

From : Sarah@wentworthwoodhouse.org.uk
To : "Cllr Brendan Mcnamara CMIOSH MIIRSM Chair of Wentworth Parish Council"<cllr.brendan.mcnamara@wentworthparishcouncil.gov.uk>
CC : cllr.stephen.peace@wentworthparishcouncil.gov.uk,
john.williams@rotherham.gov.uk, rajmund.brent@rotherham.gov.uk,
marc.hill@rotherham.gov.uk, denise.elliott@rotherham.gov.uk,
clerkwentworthpc@gmail.com, clerk@wentworthparishcouncil.gov.uk
Date : Mon, 08 Jun 2026 09:46:46 +0100
Subject : Re: Formal Complaint Regarding Traffic Management at the Balloon Festival on the 6th June 2026.

Dear Cllr Mcnamara

Thank you for contacting me about the event on Saturday. I am writing to formally apologise for the fiasco that was the Balloon Festival . The event was not a Wentworth Woodhouse event but rather a dry hire by an organisation called Showtime Events. They had attended several meetings with the team here and had attended the Local Authority SAG (Safety Action Group) meetings, providing assurance that all traffic management and safety arrangements were in place along with the relevant documentation.

As it turned out, on the day they disregarded all legal responsibilities, advertised openly online for non-ticket holders to turn up despite the event being sold out, and brought a team of just 8 traffic managers, having promised 50. To add to the absolute chaos none of the traffic managers were qualified to work on the highway so could only be responsible for parking cars inside the estate.

I know the impact of this affected many businesses in the area as well as residents (I too was stuck in my car for 2 hours with a hysterical profoundly autistic adult which believe me was no fun!). It also has had a terribly detrimental impact on our own reputation which we have tried so hard to build over recent years, particularly around effective traffic management. I too was furious. We will not be working with them again and we are seeking legal advice given there is a contract between us.

Ultimately what happens on this site is my responsibility and I am sincerely sorry for the trouble this event caused to you, and the residents and businesses in the area. WWPT takes traffic management and the safety of our staff, volunteers, visitors and local residents very seriously and we cannot allow ourselves to be so exposed in this way again.

We held an emergency meeting yesterday and have agreed the following measures:

We will contract traffic management of this site on a new 2-year contract with immediate effect.

No event provider will be allowed to provide their own traffic management services but will be required to only use our appointed team or not use our site.

The appointed traffic management company will be required to develop a detailed traffic management plan for large events at Wentworth Woodhouse, but must consult with the Garden Centre, the Estate, the Residents Association, and the Parish Council in the preparation of the plan. The detailed plan will be provided to all parties in advance of any further major event taking place on this site. This will also be shared with the SAG.

The arrangement will be reviewed after each event and any feedback from the parties listed above considered when making any required amendments to the agreed plan.

Once again, may I apologise. Please understand I have the best interests for all residents and businesses in Wentworth and I will ensure this does not happen again.

Thank you for your support

Sarah

Sarah McLeod OBE
Chief Executive Officer