

Response to representations From The Manor Barn

Please find the following, in this order:

- **In summary** - Our suggested amendments based on representation comments
- **Useful information** - Clarification and responses to comments which do not come under the licensing objectives
- **Licensing objectives** - Responses to comments which do come under the licensing objectives

The comment/concern raised is in **bold green**, followed by my response in black.

I am very happy to offer further information if anyone feels like would like this, or feel I have mis-understood their concern. I have, and will continue to welcome all concerns or questions and have been pleased to have people pop-in or contact me by email if they ever need to know anything. I do hope this continues.

Many of the queries have been answered within the original application, but I have also added some of this information again below, if I felt it relevant.

In summary

We really appreciate the many constructive and understanding representations. They have offered realistic and sensible suggestions to the concerns we face.

Having reflected on and analysed the representations we would be very happy to take those comments on board and make the following adjustments, if required, which we hope will be welcomed by the representatives and will still allow us to function as a business.

- Sunday operating schedule amended to licensable activities only taking place 12.00-18.00 to allow for quiet events such as a funeral or lunch party. Sunday is a special day to many, including my family and I, and I welcome that suggestion.
- As suggested by the Environmental Health officer, I am very happy to amend the time for the sale of alcohol to allow for 'drinking up time'. Therefore, propose that sale/supply of alcohol is amended to Monday-Saturday 12:00 - 23.30.
- Some representations mentioned the large front doors being allowed to be open all evening, allowing for sound escape. We appreciate the Environmental Health Officers' suggestion of ensuring these are closed by 23.00 on events and I am happy to agree to do so more formally.
- I can happily add a sentence to our terms and conditions stating that all guests to site must use our car park provided. Not a problem at all, thank you for suggesting this.
- Music outside. I suspect this is more of a volume consideration rather than an argument for live vs recorded music. I am happy to have a sound limit, by condition, or perhaps simpler than that, I propose that music outside must stop by 19:00 Monday-Saturday. Before this time, guests are politely having drinks and canapes served, loud music would not be appropriate anyway.
- Off-licence. Please see my full response below, however I would be willing to compromise by removing this from the application if required but is not my preferred option for the reasons below.

Useful information, or responses to queries outside of the licensing objectives

Further clarity was requested regarding how/when alcohol will be sold for consumption OFF the premises.

We only asked for this option to allow us to sell items to our bridal couples for example if we have bought in special requests of wine, and they would like to buy the surplus for themselves and their families after the event. The other reason is so that we can continue to have open days/craft fairs where in the past we have local small businesses selling gift packs of local cider, for example. I cannot see how this use would cause any issue for the village community, but if this a real worry we will of course consider removing it.

Clarification of what we are applying for.

I think it would be useful to clarify what we are applying for, and what we have permission for as there seems to be some confusion on this. I appreciate, with the many different departments at the South Cambridgeshire District Council (SCDC), that it is not always clear which area deals with which subject.

We already have planning permission to hold 30 weddings/events per year and 156 exercise classes. Comments arising in relation to this number of events are a matter for the planning department - not licensing.

This application is to the licensing department to ask to be able to serve alcohol and have music at these events. If the licence is granted, the venue is still only permitted to hold 30 weddings/events and 156 exercise classes. The venue has operated on Temporary Event Notices (TENs) for 12+ years, each one has to be applied for individually before each event, it would be far more appropriate for us to have one licence to cover all events at the premises.

The use of outside spaces for 'Sale or Supply'

This is only to allow continued use for wedding receptions. The 'Garden' area is only available for guests on their arrival to the venue (typically 2-4pm) and is closed once guests move inside for the wedding breakfast (typically 4-6pm). The use is usually only for a maximum of 2 hours. Should a license be granted including this area, this would not give rise to any potential expansion, as licensing and planning are different departments.

Our personal circumstances

Our farm business does not have any relevance to the application for a premises licence. The planning Department at SCDC are the only authority able to allow any increase or control the type of event permitted, not our farming business.

Change of use to a pub or off-licence

This would require planning permission and consent from SCDC Planning department, not licensing. We do not wish to do this.

There is 1 farm in the village

While this is not a licensing consideration, to be accurate in case it is relevant, I would like to state there are 2 actively working farms.

The number of residential dwellings stated to be present in Harlton village

This varies across the representations, I am sure SCDC can confirm this for us.

Competition with other local public houses/venues

To be clear, there are 2 public houses in the village of Harlton; The Hare and Hounds and also The Wheatsheaf.

