

# Regulatory and Appeals Committee to be held on the 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021

## Evidence to support a Public Space Protection Order at Ilkley Riverside

### Statement – West Yorkshire Police:

Over the last three years the river bank in Ilkley has created an unprecedented demand during the hot weather on the Police and our partners. Due to the spontaneous nature of these, often large, gatherings we can make short term plans by checking the weather forecast and maybe bank holidays otherwise we cannot always plan in advance or run it as an event and have to regularly pull resources from other parts of the district which in turn has a knock-on effect in other areas. Although each year we have increased our staffing, the demand has increased where we have continuously struggled with the increase in volume of people attending and the behaviour of certain people and groups.

The first year was managing the sudden surge in volume of people turning up, second year we saw more groups turning up with drinks and those misbehaving at the lido who were refused entry then turning up at the river bank causing further anti-social behaviour. Last year we saw further increased levels of anti-social behaviour often fuelled by alcohol and drug use – this was exacerbated by covid restrictions such as school closures and the lido not being open as well as periods of hot weather. We have seen groups travelling from other areas resulting in alcohol fuelled disorder. At one point this required a deployment of over 20 officers and Insp Beecroft authorising a Dispersal Order which impacted not only those attending from outside but also local residents.

On top of that was managing the safety of those individuals jumping off the footbridge, the high volume of traffic turning up causing obstructions across the local streets and the litter including drug paraphernalia. We also saw serious assaults and incident of disorder further up in the town linked to individuals attending the river bank.

I can say that the impact on our resources stretches us immensely and puts our officers at risk as there is a huge demand on West Yorkshire Police on hot days not only in Ilkley but across the district.

**Khalid Khan**

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## Impact Statement - Friends of Ilkley Riverside Parks (FOIRP)

FOIRP supports the introduction of a PSPO for the parks area

- The East side of the park ( particularly the beach and fields areas closest to the suspension bridge ) has become a magnet for very large groups of people of all ages during warm weather for drinking, informal parties, camping, BBQs and tomb stoning( jumping off the bridge).
- These activities continue often late into the night at which point the drinking is often accompanied by legal (eg nitrous oxide cannisters) and illegal drugs.
- The sheer volume of people and the behaviours exhibited causes extensive knock effects in terms of policing, parking, litter, fire risk and importantly prevents the use of the park by those who wish to use it safely without feeling threatened by the behaviour of others.
- It has effectively become a “no go” area for residents during periods of hot weather. This situation has existed for some time unresolved , but matters were exacerbated further last year by the Covid pandemic and made the national press on more than one occasion.
- FOIRP spent countless hours cleaning up the alcohol, food and drug litter day after day.
- Given the impact of Covid continues and will do so over the summer in terms of travel and holidays, it is anticipated that the park will see a repeat of the extremes of last year.
- Existing bye laws cannot be enforced without a council warden present; this is impractical and prevents the police from being able to police the area effectively
- An important part of the strategy for the future of the park area is to re-set the framework of behaviour and what is considered appropriate. FOIRP do not want to stop people from having a good time, but we do want to support responsible use of the park with respect for all users – a lot of whom are children with young families and older members of the community. A PSPO would support this strategy by making it clear that certain behaviours ( eg tomb stoning, camping, BBQs, drug use, littering ) are not permitted.
- FOIRP with BDMC have already launched new “golden Rules” for the park ( see attached pdf ). This is part of the strategy to reset the behaviour in the park.
- A PSPO would provide the police with the immediate ability to deal with any extreme behaviour – and this coupled with appropriate messaging focusing on the park as family park, we hope will result in Riverside Parks becoming less attractive to the groups who frequent it in summer.

- Without a PSPO, it is strongly felt that the ability to address the issues will continue to be severely hampered. The only alternative would be a dispersal order should events get out of hand as per last year, but that of itself does not help us address the underlying behaviour and expectations about what is permissible in the parks.

Examples of On-line posts from Ilkley Chat (Social Media platform) (35,000+ followers) between June 2019 – July 2020

The image shows a vertical scroll of four social media posts from a platform called 'Ilkley Chat'. Each post is in a light blue bubble with a profile picture icon on the left and interaction icons on the right. The posts describe various incidents of antisocial behavior in parks and along roads.

Post 1: A user with a blue profile picture icon writes: "Its disgraceful. We took our children there on Tuesday and one group of people had a radio blasting our very loud explicit songs and throwing beer cans on the floor then another group were smoking cannabis without a care in the world." The post has 1 reaction (a red heart icon).

Post 2: A user with a blue profile picture icon writes: "I live a few mins away. The amount of litter left is staggering. Usually an area of beauty and peace. I drove along Denton Road yesterday as people were dumping cars anywhere. I had to drive under 10 miles an hour as people were walking in the road with very young children out in the road near the driving cars. One chap had his 24 pack of beer safely away from the road but his toddler stuck out into the road. Madness. Everyone should be able to enjoy taking their families to the river and parks but there needs to be more bins provided and police presence to ensure everyone's safety." The post has 10 reactions (a blue heart, a blue thumbs up, and a yellow sad face icon).

Post 3: A user with a blue profile picture icon writes: "In all my 50 years of living round here I've never seen anything as bad as this...yes it's often been busy in the summer with rubbish left but never to this extent ... lots of uncaring ignorant people around these days just leaving their crap .. sad times" The post has 2 reactions (a blue thumbs up icon).

Post 4: A user with a blue profile picture icon writes: "You could place large bins within a foot of where they are all sat and it wouldn't make a difference im afraid. Without generalising a lot of the characters down at the river yesterday almost revel in being as anti social as possible"

Absolutely disgusting and I don't want to walk through the smell of cannabis. Avoiding the river at the moment which is a shame as one of my favourite walks 😞

Like · Reply · 1y



Unfortunately it's the same every year. Lovely in spring and autumn but summer to be avoided.

Like · Reply · 1y



Yes it's great isn't it kids and adults throwing stones at ducks and sometimes my dog big flaming bbqs weed smells rubbish swearing and shouting very gentile i don't think



I refuse to take my children here. Last time we came for a picnic a girl was off her head on drugs running about trying to jump into the river! Swearing, smoking weed. These people have ruined it. For the litter that's disgusting no respect

Conflicting reactions - during the hot spell, on the weekend of the fight, I was in the bridge area and the behaviour of those causing the trouble was threatening, alcohol-fuelled and totally unacceptable.

Like · Reply · 30w



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Crowds gathered by the River Wharfe in Ilkley

RICHARD WELLOCK

Crowds of visitors have left mounds of litter including used toilet roll and nappies at Yorkshire beauty spots, angry residents have said.

**YORKSHIRE POST**

## Mayor of Ilkley insists town is not a 'no-go' area despite riverside violence

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## Dispersal order in Ilkley following riverside fight

## 'Carnage' in Ilkley as hundreds of youths descend on River Wharfe

Residents of Ilkley described seeing teenagers arriving 'laden with booze' before a dispersal order was imposed on the town today.

## Sun-seeking crowds returned to packed Ilkley 'beach' for fourth day in a row