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**APPLICATION FOR VARIATION OF LICENCES FOR PREMISES TO BE  
APPROVED AS A VENUE FOR MARRIAGES AND CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS**

**REDWORTH HALL HOTEL  
BLACKWELL GRANGE HOTEL  
HALL GARTH GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB HOTEL  
SOUTH PARK BANDSTAND  
HOTEL BANNATYNE**

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**SUMMARY REPORT**

**Purpose of the Report**

1. To consider varying the current licences of the above premises for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships.

**Summary**

2. The following licensed venues have requested that their licences as approved venues for Civil Marriage and Civil Partnership be varied to include the following in their list of locations within their venue as a place for the Civil Marriage or Civil Partnership to take place.
  - (a) Redworth Hall Hotel – The Summerhouse
  - (b) Blackwell Grange Hotel - The Bandstand
  - (c) Hall Garth Hotel - The Secret Garden Gazebo House
  - (d) South Park - The Bandstand
  - (e) Hotel Bannatyne – The Gazebo

**Recommendation**

3. It is recommended that the applications for the following venues have their licences as approved venues for Civil Marriage and Civil Partnership varied to include the following in their list of locations within their venue as a place for the Civil Marriage or Civil Partnership to take place.
  - (a) Redworth Hall Hotel - The Summerhouse
  - (b) Blackwell Grange Hotel - The Bandstand
  - (c) Hall Garth Hotel - The Secret Garden Gazebo House
  - (d) South Park - The Bandstand
  - (e) Hotel Bannatyne - The Gazebo

**Catherine Whitehead  
Assistant Chief Executive  
and Proper Officer for Darlington Registration District**

**Background Papers**

Application from the Redworth Hall Hotel, Blackwell Grange Hotel, Hall Garth Hotel, South Park Bandstand and Hotel Bannatyne for renewal of premises as a venue for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships

Anthony Hall : Extension 6400

S17 Crime and Disorder	There are no issues in relation to Crime and Disorder.
Health and Well Being	There are no issues in relation to Health and Wellbeing.
Sustainability	There are no issues in relation to Sustainability
Diversity	There are no issues relating to Diversity which this report needs to address.
Wards Affected	All Equally
Groups Affected	All Equally
Budget and Policy Framework	This report does not affect the budget or policy framework.
Key Decision	This is not a key decision.
Urgent Decision	This is not an urgent decision.
One Darlington: Perfectly Placed	This report does not adversely impact on the Strategy.
Efficiency	This report does not have any direct impact on efficiency.

**MAIN REPORT**

**Information and Analysis**

4. During the Spring and Summer months it has been popular for several years for couples to have weddings 'outside' in the grounds of the venue of some of the licensed venues.
5. The current regulations provide that a Marriage or Civil Partnership can only take place at a building which is approved by the local authority and that all of the designated places within that venue where a marriage or civil partnership can take place is named on the venue's licence e.g. individual rooms within the hotel.

The rationale behind this is to allow any appropriate persons the opportunity of locating the couple at the venue should they wish to object at the ceremony.

6. This means that a legally binding wedding cannot take place for example in a garden but only at a licensed place which is permanently available for the public to attend to object.
7. In order to meet customer demand and whilst still observing the rules, Darlington's arrangement for a number of years been to firstly perform a non legally binding ceremony at a designated place in the grounds of a Hotel such as a gazebo or summerhouse (which takes the form of the main event) but it is followed by a secondary ceremony inside of the hotel or venue with just the couple and witnesses and comprises a very short legally binding wedding or civil partnership.
8. The practicalities of this have been challenging with registration staff having to perform 'two ceremonies' in the allocated time and also for the couple having to move between two locations at the venue e.g. the Summerhouse at Redworth Hotel is a distance from the hotel.
9. Following advice from the General Register Office and from other Registration Districts in the area, it appears that there are already have a number of temporary structures licensed for Civil Ceremonies, a good example being the Tree House in Alnwick Garden, Northumberland, a temporary structure but one which will not be moved and can be located by a member of the public if needed.
10. The following venues already have similar temporary structures which are permanently in situ and which Darlington has used for ceremonies for several years. A temporary structure such as a marquee erected for the temporary purpose of a ceremony would not be considered suitable as the public may not be able to locate it:-
  - (a) Redworth Hall Hotel – The Summerhouse
  - (b) Blackwell Grange Hotel - The Bandstand
  - (c) Hall Garth Hotel - The Secret Garden Gazebo House
  - (d) South Park- The Bandstand
  - (e) Hotel Bannatyne – The Gazebo
11. These applications have been subject to the usual officer consultations with the Licensing Officer, the Building Control Manager and the Fire Service. The only comment returned was regarding access for wheelchair and disabled guests.
12. In this regard I am still satisfied that whilst although the ceremonies may take place on the lawn or garden area, couples when booking the ceremony are explained the venue's restrictions at the time of booking and this has worked satisfactorily for us performing the non legally binding weddings outside for several years.
13. Also a local Authority can still licence any venue even if it is not fully accessible and indeed we have Walworth Castle with a first floor ceremony room which does not have lift access. Also many venues in the area are not fully accessible, Lindisfarne Castle in Northumberland is a good example.

14. In terms of the capacities of these venues the venue itself would only be the location for the Registrar to attend with the Marriage Register with the couple and guests being outside of it in the outside space and therefore a limitless number of guests for each venue.

### **Outcome of Consultation**

15. These applications have been subject to the usual officer consultations with the Licensing Officer, the Building Control Manager and the Fire Service. The only comment returned was regarding access for wheelchair and disabled guests.
16. In this regard, the Superintendent Registrar is satisfied that whilst the ceremonies may take place on the lawn or garden area, couples when booking the ceremony are explained the venue's restrictions at the time of booking and this has worked satisfactorily for Darlington when performing the non legally binding weddings outside for several years.
17. Also a local Authority can still licence any venue even if it is not fully accessible and indeed we have Walworth Castle with a first floor ceremony room which does not have lift access. Also many venues in the area are not fully accessible, Lindisfarne Castle in Northumberland is a good example.
18. In terms of the capacities of these venues the venue itself would only be the location for the Registrar to attend with the Marriage Register with the couple and guests being outside of it in the outside space and therefore a limitless number of guests for each venue.

### **Conclusion**

19. Officers are satisfied that it would be appropriate for the renewal of Redworth Hall Hotel, Blackwell Grange Hotel, Hall Garth Golf and Country Club Hotel, South Park Bandstand and Hotel Bannatyne as outlined in paragraph 3 above.
20. The licence will last for a period of 3 years from the date of issue.