

Steve Ashdown

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 22 June 2026 19:39
To: Eric Owens
Cc: Steve Ashdown; planninginfo
Subject: Re: Neighbour notification for Planning Application No DM/25/2223

Dear Eric,

I'm aware today is the deadline for responses for DM/25/2223 however I have only just been made aware the February planning statement has now been uploaded to the portal, leaving me little time to prepare a full response. Please find a statement below for inclusion:

In addition to my previously submitted comments referencing the number of District Planning Policies this application is in conflict with, I would like to further raise my concerns about the permanent nature of these changes. Although the applicant makes it clear the car park would only be used for a few days each year, the geo-cell grid system, marquee infrastructure and other alterations would result in a permanent change to a protected AONB, all for a temporary use that serves no public benefit whatsoever. Although the fields may "appear" to remain agricultural, planning policy relates not just to appearance but the fundamental nature and use of the land.

Scientology's claims their annual event contributes more to the UK economy than the Eurovision Song Contest are laughable at best. The economic assessments provided by the church are based on their own figures, and do not make any mention of the hundreds of millions of pounds donated by parishioners to the church itself, nor the closed-loop economy created by their event. Only one of the three days of this event is open to the public, and although £50,000 cheques may be handed out to local charities this is simply insufficient to justify the permanent alteration and destruction of a protected AONB.

It must also be considered that the Church of Scientology last week secured approval for the construction of a mega events venue at their headquarters in Clearwater Florida, and documents submitted to the City Council there make it clear the plan is to move *all* of their large-scale events to this new 'L Ron Hubbard Hall' upon completion. This means that even if this application is approved and works go ahead, the infrastructure would only be used for a couple of years at most - meaning this whole application seeks to permanently alter the landscape despite the proposed use only being temporary in nature.

Scientology's suggestion that there are no alternative venues nearby is minimal and their argument it is for religious regions directly conflicts with their own statements during a recent Premies Licence Review at Mid-Sussex District Council, where the Church's lawyers admitted the IAS event - which this application seeks to create infrastructure for - is not a religious event and contains no act of worship whatsoever. In fact, over the years a quarter of these IAS events have indeed taken place elsewhere, and there is no explanation as to why alternative locations are only now being considered as inadequate... or for that matter, that this argument will become null and void when the event inevitably moves to their new L. Ron Hubbard Hall in Florida.

I think it is also important for members to note the applicant's position that this is simply a matter of process to ratify an event that has occurred on the property for many years already. I urge Councillors

to realise that these events have taken place illegally, without the required permissions in structures erected without planning permission and indeed the applicants were issued a Planning Contravention Notice, which they flagrantly disregarded in subsequent years. This application should be viewed not as a formalisation, but as a fresh request for permission - as the impact of these events has not been assessed appropriately before. Just because they have been breaking the rules for several years, does not mean it should therefore be given less due diligence or scrutiny.

I would like for this, as well as all of my previous comments submitted throughout the process of this application being reviewed, to be considered together as a formal objection to this application.

Kind regards,

