

Supplementary Committee Agenda



**Epping Forest
District Council**

Licensing Sub Committee Tuesday 18th June 2024

Place: Council Chamber - Civic Offices

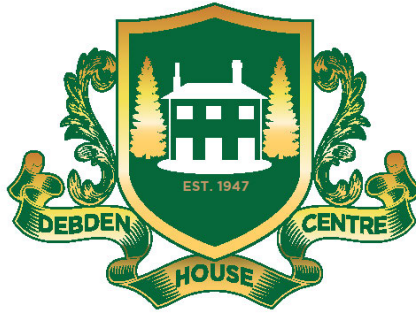
Time: 10.15 am

Democratic Services: Democratic Services (Direct Line 01992 564243)
Email: democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

**5. APPLICATION FOR A NEW PREMISES LICENCE, DEBDEN HOUSE CENTRE,
DEBDEN GREEN, LOUGHTON, IG10 2NZ (Pages 2 - 14)**

Please see attached responses from the Applicant.

Agenda Item 5



Dear Neighbour,

We hope you are all keeping well and are looking forward to the impending summer! We thought it prudent to keep you updated with an application we are submitting to Epping Forest District Council very shortly.

Debden House is applying for an alcohol & regulated music licence (alcohol until 00:00 and regulated music until 01:00). We have held a licence previously, but surrendered it in 2018.

With the current financial pressures and the need to improve our financial standing we are requested to assess the viability of our centre. As you can imagine, since Covid, training and conferencing has become much less frequent. To ensure we remain self-sufficient, our future plans include taking bookings for celebratory events with alcohol and regulated entertainment.

We do not wish our neighbours to feel apprehensive or timorous about this, so please feel free to call us or pop in to discuss any concerns you may have. We do not envisage our plans having too much of an effect on neighbours or the environment, as we will remain responsible & respectful. Please note, I also live on-site and I am the closest neighbour to the centre so do not wish disruption to my life either, so we will remain responsible with the type of bookings we accept.

If you wish, you may email me on [REDACTED] or call on 020 8508 3008 for further clarification.

Many Thanks

Shabnam Brown

Head of Centre – Debden House (LB of Newham)

Debden Green

Loughton

IG10 2NZ



Response to Corporation of London

Dear Tristan,

We are responding to concerns regarding the Premises License Application for Debden House Centre on behalf of the London Borough of Newham.

Please accept this response in relation to the issues raised by The City of London Environment department on behalf of the Conservators of Epping Forest.

General Information

Debden House was previously in possession of an alcohol license for some years (with no issues) and it was surrendered by us in 2018.

There are two functions of the centre – the seasonal campsite & the main conference centre.

The campsite operates from the end of May to the middle of September, a total of 75 days per year, which constitutes only 35% of its permitted licensed operating schedule.

The campsite opens on weekends only from the end of May and full-time opening commences only once the schools are on holiday (for 6 weeks only).

In the past there have sometimes been incidences of noise from the campsite day visitors, but this is approximately 2 or 3 Sundays per year when there are larger community groups in attendance who have used cultural instruments as part of their community celebrations. Campsite Day visitors are now required to vacate the campsite by 1900 hours on Saturdays and Sundays (previously 20:00). Debden House has never been served with any form of noise abatement order by Epping Forest District Council.

1). Live or Recorded Music

The most pertinent point to note, is the License application is **NOT** to have music for the campsite. We understand and appreciate your concerns here. The campsite is one of the largest in the UK and the potential to have hundreds of people here for festival type events, **regularly**, would be unfair & unsustainable. Let us reiterate – this is not what we are proposing.

The music is for the house area ONLY, the average size of previous house bookings have been between 30-80 people. The maximum capacity for the house is 120 people. We are not requesting

to host rave/club/festival/ticketed type events, but manageable family gatherings and celebrations. We will also NOT be offering our venue to promoters or other parties. Every booking will be taken by us and managed by our own LBN staff (& security if needed). Each booking will be assessed on its own requirements and we will ensure the safety & security of both persons and property – Ours, and yours. We will not accept bookings we would deem as disruptive. We will also work with the Environment Enforcement team to monitor the level of sound emanating from our site and maintain it to acceptable levels. (Initial meeting planned for July 2024). We will install a noise limiter device in the main hall to manage any music. We feel this will deter any loud or disruptive bookings from wishing to book with us as they will understand there are limits to level of sound we will allow. We will also ensure all local neighbours have an out of hours contact number so any concerns can be dealt with at the time.

2). Number of days/times requested.

