

N/MERCURY 24/8/59

Police and fans clash at concert

by Wendy Knowler

A ROCK concert attended by about 3 000 people at Durban beachfront's Village Green on Saturday night was marred by vicious fights and led to residents complaining of excessive noise and unruly behaviour early yesterday.

North Beach councillor Mike Lipschitz said he drove to the venue at 2 30 am, having received several calls from irate residents who objected to the loud music.

He said police told him they were getting an angry call a minute: 'I got there in time to see thousands of people pouring out. Many were drunk and those in cars kept hooting.

'I witnessed three fights and a stabbing and someone threw a bottle at my car, but fortunately it hit the tyre,' Mr Lipschitz said.

The police were out in force, he said, using loud-hailers to ask the crowd to disperse in an orderly fashion.

Investigation

'The scene was frightening and could have become a real nightmare if the police had not controlled it,' he said.

'By 3 30 am, hundreds of folk were walking through the North Beach residential area, making a tremendous noise and urinating everywhere.

Mr Lipschitz said he intended to conduct a full investigation into the incident today.

The concert featured top bands, including Bright Blue and Marcalex.

Police spokesman Lt Bala Naidoo confirmed many calls of complaint were received throughout the night.

'The S A P went to the Village Green and asked the people to keep calm. The fans started attacking the police with cans and bottles and one policeman suffered a cut to his shoulder,' he said, adding that the crowd dispersed after police fired two canisters of tear-gas.

The concert organisers could not be reached last night.

Rock concert blues

WIDESPREAD complaints from Durban residents following Saturday night's rock concert at the Village Green must be addressed immediately. The new venue has been built for such large events and, though it is not very close to blocks of flats, the excessive noise up until 2.30 am, which reached homes on the Berea, plus unac-

ceptable crowd behaviour which called for police action, cannot be tolerated. Residents pay high rates and are entitled to peace and quiet. The City Council has a duty to compel the organisers of such events to limit the noise, control the use of alcohol and ensure the quiet and earlier dispersal of audiences.

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Two 'village greens

THE WARD 2 Ratepayers' Association has complained to the Durban City Council about rowdy and disgusting behaviour after a rock concert at the Village Green Theatre on Saturday.

We sympathise. It is not nice to have people shouting and screaming and urinating in the street in a residential area. And perhaps the council, in consultation with the police, ought to tighten leasing contracts so as to discourage excessive noise, the consumption of liquor and unseemly behaviour at beachfront concerts.

But this incident, and another reported in the same issue of the Mercury, together make a shocking commentary on the

polarisation of our divided society.

Barely 30 kilometres away, on another 'village green' — or more likely a dusty vacant lot — between the houses of Kwa Mashu's L Section, Mr Philip Mavundla watched helplessly while his daughter, aged 27, and son, 19, were hacked to death and burned after a kangaroo-court 'trial' by a 'disciplinary committee'. Atrocities like this are becoming part of township life.

Some people have more to complain about than others. But none will be safe until law, order and justice are available equally to all.