

LICENSING AND REGULATORY SUB-COMMITTEE

THURSDAY, 7 AUGUST 2025

Present:

Councillors Gearon, Rollason (Vice-Chair) and Atkins

Officers in Attendance:

Licensing Manager

Legal Advisor

203. APOLOGIES

None.

204. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (IF ANY)

None.

205. APPLICATION FOR A NEW PREMISES LICENCE – BOW GRANGE, LITTLEHEMPSTON, TQ9 6NQ

The Sub-Committee gave consideration to a report presented by the Licensing Manager (previously circulated) in which determination was sought in respect of an application for a new Premises Licence for Bow Grange, Littlehempston, TQ9 6NQ.

The Applicant attended the meeting and was permitted to speak and also answered questions put to them by the Sub-Committee.

Some of those who had submitted representations also attended the meeting and were represented by a Spokesperson.

Arising from consideration of the report, evidence presented and in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Licensing Act 2003 Statutory Guidance, and the Council's Licensing Policy, it was moved by Councillor Rollason and seconded by Councillor Atkins, and

RESOLVED that the new Premises Licence in respect of Bow Grange, Littlehempston, TQ9 6NQ be granted as set out in the report with no amendments.

Reasons for the decision:

The Sub-Committee heard from the Licensing Manager who explained that the application had been submitted for a new premises licence and that the sub-committee were to consider the provision of late-night refreshment and supply of alcohol until midnight Monday to Sunday. The Licensing Manager explained that there had been five objections received on the grounds of public nuisance. There had been no objections from the responsible authorities.

The Applicant was permitted to address the Sub-Committee and confirmed that the application has been submitted as they intend to provide a venue for weddings and other events. The Applicant would like a licence to allow him proper control over the venue and the ability to make it his own.

The Applicant explained that public safety and the prevention of crime and protection of children have been considered, and the venue has CCTV which will cover all areas. It is planned that there are to be two bar areas, and the Applicant will work each event to control and manage these areas.

Training will be provided to all of those working at the premises and challenge 25 will be adhered to at all times. The Applicant's family also live on site and work in the healthcare profession and so any disturbance would also negatively impact them. The Applicant does not classify himself a farmer but does have land and is trying to diversify as farmers have been encouraged to do. The Applicant would like to create a venue that co-exists with the rural community and will be a local venue for local people. The concern from those objecting is understandable, but the Applicant is actively trying to avoid problems and control matters before they become an issue. Planning officers have been extensively consulted and conditions agreed with them.

The Applicant confirmed that music will end at 11pm and alcohol will stop being served at midnight. This will allow an hour 'cooling down' period where guests can trickle out. The intention of this will be to reduce the level of noise and disturbance caused to those living nearby from many people leaving at once. People will be encouraged to stay within the main hall and consultations have been undertaken with the fire service to ensure all maximum capacity regulations are met. The Premises only has two points that guests can leave from so this will be easy to monitor. Fencing is also being put up to ensure people do not wander offsite. There will be a list of local taxi firms and Wi-Fi available ensuring guests will be able to contact a taxi to take them from the venue. The venue is located just off the main road to Totnes and so easily accessible even late at night.

In response to questions from the Sub-Committee the Applicant confirmed that all of the area to be licensed was contained within the area off of the main road. The Licensing Manager confirmed that all other areas marked in blue on the plan supplied with the report are unrelated and should be ignored.

In response to questions from objectors the Applicant confirmed that the planning permission allowed for 32 cars and 100 people. This 100-person limit was to adhere to fire regulations and was for seated guests during the day in the main area. The website advertises up to 250 people as in the evening guests will have more areas to use, and this will be standing room which is covered by different regulations. The outdoor areas provide flexibility and allows for more people to attend. Further car parking can also be utilised if required under a 28-day notice, however they will be encouraging guests to car share and use taxis wherever possible.

The Applicant confirmed that he had spoken to one of the objectors once the application has been submitted but no objections had been received in respect of the planning application. One of the Objectors disagreed and said they were told about the planning application by another person and so went to ask about this. There was no

communication about the licensing application. The Applicant accepted that he could have done more to make contact and confirms that he is open to contact from neighbours if there are any issues going forward.