We are happy to amend some of the days & timings on our original application. The original application was to cover every eventuality. Staff also live on site and we, like yourselves never wished for or expected events every night of the week.

The new amendments would be as follows:

Provision of Live or Recorded Music – Thurs-Sat – 10:00-22:00 Outdoors & 10:00-00:00 Indoors. Sundays 10:00 – 21:00 (Outdoors & Indoors). (Previously Mon-Sun 10:00-23:00 outdoors & 10:00-1:00 indoors)

Supply of Alcohol Mon-Sat 11:00 – 23:00 & Sun 11:00-22:00 (On & Off Sales) (Previously Mon-Sun 11:00-00:00)

Provision of Film Mon-Sun 10:00 – 23:00 (Previously 10.00-00.00)

Provision of Late Night refreshment Thurs-Sun 23:00 – 00:00. (Previously 23:00-1:00)

(The supply of alcohol timings now reflects our previously held license).

3). Alcohol

The campsite caters for families camping, school & youth groups and day visitors- we are not proposing to offer alcohol on the whole of the 50 acre site, but in a small designated area away from children and the main campsite fields. Campers already legally bring their own alcohol with them and have been doing so since the campsite's inception in 1947, so the impact of us selling the alcohol would not make any significant difference to camper behaviour.

The Conference centre, in the main house operates all year round and serves the local community, public sector training including law enforcement and local interest hobby groups. The Conference Centre is located at the front of the site and away from the campsite.

There will be no serving of alcohol in the presence of children in the Conference centre, unless it is a family function and children are accompanied by their parents.

The house previously held an Alcohol license with no issues, we surrendered it in 2018 due to lack of usage. We are applying again with the previous days/timings requested.

4). Crime & Anti-social behaviour

The Police have not been in attendance to our site for many years. We contacted Essex police this month to provide some statistics in support of this. We have a statement from Essex Police Licensing officer dated 6th June 2024 –

"Essex Police would advise for you to inform the residents that the premises has not had any issues in recent years and there has been no police attendance. Essex Police have not objected to the premises licence so therefore Essex Police do not have concerns regarding crime and disorder".

5). Environmental Concerns

Debden House works in partnership with the Epping Forest Ranger service to inform and enforce the Forest byelaws. Debden House regularly affords access to the ranger service to patrol the campsite in order to enforce any transgressions. We sell fire wood to campers and inspect vehicles for any illegal material for burning. We take our responsibilities in regards to the forest seriously.

We actively promote the forest byelaws on our website and give our customers guidance and information regarding what they are permitted to use in regards to foraging. Our staff and security conduct assurance patrols throughout the camp season and seize any wood and return it to the forest environment.

Debden House have employed additional staff to litter pick the forest boundaries in order to ensure we clear up after our customers. We appreciate, this has been a problem at times in the past.

The campsite is fallow for almost 9 months of the year and our campsite operation is only 35% of our permitted schedule under our Campsite licence.

Debden House has never been served or notified by the City of London Environment Department around any environmental transgressions by the camp site.

Debden House Campsite and Conference Centre has existed in its current form since 1947, and as a responsible local authority, we value feedback from our neighbours on a continual basis. We have reached out to our neighbours on several occasions to meet with centre staff through informal events, however these offers have not been accepted. We would welcome better formal and informal communication in the future to mitigate any concerns or fears they have about Centre activities by nominating a formal representative to engage with us. We would also welcome this

opportunity for Corporation of London officers to engage with our officers to mitigate any concerns raised by your Conservators going forward.

Many Thanks

Shabnam Brown

Debden House Centre

London Borough of Newham



Response to Neighbour Objections to License Application for Debden House – LB Newham

Dear Neighbours,

We would like to respond to some of the concerns highlighted in your objection letters regarding the Premises License application for Debden House Centre, London Borough of Newham.

1). Live or Recorded Music

The most pertinent point to note, is the License application is **NOT** to have music for the campsite. We understand and appreciate your concerns here. The campsite is one of the largest in the UK and the potential to have hundreds of people here for festival type events, **regularly**, would be unfair & unsustainable. Let us reiterate – this is not what we are proposing.

