

LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE

16 May 2025
10.20 am - 3.07 pm

Present: Councillors Bick, Bird and Wade

Also present: Councillor Clough

Officers

Environmental Health Manager: Yvonne O'Donnell

Environmental Health and Licensing Support Team Leader, presenting as the

Licensing Officer: Wangari Njiiri

Legal Advisor: Ian Hawkins

Committee Manager: James Goddard

Present for the Applicant

Chairman of Cambridge Rugby Club: Tim Hague

Cambridge Ruby Club: Steve Davies

Licensing Consultant: Marti Barker

Other Persons

Various local residents as public speakers

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

25/20/Lic Appointment of a Chair

Councillor Bird was appointed as Chair for the meeting.

25/21/Lic Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

25/22/Lic Meeting Procedure

All parties noted the procedure.

Councillor Clough (Ward Councillor) asked if the:

- i. Applicant could be questioned?
- ii. Meeting could be recorded on someone's phone and Chat GBT used to edit this?

The Legal Advisor said the:

- i. Meeting would not be livestreamed due to staff issues. However it was a public meeting and people could attend in person if they wished.
- ii. Meeting could be recorded (by the public) but Chat GBT was not an authorised transcript. The meeting minutes were the official record of the meeting.
- iii. Chair could allow questions in a way that allowed the meeting to proceed, but cross examination would not be allowed.

25/23/Lic Cambridge Rugby Club Hearing Report

The Environmental Health and Licensing Support Team Leader presented the report and outlined the application.

Questions

The Environmental Health Manger made the following points in response to questions from Members and the public:

- i. There was no formal process to surrender licences. A licence holder could write to the Licensing Department to say they wished to surrender licences.
- ii. It was implicit in the application today that old Rugby Club licences would be removed. Activities linked to the old licences would be undertaken on the new licence - if granted – depending on conditions.
- iii. Page 12 of the agenda pack listed responsible authorities who had been consulted. Not all had responded. There was no history of issues/complaints linked to the premises, so few comments were expected from responsible authorities.
- iv. Noise levels were considered. Limits were set out in the Officer's report. This did not limit the number of events or location, just quantified noise levels that were acceptable.

Applicant

Mr Hague (Chairman of Cambridge Rugby Club) made the following points:

- i. Spoke in support of the application.
- ii. Referred to page 9 of the agenda pack. The number of events had been amended to three large, four medium and nine small.

- iii. Made specific reference to conditions, code of conduct, traffic management plan, noise management and parking management.

Member Questions

Mr Barker (Licensing Consultant) made the following statements in response to Members' questions:

- i. The proposal covered the whole rugby club site/grounds.
- ii. The Rugby Club could be used for rugby and non-rugby events. The Applicant would clarify these in future and how they would be controlled by conditions. The Applicant would put clear limits on how many non-rugby uses could occur such as large events.
- iii. Conditions from the old licences would transfer into the new ones, plus some additional ones. So, if the new licence was granted, there would be more conditions than in effect (now) under the old licences. The new conditions would be more stringent and stricter compared to ones in place for historic events, particularly noise and traffic management conditions.
- iv. Car parking on site would vary between events. There were two hundred and eighty spaces on site and some temporary pitches that could be used. More traffic control would be in place via new conditions compared to old licence ones.
- v. The Rugby Club engaged with residents via a quarterly newsletter and calendar of events. Communication could be online through the website and social media; or posters/banners. Mr Hague as Club Chairman hoped to improve communications with neighbouring residents in future, and hoped liaison would influence how events were run in future.
- vi. The demographics of event visitors varied on a case by case basis, but were generally family friendly. The Club aimed for low impact events on neighbouring residents rather than raves etc.
- vii. Licensing conditions set out the minimum notice period for events the Rugby Club should give residents, such as a letter drop twenty eight days before a large event.

Mr Hague undertook to continue public event communications to residents and Ward Councillors.

- viii. The rugby season covered September to May. Activities were seven days a week for all ages and abilities.
- ix. The Rugby Club expected to put out no parking signs in residential roads for match and non-match days.

Mr Hague did not expect traffic issues but did expect eight hundred visitors. Matches were every other week, there were no social events afterwards.

