

Licensing Sub-Committee Report

Croft Hall, The Croft, Hungerford, West Berkshire, RG17 0HY (Application Number 30014)

Type of Application:	Premise Licence Variation
Town Council:	Hungerford
Ward Members:	Councillor Dennis Benneyworth, Councillor Denise Gaines, Councillor Tony Vickers
Case Officer:	Mark Groves, Licensing Operations Manager
Portfolio Holder:	Councillor Tom McCann
Service Director:	Clare Lawrence

1. Purpose of the Report

- 1.1. To set out the background information pertaining to this Licensing Application.

2. Recommendation to Licensing Sub-Committee

- 2.1. Options available to Members are to: -

- (a) Grant the application for a premises licence variation subject to such conditions as are consistent with the operating schedule accompanying the application and to decide whether to modify any of those conditions to such extent as is considered appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives and subject to any mandatory condition.
- (b) Exclude from the licence any of the licensable activities to which the application relates.
- (c) Reject the application for a premises licence variation.

Members of the Licensing Sub-Committee are asked to decide at the end of the hearing after all relevant parties have been given the opportunity to speak. Members must give full reasons for their decision.

3. Introduction and Background

- 3.1. On 8 July 2026, an application was received by the Council on behalf of the Trustees of the Croft Hall for a variation to the current premises licence under the Licensing Act 2003 in respect of Croft Hall, The Croft, Hungerford, West Berkshire, RG17 0HY
- 3.2. The application was validated on 8 July 2026, and the consultation process began on 8 July 2026 and ran until midnight, 5 August 2026.
- 3.3. Members of the Licensing Sub-Committee are asked to determine the application as the Licensing Authority has received representations stating that the grant of this premise licence variation would undermine the prevention of public nuisance, public safety and the protection of children from harm.

- 3.4. The Licensing Authority may only consider aspects relevant to the application that have been raised in these representations.
- 3.5. Members of the Licensing Sub-Committee are requested to determine the application having regard to the operating schedule, representations received, the Councils Statement of Licensing Policy, revised guidance issued under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 and the four licensing objectives.
- 3.6. An authorisation is required in respect of any premises where it is intended to conduct one or more of the licensable activities, these being:
- (a) Sale of alcohol
 - (b) Supply of alcohol (in respect of a club)
 - (c) Regulated Entertainment
 - (d) Provision of Late-Night Refreshment

An appropriate authorisation is either a premises licence, a club premises certificate, or a Temporary Event Notice.

- 3.7. Licence holders are required, when offering any licensable activity, to ensure that they promote the licensing objectives at all times. The operating schedule of the application contains detail of all the activities applied for and the control measures that the applicant will have in place in order to promote these objectives. Such measures will, where appropriate be converted into enforceable conditions on any licence issued.

The four licensing objectives are:

- (a) Prevention of crime and disorder
- (b) Prevention of public nuisance
- (c) Public Safety
- (d) Protection of children from harm.

No licensing objective carries any more weight than any other and these are the only factors in which licensing can have regard in determining an application.

- 3.8. Where representations have been received from a responsible authority or any other person, and the concerns have not been resolved through mediation between all parties, the Licensing Act 2003 requires that these applications should be determined by the Licensing Authority's Licensing Committee. The Licensing Act 2003 allows for applications such as this one to be delegated to a Sub-Committee. In accordance with those rules, the Scheme of Delegation set out in the Council's Constitution states that the Licensing Sub-Committee has responsibility for dealing with this application.

4. Summary of Application sought.

- 4.1. The Licensing Authority received an application on 8 July 2026 from the Trustees of the Croft Hall seeking a variation to the premises licence under the Licensing Act 2003 for Croft Hall. This application is recorded under reference 30014. A copy of the application is attached as **Appendix A** and the plan of the premises is attached as **Appendix B (RESTRICTED)**. There is no DPS at the premises as it has dis-applied this requirement and all supply of alcohol must be made or authorised by the management committee. Copy of current premise licence **Appendix C**
- 4.2. The application seeks a premises licence to permit the following licensable activities: -

The variation application seeks authorisation for the following activities:

- **Plays (indoors and outdoors):** 09:00 to 23:00 - Outdoor activities to cease at 21:30
- **Films (indoors):** 09:00 to 23:00
- **Indoor Sporting Events:** 09:00 to 23:00
- **Live Music (indoors and outdoors):** 09:00 to 23:00 - Outdoor activities to cease at 21:30
- **Recorded Music (indoors and outdoors):** 09:00 to 23:00 - Outdoor activities to cease at 21:30
- **Performance of Dance (indoors and outdoors):** 09:00 to 23:00 - Outdoor activities to cease at 21:30
- **Book and Poetry Readings:** 09:00 to 23:00
- **Late Night Refreshment:** 23:00 to 23:30
- **Supply of Alcohol:** 11:00 to 23:00

5. Background information

- 5.1. The Croft Hall stands on the site of the old Free Grammar School, (1635-1884), and was built thanks to the generosity of Sir William Pearce of Chilton Lodge.
- 5.2. The builder was J.H Wooldridge & Sons of the Wharf in Hungerford, and the building was originally known as Church House, which in addition to the main hall, housed accommodation for the curate and caretaker, together with a separate kitchen.
- 5.3. The name was changed in later years to “The Croft Hall”, when all the rooms were made available for public and business use: offices occupy the first floor, formerly the curate’s accommodation.
- 5.4. The Hall has been improved over the years with new theatre lighting and sound systems and also has an efficient air conditioning system.

