

NEWS RELEASE

22 March, 2016

COUNCIL DECISION ON FAIR PUTS PUBLIC SAFETY FIRST

ENSURING the safety of fair-goers is the reason for a decision, taken today, to cancel the funfair at this year's Midsummer Fair in Cambridge.

The decision follows a review by Cambridge City Council of its plans and approaches to managing events on its open spaces, based on advice from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), received following an incident in which a member of the public was injured on 4 November 2015. The HSE investigation is still ongoing.

Complying with the advice means redesigning the whole fair, its layout and the way stalls are serviced, with significant footpath closures for the duration of the fair.

Midsummer Fair is a complex event taking up significant parts of Midsummer Common for a ten day period. It typically involves more than 80 separate funfair traders. Many traders stay onsite, with vehicles moving around the site. The fair has also taken place over a number of the paths on the common which are used by cyclists and pedestrians.

The Council and Cambridge Live have jointly concluded that this year it will not be possible to organise the fair in its traditional form, or a modified event with a smaller funfair, given the time available.

The market traders will now be consulted on whether, in the absence of the funfair, they want the traders' market element of Midsummer Fair to go ahead.

More follows

The Council has been working with Cambridge Live, which has been issued an Improvement Notice by the HSE, to make sure lessons are learned from the incident and revised arrangements put in place.

Cllr Richard Johnson, Executive Councillor for Communities, said: “We take public safety very seriously - it’s our number one priority. That’s why we will learn from the lessons of the incident last November.

“After consulting with public safety experts, and much careful thought and consideration, we have concluded it is necessary to undertake a scaled down and different event this year.

“We have not taken this decision lightly, as we know it will be very disappointing particularly for traders and families who attend the funfair, but we hope the reasons for it are understood. Safety must come first and we will continue to work up plans for a safe, enjoyable and sustainable event for the future with a funfair of some form.

“We will consult traders to find out whether they still wish to be part of the fair this year and we will continue to work with them and with others to plan a safe and successful event in 2017. We have made this decision now to allow traders as much time as possible to make alternative plans, should they wish to do that.”

Ends

Notes for editors

1. Midsummer Fair has an unparalleled position as an historic Cambridge event. 2016 would be the 805th event. From its roots as a traditional seasonal traders’ fair it now typically comprises a traders’ market and a large funfair which is on Midsummer Common for ten days;
2. Midsummer Fair is due to take place from 22 to 27 June this year;
3. A record of the decision made by Cllr Johnson has been published on the Cambridge City Council website.
4. Cambridge Live is an independent charity which is contracted by Cambridge City Council to deliver its City Events programme
5. Contacts

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