

Formal Representation Objecting to the Premises Licence Application – Benham Valence (Grade II Listed Building)

To: West Berkshire Licensing

Re: Representation Objecting to New Premises Licence Application – Benham Valence

Ref; IC APP 29442

From: Steve & Alice Stillman-Hurst

Address: [REDACTED] RG20 8 [REDACTED]

Date: 05/03/2026

Introduction

We are writing to lodge a formal objection to the premises licence application for Benham Valence, a Grade II listed building, which seeks permission for a change of use to host weddings, live music events, and alcohol sales for gatherings of up to **over 600** guests. **[THERE IS A LACK OF CLARITY IN THE APPLICATION AS TO TOTAL CAPACITY – BETTER TO BE CONCERNED BY A LOWER CAPACITY AND THEN FIND OUT IT IS HIGHER, THAN ALLOW THE APPLICANT TO CLAIM YOU WERE ONLY CONCERNED BECAUSE YOU THOUGHT THE CAPACITY WAS HIGHER THAN IT WAS ACTUALLY GOING TO BE]**

Traffic and Access Concerns (Public Safety & Public Nuisance)

Large events of up to 800 guests pose significant road risks including congestion, rural lane hazards, emergency access issues, and increased risk of drink-driving.

Residential Noise and Disruption

Hosting weddings and live-music events for **over 600** attendees will inevitably create **substantial noise**, both from amplified music and from large numbers of guests congregating outdoors, arriving, and departing.

Benham Valence events have stated that a 95db noise level is to be expected. These levels, even if they were to be adhered to, exceed typical residential noise limits **and this area is far from typical; being very quiet in the evenings and at night.**

There are plans to house guests in large marquees in the grounds. This is of great concern as this moves the noise away from the main building and into the grounds, even closer to our property.

The proposed alcohol-led operations would cause extensive late-night disturbance including music, taxi and vehicle noise, shouting, and light pollution. The plans include helicopter arrivals and departures for some guests and drone laser displays further contributing considerable to noise and nuisance. The rural setting causes noise to travel further and remain intrusive.

Key concerns:

- Noise breakout from the licensed area, that will not be contained by any building fabric due to the “open air” nature of the proposal.
- Listed buildings’ poor insulation leading to greater noise leakage.
- Late-night disturbances from traffic, taxis, and guests.
- Outdoor activity (smoking, drinking, photos) continuing into the evening.

Prevention of Crime and Disorder

Large-scale events combined with alcohol consumption increase the likelihood of disorder

Risks include:

- Alcohol-related altercations among large groups unfamiliar with the area.
- Disorder in car parks and access lanes during late-night dispersal.
- Insufficient clarity regarding security staffing – they have no plans for security and state that 1 night porter per 100 guests would be employed.

Protection of Children from Harm

Weddings often involve children, and the presence of alcohol, loud music, and late-night activity can expose them to harm.

We also border the proposed venue directly and have a legitimate concern for inebriated guests becoming a threat to our young children who play in our garden with only an open 150-meter barbed wire fence between us and hundreds of event guests. This would impact us as for every event (which are planned for a regular occurrence) our children would be unable to play safely in our own garden.

We have a child with additional medical needs where sleep is not just important but essential. His bedtime is 9pm. For a child with Type 1 diabetes, it is biologically essential for stable blood glucose, brain function, emotional regulation, school performance, and long-term health. Research consistently shows strong links between poor sleep and worse diabetes outcomes in children.

We are certain that our son’s sleep will be adversely affected by the noise of music, people, helicopters and drones. This will have significant impact on his health and wellbeing and could worsen an already chronic condition.

The reason we live in a quiet rural location is to ensure that our son has the best environment for his condition.

[are you able to refer to your own requirements, such as requiring quiet to enable home-working, or having to get up early to go to work?]

Requested Outcome

We request refusal of this application. If not refused, strict conditions must be applied, including reduced event size, earlier closing hours, **no** outdoor amplified music, no helicopters and no drones. Mandatory security in place, an approved traffic management plan, and on-site parking only.

Conclusion

We request confirmation of receipt and notice of any hearing.

Signed:

Steve & Alice Stillman-Hurst

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