- x. Rugby events were not licensable in themselves. A licence was needed if music was played or alcohol was sold.
- xi. The aim of the new licence was to continue all events under one licence instead of having separate rugby and non-rugby licences. The aim was to simplify the process and put details in one place instead of multiple documents such as club licence, premises licence etc.

The Environmental Health Manger said the proposal would give the Rugby Club responsibility for events; current events were the responsibility of external event organisers.

Mr Hague said the Rugby Club would benefit financially from putting on extra events, this would be invested back into the Club.

Other Persons

Due to the number of public speakers, the Committee adjourned 11:55 to 12:25 whilst Members sought procedural advice on how to conduct the meeting. The Legal Advisor set out public speaking arrangements when the Committee reconvened.

Local residents, and Councillor Clough (speaking as Ward Councillor on behalf of some residents) raised the following concerns:

- i. The Rugby Club did not engage with residents about events or its licence application.
- ii. The Rugby Club was an unsuitable site for large events and should only host small ones.

- a. The Rugby Club was village sized but tried to host large scale events for which the scale was unsuitable due to lack of infrastructure.
- b. The site could not cope with the amount of people/traffic coming to events.
- iii. Lack of communication with residents about Rugby Club events.
- iv. Rugby Club events and associated anti-social behaviour/public nuisance caused residents' stress.
 - a. A lack of toilet provision meant some visitors urinated in residents' gardens.
 - b. Visitors dropped litter and damaged residents' cars.
 - c. Emergency vehicles could not access the area.
- v. Noise levels:
 - a. These were too loud and on a par with Glastonbury so unsuitable in a residential area.
 - b. Noise could cause lack of sleep for residents.
 - c. Exam revision time was interrupted for children.
 - d. Residents were unable to use their amenity space or invite visitors to their homes.
 - e. Some residents worked from home; this was interrupted by the Rugby Club. How to compensate for loss of earnings?
- vi. The Rugby Club should limit activities to just rugby events (not music etc). The number of events should be limited.
- vii. Requested the application be refused.

Mr Barker made the following points in response to resident's concerns:

- i. The Environmental Health Department set acceptable noise levels which the Rugby Club would work to. There would be seven to nine events per year where loud noise could be expected.
- ii. Residents could contact the Rugby Club or City Council Environmental Health Team if they wished to complain about noise.
- iii. The cumulative impact area was an area of the city with a limit on the number of licences that could be given, the Rugby Club was not in this area.
- iv. There was a licence condition to limit noise; plus event management to prevent anti-social behaviour. Was unaware of damage to vehicles or issues of emergency vehicle access/egress.

- v. Event managers provided toilets. They could look at putting more facilities at site entrances/exits.
- vi. Event managers provided contact details onsite where the public could report concerns.
- vii. Marshalls had no legal powers to control parking. Traffic Regulation Orders could be put in place in future to make visitors comply with parking arrangements.
- viii. Re-iterated conditions would limit the number of small/medium/large events the Rugby Club could hold. Noise and traffic would be managed through conditions.
- ix. Re-iterated future events would have more stringent controls than historic ones if the new licence was granted.

The Environmental Health Manger made the following points in response to resident's concerns:

- i. Referred to P6 of the Code of Practice. The level of noise from events was a possible issue to monitor, not the number of events.
- ii. A licence was granted to the Rugby Club in January 2025, so it was considered fit and proper to hold a licence at the time.
- iii. Environmental Health Officers were present at events Summer 2025 in case residents wished to report concerns. These events were referred to the Safety Advisory Group (which included the Police and emergency services) in March and May 2025 to get advice on site access and safety for July.
- iv. Rugby Club events 2023-2024 were also referred to the Safety Advisory Group.

Councillor Clough spoke as Ward Councillor to make the following points:

- i. Referred to additional paperwork for agenda item 6 of today's meeting.
- ii. There were three categories of use for the site:
 - a. Rugby use on the field.
 - b. Non-rugby use on the field.
 - c. Club house events.
- iii. There was no need for alcohol to be licenced for consumption on the rugby field during training or matches, just in the bar.
- iv. Concern over traffic in the local area. This should be monitored by trained marshals.

- v. Sought clarification on what was permissible regarding events/noise under the Code of Conduct?
- vi. Expressed concern about lack of resident:
 - a. Consultation regarding the licence application.
 - b. Notification of temporary event notices. Suggested these should be included in the quota of 9 'noisy' events, not be considered additional.
- vii. Asked if Ward Councillors could attend event sound tests in future?