The music is for the house area ONLY, the average size of previous house bookings have been between 30-80 people. The maximum capacity for the house is 120 people. We are not requesting to host rave/club/festival/ticketed type events, but manageable family gatherings and celebrations. We will also NOT be offering our venue to promoters or other parties. Every booking will be taken by us and managed by our own LBN staff (& security if needed). Each booking will be assessed on its own requirements and we will ensure the safety & security of both persons and property – Ours, and yours. We will not accept bookings we would deem as disruptive. We will also work with the Environment Enforcement team to monitor the level of sound emanating from our site and maintain it to acceptable levels. (Initial meeting planned for July 2024). We will install a noise limiter device in the main hall to manage any music. We feel this will deter any loud or disruptive bookings from wishing to book with us as they will understand there are limits to level of sound we will allow. We will also ensure all local neighbours have an out of hours contact number so any concerns can be dealt with at the time.

2). Number of days/times requested.

We are happy to amend some of the days & timings on our original application. The original application was to cover every eventuality. Staff also live on site and we, like yourselves never wished for or expected events every night of the week.

The new amendments would be as follows:

Provision of Live or Recorded Music – Thurs-Sat – 10:00-22:00 Outdoors & 10:00-00:00 Indoors. Sundays 10:00 – 21:00 (Outdoors & Indoors). (Previously Mon-Sun 10:00-23:00 outdoors & 10:00-1:00 indoors)

Supply of Alcohol Mon-Sat 11:00 – 23:00 & Sun 11:00-22:00 (On & Off Sales) (Previously Mon-Sun 11:00-00:00)

Provision of Film Mon-Sun 10:00 – 23:00 (Previously 10.00-00.00)

Provision of Late Night refreshment Thurs-Sun 23:00 – 00:00. (Previously 23:00-1:00)

(The supply of alcohol timings now reflects our previously held license).

3). Impact on Traffic / Local roads

The maximum impact on traffic would be approximately 30/40 cars if we were to host an event for the maximum 120 people. We have our own ample car parking spaces around the front of the house and an extra car park towards the campsite. Uniquely, all of these spaces are on private land, away from any public roads and your properties. When patrons are arriving or departing, all of this function will occur away from the roads so the impact would be minimum i.e. getting into cars, waiting for taxi's etc. None of our customers will need to park on the public roads or outside your homes. Please do not compare a house event to Campsite visitors, the numbers will be markedly reduced, the campsite is 50 acres whereas the house capacity is much smaller. We will implement our 'Dispersal Policy' which ensures staff are trained on the safe departure of patrons from the site (as we have recently implemented with the campsite). Staff will remain on site until all customers have departed so as to ensure no disruption to yourselves.

4). Road Signage & Lighting

You may have noticed we changed our road signage earlier this year to ensure our campsite & House customers find our venue easier. Since we opened for this season we have added further signage to avoid customers travelling further pass our entrance and ending up on the T road leading in to the forest. A very recent discussion with a neighbour has highlighted that we need a sign for customers departing, which we have also implemented. This should go some way to avoid customers turning right (and past your homes) as they leave our site. We will also look to add further lighting to our entrance area. Some objectors have stated concerns around RTA's as our entrance & exit is the same and quite narrow and possible low visibility. Please note, there have been no road traffic accidents for the past 12 years. Again, the numbers of house bookings will be significantly lower than campsite bookings.

5). Litter

Since last year we employed an extra member of ground staff whose tasks include extra litter picking of the site and forest boundaries. We will continue with this appointment to ensure the litter from campers remains low. We hope you have noted the difference from some years ago. There are no litter issues around the rest of our site.

6). Alcohol

The arrangement of campers bringing their own alcohol has always existed on the campsite since its inception in 1949. Therefore the concern regarding Debden supplying the alcohol should not be an issue as alcohol already exists on site. Debden providing alcohol for purchase may assist with monitoring and limiting consumption by campers.

The main house has previously held an alcohol license for many years with **no issues**, we surrendered our last license in 2018, and we are now re-applying for this. We have now amended some timings to reflect our previously held license. We are not a private entity or business. We are a local authority who take our responsibility of the 4 objectives seriously. We will ensure we implement 'Challenge 25', 'Drugs Policy' 'Dispersal Policy' etc. and work with all bodies concerned with the management of the site.

8). Crime & anti-social behaviour

The Police have not been in attendance to our site for many years. We contacted Essex police this month to provide some statistics/evidence in support of this. We have a statement from Essex Police Licensing Officer, dated 6th June 2024 –

"Essex Police would advise for you to inform the residents that the premises has not had any issues in recent years and there has been no police attendance. Essex Police have not objected to the premises licence so therefore Essex Police do not have concerns regarding crime and disorder".

