

Hauxton Centre Premises Licence application - responses to representations from EHO and residents

Our responses are below.

Environmental Health Officer

We are happy to comply with all the recommendations of the EHO, as follows, and these will form part of the working papers of the new Management Committee when it is set up.

Prevention of Public Nuisance

1. We are happy for the sale of alcohol to be stopped at 10.00pm to allow time for clearing up before the Centre closes at 10.30pm.

NOTE: We are not applying for a licence to sell alcohol off the premises – all alcohol sales will be for consumption on the premises.
2. This signage will be placed in the front entrance porch and the door from the main hall, overlooking the playground. The other two exits in each corner of the building remain emergency fire exits only, and will be alarmed. Appropriate signage will also be placed on the car park at the front of the building.
3. We are happy to comply with this. Any movement of refuse will be undertaken by the Centre caretaker during the following morning. The refuse area will be locked to prevent public access for security.
4. The main hall has a sound limiter, and the building is designed to minimise sound pollution. There are only two opening doors in the main hall: one is a fire exit (alarmed and therefore normally closed) and the other is a single soft-close door. All sound is projected away from the properties along Church Road. At the request of SCDC Planning, the building has full air conditioning and no open windows.
5. We are happy to comply with this condition. Since there is no bar, alcohol is normally bought in supermarkets and brought to the hall by car. This arrangement is not expected to change.
6. The Architects have specifically designed all the lighting to avoid nuisance to neighbours or disturbance to wildlife. Also, in line with the recommendations of the Police 'Designing Out Crime' Officer (who we continue to work with), there are no windows at the rear of the building, which faces the neighbouring properties.
7. (See item 4 above re doors.) Air conditioning is installed and there are no opening windows.
8. All entry and exit is directed through the main porch doors to the car park. All doors are soft-close, as directed by SCDC Planning.
9. There will be no outdoor smoking area.

Public Safety

10. We will have a log book to comply with this request. The Committee has adopted the Challenge 25 guidelines, which will be displayed in the Centre. The Personal Licence holder (currently in training) has already completed her Designated Premises Supervisor qualification including Challenge 25 training.

11. H&S, Fire Safety and all other policy documentation will be stored in the Parish Council room.
12. We are happy to comply with this condition. Two people (including the DPS) have agreed to obtain a Personal Licence and a third person, from the Centre Management Committee (yet to be formed), will also undertake this.

Protection of Children from Harm

13. The Challenge 25 policy will be implemented. The DPS is qualified to do this, and the Committee will write the policy document. Information about Challenge 25 will be provided to all hirers, and posters will be displayed on completion of the building.

Private hirers of the Centre will need their own TENs. They will be required to comply with our Age Verification Policy, which will be displayed on the wall.

14. The Parish Council already has a Safeguarding Policy in place for children and vulnerable people (separate from the Challenge 25 policy), covering the existing Village Hall, and this will be adopted for the new building.

There will not be any bar or Social Club. Our intention is only to sell alcohol in limited quantities at community functions, such as Quiz Nights, Lunch Club for the elderly, WI, and Church events. We do not foresee any likelihood of unattended children being present at such functions.

Private hirers of the hall will be required to comply with this Policy, which will be provided to them, and displayed on the wall.

Private representations

We are aware of the concerns of the residents as stated in Representations 1 and 2. The Parish Council has spent some years listening to their concerns and taking these into account as far as possible within the parameters set by SCDC Planning Department. There have been two public consultation events, and the Chair of the PC and other Parish Councillors have met privately with the neighbouring residents twice to discuss their concerns.

The rear of the building will be completely enclosed by a secure fence to prevent public access. At the request of SCDC Planning, thorny plants such as berberis will be planted to prevent climbing of the fence. Pleached tree types around the boundaries will provide a natural barrier.

There are no doors along the rear of the building except a fire exit, which is normally closed and is fitted with an alarm.

The main doors are on the car park end of the building, to minimise noise and nuisance.

Although, for the purposes of the Premises Licence application, the building capacity is 'not more than 499', there is no realistic possibility of 500 people attending any event. The main hall is designed to seat 150 people in 'theatre' configuration, with possibly another 25 people in the foyer and 16 in the PC room.

The kitchen has two single domestic ovens and an induction hob, with a domestic-size extractor fan facing the Recreation Ground, and therefore facing as far away as possible from neighbouring properties.

There is a sound limiter system in the main hall, and no opening windows. Air conditioning has been installed (at huge cost to the Parish Council) to avoid the need for opening windows and doors.

The hall has electric underfloor heating (which is silent), and therefore no fuel deliveries, and no oil tank.

The wildflower meadow is still fully established and maintained by the PC.

As stated previously, the PC is happy to cease sales of alcohol at 10.00pm, in accordance with the EHO advice.

The PC has applied for this licence to enable them to run fundraising events in the new Centre. The same events have been run in the old Village Hall for many years without any complaints from neighbours about noise and public nuisance. At present, people attending have to bring their own drinks.

The PC takes Child Protection very seriously, and has a comprehensive Safeguarding Policy in place which is applicable to the existing Village Hall, the new Sports Ground, and also the new Hauxton Centre. The Policy will be displayed prominently in the new building, along with the telephone number of the PC Safeguarding Representative and all necessary Local Authority emergency telephone numbers, such as the Duty Social Worker. It is envisaged that there will be a Committee Member responsible for Safeguarding, who will also cover not only Challenge 25 for alcohol sales but the use of the Centre and the new playground in front of the building.

We feel that we have done everything realistically possible to take into account the concerns of neighbours, but with the doubling in size of the village, the existing hall is no longer fit for purpose.