The Applicant then confirmed the noise restrictions were included within the planning permission and the property is double skinned. The speakers face towards the property and there are no plans to play music outside. If music was played outside, then it will be live and unamplified as per planning restrictions. The number of staff to monitor noise levels will vary depending on the size of the wedding but the venue has all been designed on a fairly small scale around the central courtyard to minimise noise. As stated all staff will be trained and some already hold personal licences. The Applicant will be the DPS.

The Applicant confirmed that he intends to be at every event and there is no intention for there to be events/weddings held every day but that being licensed throughout the week provides flexibility. It's hard to say at the moment how many events will be held but the venue has been built to accommodate year-round bookings although it is unlikely every weekend will be booked as there is a distinct wedding season. The cash flow numbers have accounted for anything from 12 up to 20 events per year and that itself would be a dream number.

The Applicant responded to further questions from the Licensing Manager and Objectors confirming that the CCTV was stored between the two bar areas and so staff members can monitor these easily. The Applicant also agreed with objectors that in theory guests could come up to the bar before closing and order a lot of drinks for that final hour but as DPS he also has a responsibility to say no, and this would go against his personal licence responsibilities.

The Licensing Manager asked the objectors if complaints had been put in against the nearby venue as they had held events until midnight under a TEN. The Objectors confirmed that they had complained. After checking the Licensing Manager confirmed the nearby venue had received 3 complaints – 2 in 2022 and 1 in 2024 – but no nuisance was found or evidenced.

The Applicant then clarified that the nearby venue is very different and agreed that it had caused issues in the past. This venue would be different, and the licence would enable neighbours to have comeback on issues and the Applicant can be held accountable. The Applicant has employed people to ensure things are done correctly. There is no kitchen onsite just a preparation area. Food provided will be dependent on customer need, but caterers will be able to drive right up to the premises to set up and serve food. Toilets have also been built for guests.

The Objectors' spokesperson was given a chance to address the Sub-Committee and expressed their concerns about the application. All live near the premises and are very concerned about noise, public nuisance and the general impact to their life. They are poultry farmers and so understand the need for diversification and are not against this, but they feel that 7 days a week is excessive and will negatively affect the rural area and its ambience. There are no other venues nearby that operate past 11pm. The Objectors do not see why another wedding venue is required and does this not provide unnecessary competition for already existing venues. The venue is new, and the Applicant has no track record of running an establishment like this and so how can they show it will be run properly.

In response to questions from the Sub-Committee the Objectors confirmed that they do hear noise from the other nearby venues which is further away than the venue subject to this application.

The Applicant then confirmed there is another wedding venue, maybe 500 yards away, but they are run differently as that is outdoors and operates under Temporary Event Notices. The premises being considered today is predominantly an inside venue, the licence will actually provide more control to those neighbours if there are any complaints. The Applicant agreed that they hadn't operated as yet but that actually makes it hard to say that the licence won't be adhered to. The Applicant has run establishments in the past and there is comeback for objectors if the venue is not being causing problems. The Applicant would like to be provided a chance to show that he can operate the premises properly and they are not looking at putting on large events, just weddings.

The Sub-Committee having considered the application submitted and having heard from those present and being mindful of Statutory Code of Guidance and Licensing policy, felt that on balance it could not refuse this application.

The Sub-Committee were empathetic to the Objector's concerns about noise levels and accepted that other venues had likely caused problems in the past which understandably made them worry this nuisance would increase with a further venue operating. However, the Sub-Committee did not feel that they had any grounds to refuse this new application based on an unrelated venue. The Sub-Committee appreciated that the Applicant seemed earnest and that he wanted to do well and keep local residents happy. The Sub-Committee also noted that music levels had already been restricted by the planning permission which would go towards mitigating noise levels.

The Sub-Committee did not feel it was reasonable to assume the problems would occur before the venue had been given a chance to trade and felt that adding further conditions would penalise the Applicant unfairly. The Sub-Committee considered that if there were issues with the venue following permission being granted then there were appropriate channels for complainants to report these concerns and the licence could be reviewed.

The Sub-Committee did note that further conversations between the Applicant and Objectors over concerns would be beneficial and felt that more could have been done by the Applicant to facilitate this prior to the application being submitted.

Taking all matters into consideration the Sub-Committee were satisfied that the Applicant was suitably experienced and would be able to promote and uphold the four Licensing Objectives and deemed it appropriate to grant the new premises licence as set out in the report with no additional conditions.

Cllr D Rollason
Chair