7). Communication with Neighbours

We attempted engagement with you all regarding this application, to help alleviate some of your genuine fears. A letter was posted to all but we had no requests for further information. We have also communicated in the past via a neighbour on the community WhatsApp group. We have forwarded information regarding opening /closing of the campsite season, thanking neighbours for a good season, information of any events we have running, Santa's grotto, Christmas dinners, invitation to an open house for you all to see the centre and what we do, an invitation to Afternoon Tea & a summer bbq with us etc. We have made many attempts to keep the lines of communication open. Going forward, we feel better communication from both parties would be

beneficial. If agreed, we could communicate detailed information to neighbours of any upcoming events i.e. start times, end times, type of function etc. It would be of great assistance if you could nominate a new neighbour representative, as our last one has moved away from the area last summer.

As a centre, we have relationships with many of you. We understand it can be difficult living next to one of the UK's largest campsites, which has been in existence since the 1940's, please note, we do attempt to reduce the impact on you all, we now operate the campsite only **75 days** of the whole year which is only 35% of our overall permitted Licensing period. We have reduced the day visitor departure times from 20:00 to 19:00 and also moved their field location, in response to a neighbour's request. All to reduce the impact of any disturbance to neighbours. We have a campsite to run in order to fulfil our obligations to local residents and Newham communities, we do the best we can with limited resources, we work with and are inspected by EFDC Holiday License Inspection Team every 2 years to ensure we remain compliant.

To conclude, we understand your fears and wish for us to find a way to work together. We hope this information goes some way in explaining our situation and in mitigating your anxiety.

Please feel free to get in touch with any other questions.

Many thanks

Shabnam Brown

Debden House Centre

London Borough of Newham



Response to Planning & Licensing Committee - Loughton Town Council

Dear Debra,

We are responding to concerns regarding the Premises License Application for Debden House Centre on behalf of the London Borough of Newham.

Please accept this response in conjunction with the reply to our neighbours as this addresses the concerns that were presented to Loughton Town Council.

Debden House does not currently possess a premises license as mentioned in your email. Debden House was previously in possession of an alcohol license for some years (with no issues) and was surrendered by us in 2018 due to lack of use.

There are two functions of the centre – the seasonal campsite & the main conference centre.

The campsite operates from the end of May to the middle of September, a total of 75 days per year, which constitutes only 35% of its permitted licensed operating schedule.

The campsite opens on weekends only from the end of May and full-time opening commences only once the schools are on holiday (for 6 weeks only), therefore the issues raised regarding Davenant school children being affected are mitigated by our operating dates and times.

In the past there have sometimes been incidences of noise from the campsite but this is approximately 2 or 3 Sundays a year when there are larger community groups in attendance who have used cultural instruments as part of their community celebrations, please note, these groups vacate the site by 19:00. Debden House has never been served with any form of noise abatement order by Epping Forest District Council.

1). Live or Recorded Music

The most pertinent point to note, is the License application is **NOT** to have music for the campsite. We understand and appreciate concerns here. The campsite is one of the largest in the UK and the potential to have hundreds of people here for festival type events, **regularly**, would be unfair & unsustainable. Let us reiterate – this is not what we are proposing.

The music is for the house area ONLY, the average size of previous house bookings have been between 30-80 people. The maximum capacity for the house is 120 people. We are not requesting to host rave/club/festival/ticketed type events, but manageable family gatherings and celebrations. We will also NOT be offering our venue to promoters or other parties. Every booking will be taken by us and managed by our own LBN staff (& security if needed). Each booking will be assessed on

its own requirements and we will ensure the safety & security of both persons and property – Ours, and our neighbours. We will not accept bookings we would deem as disruptive. We will also work with the Environment Enforcement team to monitor the level of sound emanating from our site and maintain it to acceptable levels. (Initial meeting planned for July 2024). We will install a noise limiter device in the main hall to manage any music. We feel this will deter any loud or disruptive bookings from wishing to book with us as they will understand there are limits to level of sound we will allow. We will also ensure all local neighbours have an out of hours contact number so any concerns can be dealt with at the time.

2). Number of days/times requested.

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Provision of Film Mon-Sun 10:00 – 23:00 (Previously 10.00-00.00)

Provision of Late Night refreshment Thurs-Sun 23:00 – 00:00. (Previously 23:00-1:00)

(The supply of alcohol timings now reflects our previously held license).

