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

WALWORTH CASTLE HOTEL, WALWORTH, DARLINGTON

Purpose of Report

1. To consider an application received from Walworth Castle Hotel for a renewal of its 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), the Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005 and the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013.

Summary

2. Walworth Castle Hotel has been an approved venue for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships for a number of years, being a successful wedding venue and its three year licence is now due for renewal.
3. During the period of its current three year licence which is due to expire on 8th January, 2017 there have been no issues or problems which contravene the licensing conditions.
4. The majority of the weddings at Walworth Castle Hotel are conducted in the Ballroom which is on the ground floor. Only the ground floor rooms at Walworth Castle are fully accessible as there is no lift at the hotel.
If a wedding were to be held in the King James Suite (an upstairs ceremony room) or the Dungeon then couples are made aware of the accessibility restrictions to these rooms beforehand to best make a decision knowing the needs of their guests.
5. The Hotel has also indicated that in 2017 they will be looking to build a garden structure such as a pavilion or bandstand to allow for outside weddings to take place but this is still in the planning stage.
6. The Hotel has been advised that a report to this Committee to vary its licence will be required to accommodate this additional place for weddings to take place.

7. As an already approved venue for Marriages and Civil Partnerships the Walworth Castle Hotel is therefore 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 below.

Information

8. The Marriage Act 1949 (as amended by the Marriage Act 1994), the Marriages and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005, and the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013 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.
9. It is proposed that the capacities in the Designated Rooms continue to be a maximum of:

Reception Lounge – 40
Breakfast Room – 40
Ballroom – 100
Cardinals Court – 120
Hansards Restaurant - 80
King James Suite – 80
Library Tower – 10
Prince Bishop Room – 45
Dungeon - 45

Legal Implications

10. This report has been considered by the Assistant Director, Law and Governance, the Fire Service, Building Control and also the Licensing Officer for legal implications in accordance with the Council's approved procedures. There are no issues which the Assistant Director, Law and Governance 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

11. 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

12. The Officers are satisfied that it would be appropriate for the renewal of Walworth Castle Hotel, Darlington as a suitable venue for Civil Marriages and Civil Partnerships under the Marriage Act 1949 (as amended) and the Marriage, Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005 and the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act (2013) and the that Licence be renewed subject to the points above being taken into account. The approval will lasts for a period of 3 years from the date of issue.

Recommendation

13. It is recommended that approval be granted for The Walworth Castle Hotel, 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 previous licensing conditions.

Luke Swinhoe
The Assistant Director of Law and Governance and
Proper Officer for the Registration Service

Background Papers

Application from Walworth Castle Hotel for renewal of premises as a venue for Marriages and Civil Partnerships.

Anthony Hall : Ext 6400