

---

**APPLICATION FOR RENEWAL OF LICENCE FOR PREMISES TO BE APPROVED  
AS A VENUE FOR MARRIAGES AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS**

**CENTRAL HALL, DOLPHIN CENTRE**

---

**Purpose of Report**

1. To consider an application received from the Dolphin Centre for the renewal of a licence to be approved as a venue for Marriages and Civil Partnerships in accordance with the provisions of the Marriage Act 1949 (as amended by the Marriage Act 1994) and the Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005.

**Summary**

2. Central Hall has previously been an approved venue for ceremonies but chose to let its licence lapse in October, 2012 as it was being used as a temporary venue for the Excel Church and also the local mosque whilst being refurbished and a building cannot be used both religious services and civil marriage.
3. Now that these two groups have been relocated the Dolphin Centre wishes to once again utilise Central Hall to generate money from Civil Marriages. Also as the Register Office is based in the same area it is an opportunity to accommodate couples with larger ceremonies over 80 guests which is the maximum the register office can accommodate.
4. The application has been the subject of the usual officer consultations and has been advertised. No objections have been received. The building has the required fire risk assessments and there are no access or DDA issues which would adversely affect the application.
5. The premises are considered to be suitable for approval as a venue for Marriages and Civil Partnerships, subject to the standard conditions and a limit on the number of people permitted to be present in the nominated rooms.

**Information**

6. The Marriage Act 1949 (as amended by the Marriage Act 1994) and the Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005, (Reg. 4) permit a Local Authority to approve the use of certain premises as venues for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships. This Council is the appropriate Authority for premises within the Borough of Darlington.

7. A copy of the application submitted is attached.  
Following receipt of the application, consultations have been carried out with the following:-
  - (a) Licensing Officer, Darlington Borough Council
  - (b) Building Control Manager, Darlington Borough Council
  - (c) The Fire Service.
8. In accordance with building control requirements, the applicant has confirmed:
  - (a) that a Fire Risk assessment has been carried out within the last 3 years which covers the proposed areas for use and occupancy.
  - (b) That a Disability Risk Assessment has been carried out and that there are no access issues for persons attending ceremonies in the proposed areas for use and occupancy.

The Fire Safety Officer recommends that the maximum number of persons permitted in each room be as follows :-

Designated Room	Maximum Capacity
Central Hall	300

### **Legal Implications**

9. This report has been considered by the Borough Solicitor for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Borough Solicitor considers need to be brought to the specific attention of Members, other than those highlighted in the report.

### **Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

10. The contents of this report have been considered in the context of the requirements placed on the Council by Section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, namely, the duty on the Council to exercise its functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area. It is not considered that the contents of this report have any such effect.

### **Conclusion**

11. The Officers are satisfied that it would be appropriate for the grant of Central Hall, Dolphin Centre, Horsemarket, Darlington as a suitable venue for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships under the Marriage Act 1949 (as amended) and the Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005, and the Licence be granted subject to the points above being taken into account. The licence will last

for a period of 3 years from the date of issue.

## **Recommendation**

12. It is recommended that approval be granted for the Central Hall, Dolphin Centre, Horsemarket, Darlington as an approved venue for the solemnisation of Marriages and Civil Partnerships in respect of the venue subject to the standard licence conditions and that the maximum number of persons permitted to occupy ceremony rooms on the occasion of Civil Marriages or Civil Partnerships should be as outlined in accordance with the Fire Officer's recommendations.

**Catherine Whitehead**  
**Proper Officer**

## **Background Papers**

Application from the Dolphin Centre, Darlington for grant of premises as a venue for Marriages and Civil Partnerships.

Anthony Hall : Extension 3604