Mr Barker made the following points in response to resident's concerns:

- i. If roads were closed for Rugby Club events, then residents would be unable to access/egress their homes by vehicle. This was why roads had not been closed.
- ii. Councillor Clough had been invited to attend event sound tests.
- iii. There would be no need for temporary event notices in future if the licence were agreed as per the Officer's report. The Rugby Club could surrender its temporary event notices and amend condition 6.

Member Questions

The Environmental Health Manger made the following statements in response to Members' questions:

- i. It was recommended all events in city open spaces were referred to the Safety Advisory Group. The group offered safety advice on how to run events, they did not authorise events to go ahead or nor. Meetings were minuted in case of future enquiry by the Health and Safety Executive or other stakeholders. If there was an incident/enquiry such as Hillsborough then the Safety Advisory Group minutes could be referenced to understand what had occurred.
- ii. Other bodies who had concerns could raise these in meetings outside the Safety Advisory Group.
- iii. The Safety Advisory Group held confidential meetings by representatives of responsible authorities to offer safety advice. Ward Councillors and members of the public were not permitted.

Summing Up

The Environmental Health Manger made the following points:

- i. The new licence if granted would replace the Applicant's three historic ones.
- ii. The Code of Practice referred to noise levels not the number of events.
- iii. Members should consider the application on its own merits.

Mr Barker made the following points:

- i. Interested parties such as the Police had not objected to the Rugby Club licence application.
- ii. Rugby Club historic licences had not been refused; or revoked due to complaints.
- iii. The intention was to continue business as normal for events and day-to-day operations under one licence instead of several. Also to engage with the community more in future.
- iv. The Rugby Club would engage with Environmental Health Officers to run low impact events. Officers could take enforcement action if required.
- v. The Rugby Club was committed to more traffic management of all event types in future, including rugby matches.

Public speakers raised the following concerns:

- i. Disquiet that the Rugby Club was trying not to engage with residents.
- ii. Newnham needed quiet and was unsuited to noisy public events.
- iii. There seemed to be noise linked to the Rugby Club all the time.
- iv. Anti-social behaviour linked to public events.
- v. Residents were intimidated by event visitors.
- vi. Events inconvenienced residents such as traffic levels.
- vii. Queried why Environmental Health Officers were not concerned about the proposal given issues raised at the meeting today?

Councillor Clough (Ward Councillor) had concerns about the licensing process/application.

Member Questions

Members asked for clarity on the noise abatement order process.

The Environmental Health Manger made the following points:

- i. Environment Action Section 80: The Local Authority could serve a noise abatement order to stop (subjective) levels of 'loud' noise.
- ii. Officers would visit a site, listen themselves and monitor via a sound app; then consider the volume, time of day intrusiveness and frequency.
- iii. Frequent events were more likely to be investigated than one-offs.
- iv. If Officers were able to witness or identify a statutory nuisance, they were obliged to serve a statutory noise abatement notice. If noise continued, responsible parties could be prosecuted and equipment seized.

Members withdrew at 2pm. Whilst retired, and having made their decision, Members received legal advice on the wording of the decision. This would be sent to the Rugby Club in writing.

Decision

The Sub Committee resolved to **GRANT** the application, but with the amendments set out below, and subject to Live Tour Promotions Limited surrendering PRECAM 000926, and London Road Event Hire Services Limited surrendering PRECAM 000972 by 12th June 2025 i.e. 2 of the 3 existing licences as proposed by the applicant at Condition 6.

The Members do not seek the surrender of the applicant's existing Club Premises Certificate, CLUBCAM 000026, which was limited to indoor events within the club buildings (Appendix 4) and was working well for current rugby events.

The Members did not see the distinction between Rugby and Non-Rugby as helpful and its use was replaced with one category of use. The categorisation of small, medium and large event was retained.

