

Meeting at Kelham Hall – Wednesday 1st November 2023 at 10am

Those who attended:

Stuart Downham – Managing Director of Renaissance at Kelham Hall Ltd

Cllr Keith Melton – District Councillor NSDC

Cllr John Allan, Parish Councillor for AKS PC

Cllr Jemma Towler, Parish Councillor for AKS PC

A number of residents asked the AKS Parish Council to arrange this meeting with Stuart Downham, to discuss the recent closure of the grounds to the residents/members of the public and to discuss noise from events.

Stuart confirmed that the grounds to Kelham Hall had been open to residents for the past 45 years. After 18 months under new ownership, the decision to close access to the grounds was taken due to the negative impact it was having on the business.

He reported a number of issues including verbal abuse to his staff, statues tipped over, dog mess left and bags of the same discarded in the grounds.

A resident allowed her dog to foul in front of the owner of Kelham Hall and did not clear it up. A bride also had a dog jump up at her on her wedding day.

It was explained that since Kelham Hall closed access to the grounds, many residents no longer had anywhere to walk safely, due to the busy main road running through the village. It was explained that this was having a detrimental effect on the wellbeing of the residents who for many years have had the use of the grounds.

Stuart replied that it was not in the business' interests to continue to allow access and that the residents have no public right of access within the grounds.

Stuart has recently received an email which he found threatening from a resident of Kelham advising him that the residents are contacting the Ramblers Association with a view to a right of way application being pursued. The resident had explained that an outstanding right of way issue could possibly have a negative impact on the sale of the business in future years.

Stuart said he has received complaints regarding the use of flares, guests in supercars using their horns and revving of their engines, noise from events and fireworks. The business is doing the following to minimise disturbance from these:

- Recruitment is ongoing for 2 car park patrol staff members
- 2 speed calming ramps are on order to use of the driveway closest to residents' homes on Home Farm Close (it is yet to be decided if these will be a permanent fixture or used for events only)
- Decibel readings are to be continuously taken and monitored during events.
- There will be signs erected with a 15MPH speed limit (reduced from 20MPH)
- Signs will be installed on the driveway requesting guests to be considerate regarding noise.

He explained that the business has licensing for fireworks all year round from 7pm until 11pm. New Years Eve 7pm until 2am.

He is unsure regarding licensing times for Eid and Diwali, which he will look into.

Shortly after the closure of the grounds, Stuart agreed he would be happy to meet with residents if they wished to discuss matters. He retracted this offer after reading screenshots of messages from a village WhatsApp group. He found a number of the messages to be offensive.

Stuart agreed that he is willing to meet with a small number of residents if it is requested.

When asked whether a compromise could be reached regarding access to the meadow for residents only with time restrictions, Stuart said this was not something the owners are willing to agree at this point in time.

Cllrs Melton and Allan suggested that in the short term a residents liaison group should meet on a periodic basis with Stuart to work in local issues affecting both parties and develop a mutual respect.