I really do wish to make it very clear that the 2 consecutive landlords at The Hare and Hounds (one left just a few days ago) and the landlord at The Wheatsheaf have approached me directly on multiple occasions throughout our operating time to inform us of the warmly-welcomed, additional business, generated by them due to our ongoing business here. Our couples and their families visit these establishments after site visits, on set up days, before the ceremony in the village church and the day after the wedding. While competition is not a planning or licensing consideration, I can only see that this community of rural businesses mutually benefit each other. It is a shame representation has been made on their behalf without consulting them. I would be happy to contact the landlords and request affidavits if required – I consider us to have a great relationship with both of these businesses which I support/visit frequently with my family.

Regarding other venues and village halls, this competition has existed for at least 12 years, I do not feel this is a concern for those venues, for ourselves or licensing. We have worked hard to carve a niche for our own, very specific, clientele. We also often refer clients to those other local businesses, and vice versa, if we are unable to host them here, there is a good business network locally.

The condition of surrounding roads surfaces.

Some representations are concerned about an increase in traffic, there will be no increase. We are not asking to do more events than we already do and have permission to do. In contrast, we have reduced the amount of large farm machinery using this road vastly. I believe concerns about road surfaces are a matter for Cambridgeshire County Council and not Licensing. We currently advise our guests to access the venue via Washpit lane to minimise disturbance to as many residents as possible. If residents would prefer us to direct traffic though the main Highstreet we can do so, but this feels like the wrong decision. Please note we also recently repaired the surfacing along the front of The Manor Barn with our own investment to ensure a high level of safety is maintained.

Pollution and environmental impact.

There is no proposal to increase any light or noise pollution, our continued work only serves to reduce that. We are very dedicated to being an exemplar for farm diversification and take great pride and effort into looking at our impact on the environment. We produce all our own hot water and heating without any use of fossil fuels, something we are further offering to the new dwellings in the village, mentioned later by another resident. We only use British meat, poultry is free range and we promote a seasonal menu focused on food miles and supporting other local, small businesses. We only stock bamboo single use bathroom hygiene products and we operate a paperless office. We recycle all of our waste and grow herbs and flowers on-site (which we hope to expand in the future). We have installed owl boxes, bird boxes and continue to work to help the wildlife on our site, this passion is fuelled by my previous work in Veterinary Medicine. Our staff are encouraged to car-pool, which they all do with great enthusiasm and we have donated our left-over food to a local homeless shelter and online food waste apps. All our staff are local, some from the same or neighbouring villages, and we always advertise available work locally, first.

This is only a few of the 'obvious' changes we have implemented over many years and continue to work on this every year.

No positive impacts for the village.

I do differ my opinion on this subject as I believe there are huge benefits for the village and other local communities by our business already having been operating here for over 12 years. At the very least, it has been wonderful to offer hours to local residents who appreciate not having to travel further afield.

I have mentioned many of these in previous sections but to summarise a few:

- Local/rural employment
- Rural business growth
- Rural tourism
- Diversification of redundant farm buildings
- Benefits to other local small businesses, especially food suppliers and public houses

Other local businesses who have, and will continue to, benefit from our business operating here includes:

- Florists
- Cake makers
- Chefs/front of house staff and all support staff used temporarily
- Event planners
- Event stylists
- Food producers
- Prop hire
- Musical bands/DJ's
- Local accommodation (which included some within Harlton itself via Air B&B)
- Private car hire
- Cleaners
- Gardeners
- Celebrants
- Lighting
- Photographers

A 'close neighbour' made proposals of some very well considered conditions.

We welcome these and would like to say these formed parts of our 'Summary' section.

Reference to a previous planning application made over 10 years ago.

I am unsure how this old planning application is relevant to licensing, but I can see it is a concern to some. So, to clarify, this previous application was turned down. However, since then we have now obtained permission to do 30 weddings/events and 156 exercise classes only.

6 new residential buildings

It was stated these new dwellings are being constructed 'within metres' of the venue. The nearest new residential building that I believe they are referring to is approximately 120 metres away. It will be great to this area of the village visually improved on completion, and even nicer if we can offer to provide 'green-heat' to any of those dwellings.

Specific reference to the weekend of the 18th July 2020

This was not on the premises of The Manor Barn or anywhere near the area being applied for. This was a vow renewal ceremony for an older couple, not a party with music or shouting (currently prohibited at this time). This was a rare request from a local couple, who's event had been devastated by the pandemic and reached out for our help. We offered it free of charge to try and help them during this difficult time.

I am very sorry if anyone experienced any disturbance from this, I did speak to the nearest neighbour in advance to inform them of this.

No consideration for our neighbours.