Having taken into account the effect of all the above, the **GRANT** was in the following terms:

- a. Performance of Plays – indoors & outdoors
 - Small Events
 - Monday to Thursday – 09:00hrs to 22: 00hrs
 - Friday - Saturday – 09:00hrs to 23:00hrs
 - Sunday – 10: 00hrs to 22:00hrs
 - Medium & Large Events

Events in this category can only take place on a maximum of **2 consecutive days across Friday, Saturday & Sunday**

Friday - Saturday – 10:00hrs to 23: 00hrs

Sunday – 10: 00hrs to 20:00hrs

b. Provision of Films – indoors & outdoors

Small Events

Monday to Thursday – 09:00hrs to 22: 00hrs

Friday - Saturday – 09:00hrs to 23:00hrs

Sunday – 10: 00hrs to 22:00hrs

Medium & Large Events

Events in this category can only take place on a maximum of **2 consecutive days across Friday, Saturday & Sunday**

Friday - Saturday – 10:00hrs to 23: 00hrs

Sunday – 10: 00hrs to 20:00hrs

c. Provision of Live Music – indoors & outdoors; Recorded Music indoors & outdoors; Performance of Dance indoors & outdoors

Small Events - limited to ten days per year (10)

Monday to Thursday – 10:00hrs to 22: 00hrs

Friday - Saturday – 10:00hrs to 23:00hrs

Sunday – 10: 00hrs to 20:00hrs

Medium & Large Events

Events in this category can only take place on a maximum of **2 consecutive days across Friday, Saturday & Sunday**

Friday - Saturday – 10:00hrs to 23: 00hrs

Sunday – 10: 00hrs to 20:00hrs

d. Supply of alcohol (on the premises)

Small Events - limited to ten days per year

Monday to Thursday – 10:00hrs to 21: 30hrs

Friday - Saturday – 10:00hrs to 22:30hrs

Sunday – 10: 00hrs to 19:30hrs

Medium & Large Events

Friday - Saturday – 11:00hrs to 22: 30hrs

Sunday – 11:00hrs to 19:30hrs

Reasons for reaching the decision were as follows:

Members acknowledged the concerns of the Interested Parties regarding the location and their experience of similar events. The premises was an open, flat, part-rural and part-suburban green space. Members noted that comprehensive conditions had been negotiated with Environmental Health, and no amendments were proposed by that responsible authority. Statutory Guidance at 9.15 requires the Environmental Health team to make any relevant representations about noise nuisance. Members were informed that the proposed premises was not located within a Cumulative Impact Area (CIA). Environmental Health do not consider that other outdoor music events organised by the rugby club have a significant cumulative impact.

Members noted that the Applicant was seeking to provide: **9 small events, 4 medium events and 3 large events per year**. It also proposed an **unlimited number** of outside, licensable rugby events.

Members listened to the concerns of Interested Parties that allowing **unlimited** number of rugby events plus the proposed number of (16) non-rugby events would create a significant increase in the intensity and frequency of use at the Premises.

Members noted that the relatively large number of objections [55] and the heavily contested submissions from parties regarding the impact of the events upon the residents.

Members noted that the Conditions allowing Environmental Health Team to monitor noise music plans and sound limits prior to an event (Conditions 51—58) relate solely to Medium and Large Events, and that Conditions 9-64 only apply to Medium and Large events.

Members therefore asked for the distinction between rugby and non-rugby events to be explained. Members probed particularly for the difference, in terms of the effect on residents, of live music produced by a rugby event as opposed to a non-rugby event.

Members listened carefully to the Applicant's response but felt the distinction was extremely narrow as both types of live music event would take place outside, on the field, rather than in the clubhouse; and both rugby and non-rugby events could number up to 999 persons. Members noted that the control measures proposed to promote the 'prevention of public nuisance' licensing objective were less robust for smaller events.

Considering this, Members determined that the categorisation of rugby and non-rugby events be removed, in order that the levels of control for non-rugby events also applied to rugby events.

This decision was made in the context of a careful investigation into how the Applicant's current rugby use through Certificate, CLUBCAM 000026 and indoor events works. Members noted that it had been in effect since 15th December 2005 and matched the definition at Condition 2 of the new application ie; *rugby matches, training sessions and tournaments*. The Members determined the Applicant should retain the club premises certificate (as it adequately satisfies indoor use) instead of surrendering it. This would ensure adequate ongoing control measures to promote the Licensing Objectives for Rugby use.

Further, the Members determined that Condition 4 should be amended so that the number of days usage per annum for all small events would be limited to **ten**. This was still an increase on the Applicant's amended proposal of **nine**. The Applicant had explained previously that the purpose of its amendment reducing the number of small non rugby outdoor events from unlimited to 9 was to comply with the City Council's Policy on use of outdoor spaces (i.e. to 15 such events). The same Policy considerations would apply to the unified categorisation.