3). Impact on Traffic / Local roads

The maximum impact on traffic would be approximately 30/40 cars if we were to host an event for the maximum 120 people. We have our own ample car parking spaces around the front of the house and an extra car park towards the campsite. Uniquely, all of these spaces are on private land, away from any public roads and neighbour properties. When patrons are arriving or departing, all of this function will occur away from the roads so the impact would be minimum i.e. getting into cars, waiting for taxi's etc. None of our customers will need to park on the public roads or outside any homes. Please do not compare a house event to Campsite visitors, the numbers will be markedly reduced, the campsite is 50 acres whereas the house capacity is much smaller. We will implement our 'Dispersal Policy' which ensures staff are trained on the safe departure of patrons from the site (as we have recently implemented this with the campsite). Staff will remain on site until all customers have departed so as to ensure no disruption to yourselves.

4). Road Signage & Lighting

We have recently updated our road signage earlier this year to ensure our campsite & House customers find our venue easier. Since we opened for this season we have added further signage to avoid customers travelling further past our entrance and ending up on the T road leading in to the forest. A very recent discussion with a neighbour has highlighted that we need a sign for customers departing, which we have also implemented. This should go some way to avoid customers turning right (and past homes) as they leave our site. We will also look to add further lighting to our entrance area. Some objectors have stated concerns around RTA's as our entrance & exit is the same and quite narrow and possible low visibility. Please note, there have been no road traffic accidents for the past 12 years. Again, the numbers of house bookings will be significantly lower than campsite bookings.

5). Litter

Since last year we employed an extra member of ground staff whose tasks include extra litter picking of the site and forest boundaries. We will continue with this appointment to ensure the litter from campers remains low. We hope you have noted the difference from some years ago. There are no litter issues around the rest of our site.

6). Alcohol

As your email correctly states, the campsite caters for families camping, school & youth groups and day visitors- it is one of the largest campsites in the UK. In response to your statements, we are not proposing to offer alcohol on the whole of the 50 acre site where children are present, but in a small designated area away from children and the main camping fields. Campers already legally bring their own alcohol with them and have been doing so since the campsite's inception in 1947, so the impact of us selling the alcohol would not be significant. Deben providing alcohol for purchase may assist with monitoring and limiting consumption by campers.

The second function of the site is the Conference centre. The main house operates all year round and serves the local community, public sector training including law enforcement and local interest hobby groups. The Conference Centre is located at the front of the site and away from the campsite.

The main house has previously held an alcohol license for many years with **no issues**, we surrendered our last license in 2018, and we are now re-applying for this. We have now amended some timings to reflect our previously held license. We are not a private entity or business. We are a local authority who take our responsibility of the 4 objectives seriously. There will be no serving of alcohol in the presence of children in the Conference centre, unless it is a family function and children are accompanied by their parents.

We will ensure we implement 'Challenge 25', 'Drugs Policy' 'Dispersal Policy' etc. and work with all bodies concerned with the management of the site.

7). Crime & anti-social behaviour

The Police have not been in attendance to our site for many years. We contacted Essex police this month to provide some statistics/evidence in support of this. We have a statement from Essex Police Licensing Officer, dated 6th June 2024 –

"Essex Police would advise for you to inform the residents that the premises has not had any issues in recent years and there has been no police attendance. Essex Police have not objected to the premises licence so therefore Essex Police do not have concerns regarding crime and disorder".

8). Communication with Neighbours

We attempted engagement with all neighbours regarding this application, to help alleviate some of their genuine fears. A letter was posted to all but we had no requests for further information. We have also communicated in the past via a neighbour on the community WhatsApp group. We have forwarded information regarding opening /closing of the campsite season, thanking neighbours for a good season, information of any events we have running, Santa's grotto, Christmas dinners, invitation to an open house for you all to see the centre and what we do, an invitation to Afternoon Tea & a summer bbq with us etc. We have made many attempts to keep the lines of communication open. Going forward, we feel better communication from both parties would be beneficial. If agreed, we could communicate detailed information to neighbours of any upcoming events i.e. start times, end times, type of function etc. It would be of great assistance if they could nominate a new neighbour representative, as the last one has moved away from the area last summer.

As a centre, we have relationships with many of our neighbours. We understand it can be difficult living next to one of the UK's largest campsites, which has been in existence since the 1940's, please note, we do attempt to reduce the impact on all, we now operate the campsite only **75 days** of the whole year which is only 35% of our overall permitted Licensing period. We have reduced the day visitor departure times from 20:00 to 19:00 and also moved their field location, in response to a neighbour's request. All to reduce the impact of any disturbance to neighbours. We have a campsite to run in order to fulfil our obligations to local residents and Newham communities, we do the best we can with limited resources, we work with and are inspected by EFDC Holiday License Inspection Team every 2 years to ensure we remain compliant.

Many Thanks

Shabnam Brown

Debden House Centre

London Borough of Newham