



Raves

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Author: Pat Strickland and Philip Ward
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Under the *Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994*, the police have the power to stop raves. Until January 2004, these were defined as unlicensed *open air* gatherings of 100 or more people at which loud music is played during the night. New provisions introduced into the *Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003*, which came into effect in January 2004, reduced the number of people who constitute a rave from 100 to 20, and removed the requirement for the gathering to be in the open air. It also introduced an offence of attending another trespassory rave within 24 hours of a police direction, to stop people simply moving the rave to another place. There have been press reports of police in some areas holding back from using their powers for health and safety reasons, either because of the dangers of dispersing large crowds in the dark or because of other dangerous local conditions. However, there have also been reports of successful police action to control raves in particular areas.

Gatherings for which an entertainment licence has been obtained are not counted as raves within the meaning of the legislation. However, there was some controversy about so-called licensed "raves" under provisions in the *Licensing Act 2003* which came into force in November 2005. These allow people to get temporary event notices for gatherings of up to 499 people for events lasting up to four days. The licensed events could involve the sale of alcohol, and while the police have to review the application and object if they consider that crime and disorder would result, there is no mechanism for the general public to object. The Government is keeping this area of law under review. These provisions would not apply to the kind of illegal raves covered by the 1994 Act, which by definition are unlicensed.

The Conservative MP Christopher Fraser has introduced a Ten Minute Rule bill in February 2008 designed to strengthen police powers, although it has yet to receive a second reading. In the debate, Mr Fraser argued that, although the police in his constituency of South West Norfolk were working hard to

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