Members noted that the Interested Parties made submissions that the Applicant's current practice to obtain additional events via application for four Temporary Event Notices (for events to take place in mid- June and July 2025) can continue to be utilised if more Event dates are required on the field, or it may use the current allocation.

Members felt that if the Applicant were required to continue to make applications for TENs, above the imposed limit of 10, then there would be some degree of scrutiny of events proposed. Members felt the limitation via amended Condition 4 was necessary and proportionate to provide a balance between the commercial interest of the applicant and the rights of residents.

The Members listened to the concerns of the Interested Parties that the application as drafted would mean that events would be run over three **consecutive days**, seven-day week (Monday - Sunday), from 09:00 to 23:00 (22:00 on Sunday).

Interested Parties described the significant cumulative impact on schoolchildren studying for GCSE exams; people working from home; and

elderly residents (twenty percent of residents were said to be between 80-90 years old).

Members welcomed proposed conditions 51-58 in the Operating Schedule section (d) relating to control of public nuisance: i.e. that limits on noise would only be set after a formal engagement and consultation with Environmental Health, for each event.

However, Members had concerns that the application as drafted provided limited control over the number of consecutive days an event would last where, for example, organisers had pre-sold tickets to events, in advance. This might create difficulties around ensuring adequate control measures to promote the Licensing Objectives in relation to the cumulative impact of the live music events.

Members received representations from the Applicant, Environmental Health team and Interested Parties on the interpretation and status of Table 1 and footnote 4 to the Code of Practice for Environmental Noise Control at Concerts on this point too. The Members acknowledged the concerns that if mismanaged this could give rise to public nuisance.

Members determined that the easiest way to deal with this issue was to limit the number of consecutive days for Medium & Large live music, external, events to a maximum of 2 consecutive days per event and to take place only on a combination of Friday, Saturday or Sundays.

The Members listened carefully to the concerns regarding the proposed non-standard timings for Licensable Activities in relation to live music events. The Members took on board the comments of both the Applicant and the Interested Parties in relation to this and decided that small events be reduced slightly to 10:00hrs to 22: 00hrs Monday to Thursday and 10:00hrs to 23: 00hrs Friday to Saturday; and 10:00hrs to 20:00hrs on Sunday. In respect of Medium & Large Events these were also reduced to 10:00hrs to 23: 00hrs Friday to Saturday; and 10:00hrs to 20:00hrs on Sunday. Sale and supply of alcohol would cease half an hour before the finish times of music.

The Members listened to the concerns of the Interested Parties in relation to traffic congestion during previous events. Some residents felt unable to leave their homes because the volume of crowds, vehicles and taxis trying to access the venue. Members noted that Grantchester Road was the only access to the site. Submissions were received that Taxi drivers and other drivers had refused to go into the one-way drop off and collect within the club grounds due

to crowds. Interested parties accepted an improvement in 2024 to traffic and crowd management. The Environmental Health Manager confirmed that no complaints had been received about the traffic.

Members were encouraged that the applicant undertook to ensure the 2025 event would be as low impact as possible in terms of both traffic and noise. A Temporary Traffic Restriction Order (TTRO) has been applied for and was currently being processed. A one-way system will alleviate traffic congestion and stop verge parking. Members felt that Conditions 9-64 include suitable provisions to reduce the impact of Traffic.

Members acknowledged the concerns regarding the anti-social behaviour and property damage. Members were pleased that the Applicant intends to provide additional security and stewarding outside the club. They will patrol the perimeter and the back of Fulbrooke Road to prevent anti-social behaviour. Members are conscious that licensing was not the primary mechanism for the general control of nuisance and anti-social behaviour by individuals away from licensed premises and beyond the direct control of the licensee.

Members listened to the concerns of the Interested Party in relation to how licensing applications are notified and advertised and sympathised with the Interested Party's position. Members noted that the Application was correctly advertised in accordance with the relevant legislation.

Members were happy to agree the other conditions suggested as being appropriate and proportionate to promote the Licensing Objectives noting that these were agreed by the Applicant.

Members felt that these additional conditions would assist in promoting the Licensing Objectives and were appropriate and proportionate in that regard.

The meeting ended at 3.07 pm

CHAIR