We have a long history of our family living and working in the village, we have great affection for it and as such try very hard to be involved and help with many village traditions and events. The Manor Barn has been used on many occasions to help raise village funds for different projects, which we would love to continue. I have attempted to address all concerns raised, within this document.

I am humbled that a large majority of the village has continued to show verbal support for our business existing here. By existing here for over a decade, I think we have demonstrated that we can, and will continue, to operate a safe business here which does not adversely affect residents. I do understand that a few residents do have worries and I hope my response can help alleviate those concerns and we can work together to find a middle ground where we can all be happy.

The Prevention of crime and disorder

Antisocial behaviour

I must refer to the comment from the Environment health officers that 'there are no records of formal nuisance complaints having been made to this department relating to activities at these premises.

There has been a rise in antisocial behaviour since March 2020 (since lockdown and we have been closed) which we have been working with the police and our closest neighbours on. This has not come from our venue as we have been closed.

One representation made comment to suggest there was one case of antisocial behaviour approximately 10 years ago. I do remember this comment being made at the time, but I believe it was on the Highstreet and not near to our venue. There is no evidence or reason to believe this came from our venue. I am sorry if any resident has experienced antisocial behaviour because of ours, or any other, business in the area.

I do understand that people may be worried about this. I can only offer my best assurance/opinions which some people may or may-not choose to believe, but I have no other way to express it. My husband, 2 young children under 9yrs and myself all live within metres of the venue. My husbands' parents also live on-site, and although they are due to move to a new house in the future, will still be in one of the closest properties. We also have other family members close by, as well as village friends. My husband and I are the only monetary beneficiaries of the business, so it cannot be said that our extended family 'put up with it' because they are benefitting in some way. Yes, we want to make this a thriving rural diversification business, but certainly not at the cost of those relationships. Please see section 'Public Nuisance' for more details of how we are in the process of sound insulating the venue. We have strict training regarding anti-social behaviour and management on the day of each event to ensure antisocial behaviour, if any, would be dealt with promptly and effectively.

By the very nature of weddings there is a large age demographic, with parents and grandparents in attendance. It is a special day; guests have a level of respect to their hosts and the family/friends having invited them to such an important day. We offer a very bespoke and personal service; we are not a wedding 'machine' and would never wish to change the way our clients are looked after. Many of our couples met at the Cambridge Universities, we get to know them and their families very personally and we have never had any antisocial behaviour inside the venue - ever. This is, in-part, down to that relationship and mutual respect we have for each other. The suggestion that our guests would then leave and change character entirely, is surprising.

By experience, having now worked and overseen over 200 events, guests do stay with the cohort of other guests, music, food and drink. As they leave the venue, they walk a short distance to the car park in a direction which is away from the village so would have no need to walk the other way. Staff remain on-site until all guests have safely left the site. From my own visual experience, and having spoken with staff too, none of us have ever seen guests walk toward the direction of the majority of village dwellings at the end of an event, there is nothing that way for them (no shop, pubs are closed, no other amenities for them). To look at this objectively, the village pub in the centre of the village has guests leaving, having been in a licensed premises, having to travel past many residential dwellings on any day of the year, up to 365 days of use. I have allowance for just 30 weddings/events and 156 exercise classes, I cannot see that there is any realistic risk of disturbance at all, in fact, it would be far lower than other local establishments.

Public Safety

Pathway to the venue from the car park

The replaced fencing has now ensured there is access by foot to the venue, without walking on the public highway. On occasion the cars parking for the on-site exercise classes did use Washpit Lane to park, but as soon as this was brought to my attention 'No Parking' signs were put onto the old fencing and the exercise teacher asked to inform all attendees to use the car park, which they have done ever since. I trust residents are happy with this outcome and were happy with our response to remedy this. We welcome all/any concerns residents may have and will continue to welcome this conversation in the future.

The Manor House pond

The pond, owned by Manor Farm, has been enjoyed safely by guests and residents for decades without issue. It has council-installed railings along the roadside edge. As per our risk assessment, we have installed safety signs and buoyancy-ring for use during our events. While this is not a consideration for licensing, I am happy to assure others that we take the safety of this area very seriously, even though it is not on a route which guests travel by foot to/from their vehicles. We would be happy to consider more robust fencing (if permission from Highways could be obtained) to enclose and restrict all access to this area from the roadside, however, I think this would be a terrible shame when so many village residents enjoy visiting it.

