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By Alex Fredman

WHITBY Motocross Club has made a bid to double the number of race days it stages at Skelder to safeguard the future of what is one of the country's top race venues.

But residents are objecting to the not-for-profit club wanting to vary its planning approval from five race days to 10.

The venue at Skelder Farm off the A171 Whitby to Guisborough Road is held in high regard by the governing body of British motorcycle sport, The Auto-Cycle Union.

It is supporting the club's bid and says each event staged at Skelder Farm attracts in the region of 2,400 people and can bring in £100,000 to the local economy over the course of a weekend.

The North York Moors National Park Authority, who will consider the application on Thursday, has recommended approving the application despite concerns from Natural England, which says it could have a significant impact on the moors landscape and the enjoyment of the area by visitors, and objections from residents.

Some have claimed Whitby Motocross Club has in the past breached its original permission of five days racing, something the club's president John Noble categorically denies.

Among the objectors is Scarborough borough councillor Mike Ward and his wife Val, from Dunsley.

Mr Ward said: "We believe many residents have tried to be understanding but last year it most definitely was out of hand.

"We not only have to put up with the incessant noise of the bikes but with the announcer on the loud speaker.

"Every word can be heard meaning we cannot sit out in our garden.

"The only way in warm weather is to spend those days away from our home."

Among residents' other concerns is that the noise is intolerable, traffic would increase, the site is an eyesore with equipment there 365 days a year and events have placed additional loads on both the NHS and air ambulance, diverting resources away from none self-inflicted cases.

But Mr Noble said they have tried to be sympathetic to residents and the event is professionally run to the required standards.

"After Whitby Motocross gained planning permission in 2005 it has gone from strength to strength and has become one of the UK's top circuits.

"Because of this national and international interest we feel that to keep up the prestige of the track, we require more days to race and this would also benefit the local area and economy as more people from further afield would visit, thus putting money into the local economy.

"This said, Whitby Motocross is a voluntary organisation and puts all the money from such meetings back into the safety and betterment of the track.

"I understand it is noisy but it's only at specific times.

"We are trying to be sympathetic and we are not trying to ride roughshod over everybody.

"We are trying to run the big meetings outside the holiday season so everyone is getting the benefit.

"The club also owns its own noise meter and regularly tests bikes and will exclude bikes that don't make the right decibel.

"People think they are all scruffy Hells Angel-types but they are not – they are really good lads and it's keeping them off the streets, their friends and family come to watch them."

Mr Noble said they have also asked the authority's help in drawing up a landscaping and tree planting scheme to minimise any impact to the landscape there.

A number of conditions have been placed on the planning approval should it be given the green light including that events will not be allowed to take place on consecutive weekends.