example last night, I was not clear who was in charge, or how we contact the various other parties such as the fun fair or fireworks teams. Nancy produced a number of radios which we sort of worked out how to use and accidentally found we could talk to the fireworks people who were on channel one.

The reason why I am writing this ahead of a debrief is I don't want to forget some of the important issues which did occur and should not be overlooked.

Others involved may not be aware but just before the 'firing' (causing the delay) Stella asked for Brian, Darryl and I to go urgently and speak with the fireworks team leader because the cordon on the east side was giving concern. For reasons explained later the fireworks were now too close to the east cordon and spectators were standing where debris etc. would be falling during the display. Darryl, Brian and I moved these people down the hill to the southern cordon. I noticed some of the spectators I spoke to had clearly been drinking but they moved anyway.

After the display and while people were starting to leave the Tye another call from the fireworks team for assistance was received. Brian and I went up to speak to them. Apparently people started to enter the cordoned off area and more of a concern is they were trying to enter the bit where the fireworks were set up. They explained that before the public could return, the fireworks must be checked for duds and these made safe. A chap called Chris explained that in addition to this he had tried to stop two males entering the fireworks area which led to an altercation where one drunk or high individual swung a punch at Chris and the other male dragged him off described as having a white top.

During the discussion it was clear they had concerns about the event; I have asked them to email Nancy so we can capture these concerns and make the necessary changes for next year. 1. The cordon in effect was in the wrong place because the fun fair had crept up the hill towards them. This meant they set the fireworks in the top right hand corner of the enclosure, close to the eastern perimeter. The delay was caused because people were up against that cordon and as the fireworks company predicted due to the wind direction debris and as it happened, still ignited fireworks, hit the ground in this area during the display which had been cleared of the public by Brian, Darryl and myself.

I was unaware that a beer tent was going to be involved which ordinarily is fine but needs additional planning. In reality it makes the event potentially more risky and as with a football match for example, planning should be stepped up to counter the impact of people who have been drinking, causing increased disorder, not understanding instructions or as in this case trying to punch one of the fireworks team.

Watching still ignited fireworks hitting the grass where we had just cleared spectators was a worry particularly as we seemed to be muddling through on the night and fortunately this risk had been dealt with.

Parking was an issue like I have never seen it before, I challenged a lady who drove up to within 30 feet of the Cordon placed her disability badge on the dashboard and refused to move it? I noticed cars parked all around the fun fair and more worrying was the drivers were exiting through the people walking around in the dark, on the Tye?

Ron who was not present had a job to do (calling the emergency services presumably if something had gone wrong) I return briefly to the fact as a named person (which I was, speaking into the PA system?) it would have been nice to have been told. I refuse to take any responsibility for this event and as no one is named, that I am afraid would fall to the 'Directors' responsible for planning or the lead officers presumably.

Councils are not above the law when things go wrong and had we had a problem last night and a Police or HSE investigation followed, the plan would be found to be inadequate in my view.

I am assuming the responsible officer from TTC or 'lead' was Stella (who was doing an excellent job) on the night. I am including the observation that Nancy arrived on the field having clearly been drinking. This is not a problem but this does carry some additional potentially risks, to the council, if the TC was involved in decision making which she was not at this stage.

Fortunately apart from the issues raised here, we did get through the event, but let's not forget this all started as an idea to market our Town Council and if someone gets injured in circumstances which could have been avoided then the thing back fires literally.

Kind regards

Andy

From: dave neave [mailto:daveneave@gmail.com]

Sent: 03 September 2017 19:54

To: Andy Smith

Cc: Nancy Astley; Andy Loraine; Job Harris; Stella Newman; cllr.brianpage@gmail.com; Harris Job; Joanna Wilkins; Brindley Daryll

Subject: RE: Fireworks

You been drinking

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