

This information relates to the planning application reference number 210953.

Background information:

In March 2020 the COVID pandemic and imposed national lockdown by the Government meant that no face to face music tuition could take place. During this time all teaching was suspended or moved to on line lessons.

In September 2020 the Government lifted some of the COVID restrictions but large group teaching was still not allowed inside and some musical instruments (wind, brass & singing) had to be played at least 2m apart. We did not have any teaching spaces large enough to meet these requirements. We were keen to ensure the students could return to some music education as studies showed that young people's mental health & well-being was beginning to be effected by the pandemic!

Berkshire Maestros have the luxury of owning two car parks and the use of a third car park when not being used by Prospect School. Our lower car park is not used so we decided to investigate using this space as an outdoor teaching space to allow some groups to return.

To allow this to happen we had to do in depth risk assessments considering:

- Permanently closing the lower car park and advising staff & students that no vehicles access was allowed with the exception of the Berkshire Maestros van. Assessing that it was a safe space and ensuring enough alternative parking was available in the other two car parks.

- COVID guidance with regards to teaching groups (bubbles).

- COVID guidance with regards to playing music instruments.

- The weather in Autumn/Winter months considering how long was safe and acceptable to ask people to work outside.

- The weather in Autumn/Winter months considering how long was safe and acceptable to ask students to be taught outside.

- The lighting in Autumn/Winter evenings as it gets dark very early in the evening. We need to ensure a safe environment but also students needed to be able to read their sheet music.

The other factor we had to consider was the noise. There is a small woodland area between our premises and the nearest residential areas but we needed to consider the possibility that the noise of the musical instruments and singing could carry and may disturb local residents. Using the google maps measurement tool we checked the distance from the lower car park to the nearest neighbours as follows:

- North of Stoneham Court – 103m

- East of Stoneham Court – 67m

- South of Stoneham Court – 190m

- (Prospect School playing field separates us and the nearest dwelling)

- West of Stoneham Court – 190m

- (Prospect School building separate us and the nearest dwelling)

To our knowledge we are not aware of any formal complaints regarding noise to Reading Borough Council since we started this activity in September 2020.

We did have one neighbour visit site and comment on the music at the end of our summer term but the comment related specifically to our end of term activities not the music in the lower car park.

Type of noise:

The main purpose of our business is orchestral music and choirs. We offer more contemporary music, sound technology and live bands but this as a rule has to be done inside especially when requiring IT and amplifiers etc. If it was outside it would only ever be a one off event and unlikely to take place in this area.

Location during the pandemic:

Outside in the lower car park

Location if planning permission is granted:

Under the new structure in the lower car park.

Days & Times:**Term Time**

These *may* be the times we would use this area and this would be the very latest time in the evening music *may* be played

Monday – 4.00pm – 9.00pm

Tuesday – 4.00pm – 9.00pm

Wednesday – 4.00pm – 6.00pm

Thursday – 4.00pm – 6.00pm

Friday – 4.00pm – 9.00pm

Saturday – 8.00am – 5.00pm

Sunday – 8.00am – 5.00pm

Bank Holidays – No activity

School Holidays

In the summer months we *may* hold holiday courses but this is not every holiday

Monday – 9.00am – 5.00pm

Tuesday – 9.00am – 5.00pm

Wednesday – 9.00am – 5.00pm

Thursday – 9.00am – 5.00pm

Friday – 9.00am – 5.00pm

Saturday – 9.00am – 5.00pm

Sunday – 9.00am – 5.00pm

Additional Information:

We are hoping to raise enough funds to build a structure that can act as an outside classroom. Unless the pandemic returns as it did in 2020 we don't ever intend to use the area at all the above times listed. The above mentioned times are the times we currently have lessons and may use this area for larger groups or if COVID restrictions mean we need to be outside.