

DECISION NOTICE

The Licensing Sub-Committee convened to determine an application to vary the Premises Licence made pursuant to S34 of the Licensing Act 2003.

Premises: Walesby Forest Limited, Brake Road, Walesby, Newark, NG22 9NG

Applicant: Newark & Sherwood District Council as a Responsible Authority

Premises Licence Applicant: Guy Laurie

Sub-Committee Members:

Councillor Jean Hall (Chair)

Councillor Paul Taylor

Councillor Linda Tift

Sitting at Newark and Sherwood District Council on the 23 April 2026 at 10.00am

Also present:

Damian Wilkins (Environmental Health and Licensing Manager).

Helen Brandham (Democratic Services Officer).

Lisa Ingram (Principal Legal Officer and Legal Advisor to the Sub-Committee).

Decision

The Licensing Sub-Committee granted the variation subject to conditions agreed with the police and as agreed at the Sub-Committee.

Right to Appeal

If you are dissatisfied with the Council's decision, you can appeal against it to the Magistrates' Court. If you choose to appeal against the decision, you must lodge your appeal, in writing, at the relevant Magistrates' Court within 21 days of service of this notice on you.

This decision does not have effect until the end of the period given for appealing against the decision, or if the decision is appealed against, until the appeal is disposed of.

REASONS

This statement of reasons is not and does not purport to be a verbatim record of proceedings.

Introduction

On 26 February 2026, Guy Laurie (“the Applicant”) submitted an application to the Council for a variation to the premises licence held by Walesby Forest. In summary the application included 3 changes:

- Double the capacity from 4999 to 9999
- Increase period for sale of alcohol for 3 hours
- Increase period of provision of late-night refreshments

The Sub-Committee were told that the increase in capacity had come about due to Girl Guiding UK, wanting to host their event ‘The Big Camp’, a national girl guide jamboree. Other organisations had contacted Walesby to see if they could accommodate various festivals each with their own requirements.

Mr. Laurie confirmed that the licensing hours would remain as they had been in respect of the current festivals, for example, the Big Fake Festival.

Mr. Laurie explained that all major events went through the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) and the Event Plan and Noise Management Plan was referred to in the contractual arrangements. He confirmed that there had been one event which went over the licensing hours by 10 minutes but they had apologised to the residents about this. He noted that objectors had referred to glass found in the forest, but no glass is allowed at events, as agreed by SAG.

Mr. Laurie stated that Walesby Forest was not looking to be a major event provider but only cater for 3 or 4 events per year. He confirmed that the primary purpose was being a charity and providing an education base. He accepted that post-COVID, they have been forced to look at alternative sources of income generation to ensure that they can continue providing services to scouts and children trying to be a part of our community. He advised that Walesby Forest was not trying to be Newark Showground.

Mr. Laurie advised the Sub-Committee that the police signed off the traffic arrangements and these would also be signed off by Chevron. He accepted that there had been an issue 3 years ago whereby the camping and caravanning club arranged for booking in at the site which blocked the road but there had not been the same issue again.

With regards to litter, 1100 litre commercial bins are provided on site which are emptied into skips which are then removed from the site.

The Sub-Committee heard representations made by George Hodgson and Anne-Marie Pitchford, two of the individuals who had submitted written objections to the application.

George Hodgson was invited to make representations to the Sub-Committee. He advised that he had lived on Brake Road for quite a while and explained that he was impacted by the festivals which take place at the Premises. He asked the Sub-Committee to imagine a hot summers day, Mr. Hodgson sitting in his conservatory, music being so loud, that the windows in the house have to be closed. He explained that he and his wife both have breathing difficulties. He explained that

he then opens the windows at 0100hrs or 0200hrs and he can hear cars going down Brake Road. He confirmed that Environmental Health had carried out a visit due to the noise. Mr. Hodgson explained that they were also disturbed by drunk people walking past their property in the early hours of the morning.

Mr. Hodgson thought with the events increasing, the site was no longer about the Scouts, but the Premises was becoming a commercial venue. Mr. Hodgson said he and his wife were suffering because of it and he wished he could get away from it when the events were being held and live somewhere else.

