

**21/00517/F: Wroxton Motocross Track**  
**Environmental Protection further report by Jim Guest – 1 June 2021**  
**Comments from Hornton Parish Council**

We have analysed the officer's latest thoughts on the noise nuisance caused by the track and have these points which help to explain and correct key factors. In each case, we have quoted the officer's words in italics and comments on them immediately after each extract:

**1. Noise:**

*...Three further complaints were received at the same time in 2019. The complaints had been made after an email was sent out by a complainant to other residents of Hornton encouraging them to voice their displeasure at the noise from the motocross track...*

The inference here is that it was 'only' three complaints back in 2019 – ie. not very many. However, the entire reason the officer did not receive more complaints, representing the village-wide concerns, at that time is that he specifically told our complainant that no more were required and that it was not a good use of his time to be obliged to read them. However, what he did receive by email, for example, in August 2019, was a quicker indication that would have taken only a few seconds of his professional time: a village map shading in the homes of those residents who felt that they, and others, were badly affected by motocross noise and who had agreed to have their views made known to Cherwell District Council in this way. On the map, these homes, very noticeably, were spread right across the village, not just on the side facing the track. In that first map, 20 homes were marked in all parts of Hornton – more opted to be added to later versions as a means of indicating the serious noise intrusion affecting them.

The purpose of encouraging fellow villagers to send their concerns to the officer and, then, of sharing this map on 19 August, was to demonstrate that the noise impact was widely experienced and, therefore, that the issue was worthy of investigation by the local authority and not just the bugbear of a minority. Hornton Parish Council was copied on the email correspondence at the time. The writers were not encouraged to 'express displeasure' but to make their views known to demonstrate, very genuinely and openly, the widespread impact and the call for something to be done.

Fast forward to 2021 and, reflecting this genuine public impact, there are now around 250 objections sent to the Planning Portal. These parishioners – predominantly from Hornton, Wroxton, Wroxton Heath, Horley, Upton and Shenington – are not just 'expressing displeasure' but recounting, very honestly, their concerns about the noise and how it affected their residential amenity. There is also video evidence, with sound, to verify what they say. We have not seen the officer refer to this although he has been sent details of links to enable him to see just how noisy the track was on that day. You can hear for yourself if you log onto clips of the official video shot for the track at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EvPVKiKnBHo> There is also a video clip of the terrible motocross noise in a Hornton garden submitted by The Gables and on the portal, again already flagged.

*2. Measurements were taken with a sound level meter in Hornton during full race events on 15/09/19, 22/09/19 and 20/10/19. Measurements were taken at locations in both the north and south of Hornton, with the noise being close to inaudible at the southern side of the village compared with on the northern side. During the first two of these events the wind was blowing from the south, carrying the noise of the track towards Hornton, on the third site visit the wind was northerly and, as such, the racing was barely audible anywhere in Hornton. Over the course of all three events the noise was not determined to be significant enough to constitute a nuisance in Hornton.*

On the first two dates, the officer says the wind was southerly (which, of course, the applicant in their noise report said made no difference to noise and apparently Mr Guest was "happy with" their statement at that time). It appears he now believes, correctly, that weather has a large impact on noise pollution travel.

More specifically, what was happening on the dates the officer says were 'full race events'? Did he check? We can assist here as, since then, to combat the track's failed LDC and current planning application, we have researched the fixtures and now have accurate records as follows:

It was the Girls National taking place on 15 September 2019. Note, in this Facebook picture (right) how many riders are children. We know now that the bikes they were riding would have been 125 and 250cc – nothing like the size, scale and power of adult male championship racers on much noisier 400-450cc bikes. As we have explained elsewhere, it is these larger male/adult bikes at the bigger, national-scale hire-out events that generate the worst noise nuisance and create engine and acceleration sound that carries further.



Our complainant was with the officer when he took the sound reading on Millers Lane in Hornton on that day and pointed out to him, beforehand, that the audible noise was only about a third as bad as the worst levels suffered and that we were aware it was a female race event being held that day.

By coincidence, on 22/9/2019, when the officer took his second sound reading, it was East Anglia Schoolboy Scrambling Club EASCC: again focused on juniors, with video showing children on small bikes. Again completely misleading to compare this to a full-on adult race event.

On his third visit the wind was not southerly - 20/10/2020. This was an event run by Banbury MX Club. Again video shows no comparison with the scale of events such as the Bridgestone Championship or other major hire-out fixtures. What's more, we repeat: the noise impact in Hornton is at its worst when a southerly wind blows towards us. On this occasion, with a northerly wind, the noise would have been heard very badly in Wroxton and Wroxton Heath. Did he take measurements there on that day?

So, we have two sound readings which, by chance, were taken at hire-out children's events and a third reading taken on a day when the prevailing wind was not blowing towards Hornton. Not a representative sample on which to build a case, we would argue.

*3. I have reviewed the report submitted on behalf of Hornton Parish Council by Clarke Saunders and the report submitted by Parker Jones Associates on behalf of Wroxton MX Track, along with the materials submitted by Hornton Parish Council. While the measurements taken for the noise report compiled by Parker Jones Associates were from a practice session, they consistent with the levels measured when CDC visited to measure the noise in relation to complaints from Hornton parish Council in 2019. While the directivity of motorcycle engines is an important factor in determining the noise levels on or close to the site, the nearest receptors are between 800 m and 1 km away. Therefore, when assessing the impact of the noise from the track on nearby sensitive receptors we do not believe the directivity to be an important factor, especially given the bikes continuous change in direction as they travel around the track.*

These comments assume the events where noise readings were taken were typical of the worst noise impacts of this track – as explained above, they were not – and also fails to take on board any of the other expert views of Clarke Saunders, who are Britain's leading motorsport noise consultants and who have worked for both Brands Hatch and Silverstone.

*4. I recommend that the Motocross Track publishes details of race events on their website as far ahead of the events as is feasibly possible and provide events calendars and timetables to the residents on request.*

We cannot understand how this recommendation would do anything to mitigate or manage noise nuisance. It merely offers an 'early warning' to residents (something the track has repeatedly promised but failed to deliver in the past) so that more homeowners can choose to leave home or avoid garden or village events on these dates. Some of them, seeing no alternative, already do this on days when they hear the engines start up. If this is the intention, this recommendation is a rather appalling attempt at a mitigation and actually acknowledges the impact of this track on villagers.

Once again, we draw the officer's attention to section 4 of the Motoring Organisations' Land Access & Recreation Association's (LARA) *Motor Sport Events in the Countryside* document (revised November 2019). It makes some excellent points regarding 'Noise nuisance from motor events', defining noise nuisance as "noise that is sufficiently loud, intrusive, repetitive and frequent as to unreasonably diminish people's enjoyment of their property". Four parish councils, CPRE and hundreds of objectors have publicly witnessed that this is exactly the impact of Wroxton track in terms of noise.