The prevention of Public Nuisance

Further noise, traffic and safety concerns

We are not proposing to increase what we have already been doing for 12+ years. It should also be noted the venue has been operating for over 12 years with multiple events per calendar year, as recently proven unequivocally during a Certificate of Lawfulness application granted in March 2020. During this application we had to prove the venue had been used continuously for a period of over 10 years. It was reassuring that many residents were unaware/surprised that we had held the number of events that we had done, until evidence was shown, which helped to confirm that nuisance had not occurred and noise disturbance was minimal, even without our new insulation.

Our need to use our days of use 'allowance' flexibly is only to allow us to operate a functional business.

Unruly behaviour.

We have not, for our entire operating time of over 12+ years ever had a complaint made to the Environmental health officer for any antisocial behaviour. I strongly intend to manage all of our events to the very high standard we already do, it would not be in our interest of the village community or our business' reputation for our client base, to do anything other than this.

Venue being used on any day of the week/year

I suspect this is a planning query and not related to licensing. Our primary event type is weddings. As we only hold a small number per year, with most couples only considering a Saturday we are able to accommodate their wishes and therefore staggered events are inevitable (I cannot foresee any circumstances where we would require 7 days continual use).

We are still limited to 30 events/weddings and 156 exercise classes even if the licence is granted.

Car park size and use

I am very surprised and sorry to hear any guests have parked off-site. Our parking area is much larger than required and has never been full at any wedding, most guests car-share. I would be unsure why they would prefer to park further away from the venue than the carpark itself. I can only explain that this may be about annual Open Farm Sunday's we took part in. On one year, believed 2017, turnout was far bigger than expected and some parking off-site may have occurred. Considering that, subsequent Open Days had access to a large field with parking attendants.

I would be very happy to add a sentence within our terms and conditions to further ensure this as suggested by a resident, a great idea.

Noise from cars leaving the site will always be staggered with weddings, from experience, there is no mass dispersal at midnight. This will not be increasing from the current level of permissioned use. Some of our clients use a small bus to shuttle guests in/out of the site which we encourage due to it being a far more environmentally friendly way to access the site and has less impact on residents. We hope to continue to promote this.

Music in outside areas.

By the very nature of a wedding reception outside, music is kept to a level where guests can talk easily. I would be happy to limit this to unamplified music only as has been suggested, however this would only allow live music which is vastly more expensive for our guests than recorded music being played at the same level. Perhaps we could agree to end all outdoor music Monday-Saturday by 19:00. Before such a time, a drinks reception is quiet by nature anyway.

Concern that guests venture further than the grass area immediately outside of the venue

I attend and oversee every event on the premises and can assure residents that guests at a wedding want to stay with their fellow guests. Staff circulate the outside areas continuously to keep it extremely tidy and ensure guest safety.

Travelling noise.

We recently have sound-insulated the Washpit Lane facing side of the barn and are due to complete the South facing end (facing the village) within the next few months. The roof is also to be replaced and insulated as soon as it is fundable. This is not a compulsory part of our permission to carry out events but we have voluntarily chosen to do so to reduce any impact on ourselves living on site, and our neighbours (which include lots of family members we would be sad to disrupt). We have also voluntarily installed a sound limiter which has been in place for several years now, and all music is restricted.

Reference to the church being 150m away for the venue

We have never had music playing, or alcohol served, during a Sunday morning service. The Sunday service runs 11am-midday and we are not applying to carry out any licensable activity during this time. I am unsure what the concern is for the church regarding this application. However, many of our couples have used the village church to be married in, prior to our reception with us. I have always had full support from the 2 previous vicars on this matter, and they have expressed that they appreciated the revenue. (The second vicar I mention, only left our parish a few months ago). We hope to continue this relationship.

Littering of verges with cans

We do not serve any cans to our guests, so this cannot have come from our venue. We will, however, continue to litter pick on this lane as we do now.

The main doors on the Washpit Lane being open until midnight

Often these are closed well before that time, but I am very happy to take the Environmental Health Officers suggestion of closing them by 11pm during the events.

Unable to mitigate against noise because the barn is a listed building

We already have listed building consent and have begun work to insulate the walls and roof.

The Protection of Children from Harm

We have a very strict policy of asking for identification if we believe anyone asking for alcohol looks under 25. Since applying for this licence, I have also been liaising with Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Trading Standards and have received information about their preferred 'Challenge 25' scheme which we fully support and adhere to.

Underage drinking in the village chalk pit, (behind the Hare and Hound Public House), and surrounding areas.

I would like to add, I agree there has been an increase in antisocial drinking in the village. This has increased since the pandemic/lockdown (we have been closed the entire time so it has not come from our establishment) and is something we have already been working with local villagers and the police with and will continue to do so.

I do not know these individuals so could not speculate if they are, or are not, underage for the consumption of alcohol.