Mr. Hodgson accepted, when asked by the Sub-Committee, that he was concerned about the existing activities. He also went on to say that any proposed extension would exacerbate those issues. He told the Sub-Committee that he was a retired person, wanted to enjoy it but the noise was imposing on his life and that any extension will impinge further and on others around him.

Anne-Marie Pitchford was invited to speak. She confirmed that she had lived on Brake Road all her life. She explained that the objection was due to her direct experience of events held in previous years. During the festival events, music was so loud, that she has to shut her windows in the middle of summer, and she added that music could be heard up to 6 miles away last year. The proposed variation would only allow an increase in the frequency of such events.

Previously during events hosted by Walesby, she has been unable to sit and enjoy her garden and held significant concerns that the frequency would increase due to the doubling of the capacity. She added that she had booked holidays away to avoid being at home when events were being held. Mrs Pitchford went on to explain that Brake Road was a narrow, rural road with horses located on the other side, who can be affected by events and fireworks. Mrs Pitchford felt that was not acceptable and advised that Center Parcs had banned the use of fireworks on their site. In referring to Mr. Laurie's comments about the Vegan Campout Events, Mrs Pitchford noted that this was a single event in the year so the proposed extension in hours to late night refreshments and provision of alcohol did not have to be for the whole year.

In response to the presentations by Mr. Hodgson and Mrs Pitchford, Mr. Laurie advised that he would be willing to accept a condition that stated that existing events would not be extended, as per Walesby Forest's agreement with the Police.

Determination

Section 35 of the Licensing Act 2003 provides that where a licensing authority receives an application to vary a premises licence, it must hold a hearing to consider it and any relevant representations. The licensing authority having had regard to the application and any relevant representations must if it considers it necessary, take any of the following steps for the promotion of the licensing objectives:

- to grant the licence subject to such conditions as are consistent with the operating schedule accompanying the application (as maybe amended)
- exclude from the scope of the licence any of the licensable activities to which the application relates;
- refuse to specify a person in the licence as the premises supervisor;
- reject the application.

The Sub-Committee considered:

1. The Sub-Committee report of the Environmental Health and Licensing Manager
2. The application and oral representation of the applicant.
3. The written and oral representations of the objectors.
4. The relevant provisions of the Licensing Act 2003.
5. Statutory guidance issued under S.182 of the Licensing Act 2003.
6. Newark and Sherwood District Council's Statement of Licensing Policy 2024 -2029.

The Sub-Committee determined that:

1. The purpose of the Sub-Committee was to establish the facts and evidence which supported the application to vary the current licence and the which formed the basis of the objections.
2. Responsible authorities had agreed conditions with the Applicant which resulted in no objection being considered, any objections/observations were not required or no comment was provided. Weight was placed on the representations and lack of objection from responsible authorities.
3. The starting point for the Sub-Committee in reaching determination of the application to vary the licence was the promotion of the licensing objectives and that the licensing regime was one which was permissive. The Sub-Committee needed to consider if the application adversely affected the licensing objectives.
4. The objectors made representations about noise nuisance (from music), littering and increased traffic, all matters which fell within public nuisance, licencing objective. When objectors were asked the variation would make a difference to the nuisance, they were already being caused they confirmed it would.
5. The Applicant confirmed that there was no alteration to the times music was to be played, that measures had been put in place with SAG to manage traffic and that he would request the event providers to extend their duty to put the site back to how it was to include the village in terms of clearing litter.
6. The Applicant offered to condition the variation to the capacity so it was limited to Scout and Girl Guide groups only.
7. The Sub-Committee found that such nuisance, if it were to occur would not be a frequent occurrence and that with the measures already in place and with those proposed by the Applicant, there was a small likelihood of such an occurrence.
8. The Sub-Committee was satisfied that the review process would be a sufficient recourse should such, unlikely occurrence as described by the objectors. The Sub-Committee concluded that it was unnecessary to impose any further conditions.