



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