

**GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE
6 SEPTEMBER 2022**

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

Blackwell Grange Hotel, Grange Road, Darlington DL3 8QH

Purpose of Report

1. To consider the renewal of a licence for the Blackwell Grange Hotel to be able to continue as an approved venue for civil marriage and civil partnerships in accordance with the provisions of:
 - (a) The Marriage Act 1949 (as amended by the Marriage Act 1994);
 - (b) The Civil Partnership Act (2004);
 - (c) The Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005 and 2021; and
 - (d) The Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act (2013).

Summary

2. Since 1994 local authorities have been able to approve venues where civil marriage and civil partnerships can take place as alternative venue to a Register Office with most approved venues being hotels.
3. Blackwell Grange Hotel has been licensed by the local authority since 1994 as an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships. Blackwell Grange Hotel is also currently one of the more popular venues in Darlington for marriages and civil partnerships. It has important role to play in the local economy in terms of employment and also of attracting wedding couples and their guests to Darlington from a wide area with most couples being married at the Blackwell Grange Hotel being located outside of Darlington.

The current licence for Blackwell Grange Hotel is due to expire on 22nd November 2022. The hotel has indicated that they have future bookings for weddings and wish to continue as an approved venue for civil marriage and civil partnerships.

4. There have been no issues with Blackwell Grange Hotel which would adversely affect their application to renew its licence. Renewal of the licence would provide the hotel with a licence for civil marriage and civil partnerships for a further three years from 22nd November 2022.

Information

5. Blackwell Grange Hotel has the required fire risk assessments and there are no accessibility or DDA issues which would adversely affect either application.
6. The premises are considered to be suitable for approval as a venue for marriage and civil partnerships, subject to the standard conditions and a limit on the number of people permitted to be present in the nominated rooms. The venue does not wish to change the capacities or designated areas where civil marriages or civil partnership can take place.

The Marriage and Civil Partnerships (Approved Premises) Regulations 2005 were amended in March 2022 to permit outdoor marriage and civil partnerships at a suitable location anywhere within the boundary of the licensed premise.

7. The current locations and capacities for civil marriage and civil partnerships at the Blackwell Grange Hotel are:

Room	Maximum Capacity
The George Allan Suite	130
The Bruhenny Suite	300
The Havelock Restaurant	150
The Gazebo *	6

*ie. two registrars, the couple and two witnesses inside the gazebo.
Guests Outside on the garden is unlimited.

Financial Implications

8. Blackwell Grange Hotel has been invoiced for £1750.00 being the fee for all venues seeking a grant or renewal of a licence for civil marriage or civil partnerships.

Legal Implications

9. The current licence for the Blackwell Grange Hotel expires on 22nd November 2022. The grant of a further licence is required to facilitate its current bookings for civil marriages and partnerships. The standard renewal licence is for three years from the date of expiry of the current licence. The licensing committee can issue a licence on a shorter timescale as a temporary measure should it wish and/or make specific conditions including where the ceremony can take place, how many can attend and improvements for accessibility.

Conclusion

10. Members are asked to renew the licence for the Blackwell Grange Hotel for a further three years from 22nd November 2022.

Recommendations

11. It is recommended that the licence for the Blackwell Grange Hotel as an approved premise for civil marriage and civil partnerships be granted for a further three years from 22nd November 2022 and that the places designated where civil marriage and civil partnerships can take place indoors at the premises and the maximum of numbers of persons who can attend those marriage and civil partnerships continue to be:

Room	Maximum Capacity
The George Allan Suite	130
The Bruhenny Suite	300
The Havelock Restaurant	150
The Gazebo *	6

*ie. two registrars, the couple and two witnesses inside the gazebo.
Guests Outside on the garden is unlimited.

Reasons

12. To facilitate the continuation of the Blackwell Grange Hotel as a premise approved for civil marriages and civil partnerships.

**Luke Swinhoe, Assistant Director, Law and Governance and
Proper Officer for Darlington Registration District**

Anthony Hall, Superintendent Registrar, Ext 6400