More information can be found here:
<https://www.hungerfordvirtualmuseum.co.uk/?view=article&id=280&catid=8>

- 5.5. This application seeks to licence the venue for the sale of alcohol, late night refreshments, and regulated entertainment including live and recorded music and the provision of plays, films and dance.
- 5.6. From additional information provided by the applicant the events envisaged in the operation overview include weddings, private celebrations and community events.
- 5.7. The application states that all licenced activities is within the red line boundary shown on the submitted plan (**see Appendix B restricted**). The building capacity shall not exceed Number of persons on premises not to exceed: Dancing 140 persons, Seating (Restaurant Style) 70 persons composite of above 100 persons and closely Seated 160 persons
- 5.8. On site parking is provided for a small number of vehicles.
- 5.9. The application seeks to run licenced events between 9am and 23:00. The provision of outdoor amplified and live music will stop at 21:30 hrs. Indoor regulated entertainment and alcohol will cease by 23:00 hrs.
- 5.10 It is worthy of note that the Deregulation Act 2015 would allow the premises in some circumstances to operate until 23:00hrs outdoors which is past the 21:30hrs that has been proposed by the applicant and therefore would not require a licence.
- 5.11 There have been issues raised regarding the parking situation in the Croft which are understandably important to local residents, however, they do not generally fall within the scope of the four licensing objectives set out in the Licensing Act 2003. These issues are more related to Highways and Civil Enforcement with the means to report these issues to.

- <https://www.westberks.gov.uk/reportaproblem> and
- <https://westberks.highway-iams.uk/live/PBLC/PIP/?cg=Parking%20on%20the%20Highway>

Consultation

- 5.10. The 28-day consultation period ran from 8 July 2026 to 5 August 2026. Responsible Authorities were advised by email on the 8 July. Ward Members and Hungerford Town Council were advised by email on the 10 July 2026. The application has been advertised in accordance with the regulations, with the required blue notices being placed at the premises, which were checked by an officer from the Public Protection Partnership. An advertisement for this application was also placed in the Hungerford & Marlborough Adviser on the 23 July 2026.
- 5.11. A total of 16 representations were received from residents and the 16 valid representations are attached at **Appendices 1-16**. There was 1 late representation from the nursery which has not been considered but is available for members if required (the nursery was open when the consultation process commenced and for another 11 days until the end of term.)

6. Responsible Authority Responses Received/No Response

Fire Authority – No objection

The Chief Officer of Police Thames Valley – No objection

Environmental Health – None received

Environmental Health (Public Nuisance) – No objections

Planning Enforcement – None received

The Local Enforcement Agency for the Health and Safety at work etc. Act 1974 – None received

Trading Standards – no objections.

Children's Safeguarding Board – None received.

Public Health – None received

Home Office – None received.

The Licensing Authority – None received.

7. Summary of Relevant Representations

- 7.1. The representations received raise concerns that the granting of the licence would undermine the licensing objectives. The key issues raised include:
- 7.2. **Prevention of Public Nuisance**
- Noise from amplified music, outdoor events and guest activity
 - Late-night disturbance, particularly from dispersal of guests

7.3. **Public Safety**

- Potentially restricting access to emergency vehicles

7.4 **Protection of children from Harm.**

- Exposing children to the consumption of alcohol
- Exposing children to the effects of smoking and vaping

8. **Options**

- 8.1. The Home Office's Revised Guidance issued under [section 182](#) of the Licensing Act 2003 (February 2026) must be taken into account when determining this Application.
- 8.2. Members are asked to consider, after taking the representations both oral and written into account, and having due regard to the licensing objectives, whether the application for the variation of the premises licence should be granted or rejected. Members will need to give reasons for their decision.
- 8.3. If Members are minded to approve the application, they need to consider any additional conditions, other than those contained in the operating schedule, and any relevant mandatory conditions in ss19-21 of the Licensing Act 2003. Modification of conditions includes adding, omitting or altering a condition.
- 8.4. If members are minded to include any additional conditions, they will need to be minded that they are relevant, proportionate and enforceable and provide their reasons for doing so in the decision notice.

Background Papers: Relevant Legislation

- (1) The Licensing Act 2003
- (2) Appropriate Regulations including but not limited to The Licensing Act 2003 (Premises licences and club premises certificates) Regulations 2005, The Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005 and The Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) (Amendment) Regulations 2005
- (3) Statutory Revised Guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003
- (4) The Council's Statement of Licensing Policy Licensing Act 2003
- (5) The Council's Constitution

9. **Appendices**

Appendix A – Application
Appendix B – Plan (**Restricted**)
Appendix C – Current premise licence
Appendices 1 – 16 Representations from Objectors

Appendices 18-19 - Ward Member submissions

Appendix 20 – Representations from Responsible Authority (Environmental Health)

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