

**GENERAL LICENSING COMMITTEE  
29 NOVEMBER 2022**

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

**HALL GARTH GOLF AND COUNTRY CLUB HOTEL,  
COATHAM MUNDEVILLE, DARLINGTON DL1 3LU**

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**Purpose of Report**

1. To consider the renewal of a licence for the Hall Garth Golf and Country Club 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 an alternative venue to a Register Office with most approved venues being hotels.
3. Hall Garth Golf and Country Club Hotel has been licensed by the local authority since 1994 as an approved venue for civil marriages and civil partnerships and is also currently one of the more popular venues in Darlington for marriages and civil partnerships. It has an important role to play in the local economy in terms of employment and of attracting wedding couples and their guests to Darlington from a wide area with couples being married at the Hall Garth Golf and Country Club Hotel being from Darlington but also many being located outside of Darlington.

The current licence for Hall Garth Golf and Country Club Hotel is due to expire on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023. 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 Hall Garth Golf and Country Club 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 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

## Information

- Hall Garth Golf and Country Club Hotel has the required fire risk assessments.
- 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 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.

- The current locations and capacities for civil marriage and civil partnerships at the Walworth Castle Hotel are:

Venue: **Hall Garth Golf & Country Club Hotel**

GRO Premise No: 001107

Current Licence Expires: 09.01.2023

Room	Maximum Capacity
<u>Summerson</u> Suite	220
<u>Brafferton</u> Suite (combined)	350
Residents Lounge	25
Stables Bar Conservatory	40
Restaurant	40
Conservatory	50
The Lounge	30
The Secret Garden Gazebo *	6

The Hall Garth Golf and Country Club Hotel are currently undergoing a significant refurbishment which has changed the layout and capacities of some of the rooms designated and used for ceremonies.

The majority of ceremonies take place outdoors in the Secret Garden Gazebo or alternatively if indoors then in the Brafferton Suite. As part of the refurbishment of the hotel the Brafferton Suite has been divided into two rooms, one half being a smaller ceremony and function space (Brafferton Suite A) and the second half becoming a bar and lounge area for guests to meet before the ceremony (Brafferton Suite B).

The Summerson Suite is normally used for the post ceremony wedding breakfast/function although is occasionally used for larger indoor weddings.

Smaller weddings can take place in either the Conservatory, the Restaurant or the residents' lounge.

To reflect the changes to the hotel's refurbishment plans the hotel are seeking to make the following changes to the areas and capacities designated for ceremonies.

All of the areas identified as locations for ceremonies are on the ground floor and are fully accessible. The Secret Garden Gazebo, the outdoor area designated for ceremonies is also fully accessible.

Room	Maximum Capacity
Summerson Suite	220 – no change
Brafferton Suite	350 – reduce capacity to 120
Residents Lounge	25 – no change
Stables Bar Conservatory	40 – no longer available for ceremonies
Restaurant	40 – no change
Conservatory	50 – no change
The Lounge	30 – no longer available for ceremonies
The Secret Garden Gazebo *	6 – no change

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

### Financial Implications

8. Hall Garth Golf and Country Club 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 Hall Garth Golf and Country Club Hotel expires on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023. 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 Hall Garth Golf and Country Club Hotel for a further three years from 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023.

## Recommendations

11. It is recommended that the licence for the Hall Garth Golf and Country Club Hotel as an approved premise for civil marriage and civil partnerships be granted for a further three years from 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 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
Summerson Suite	220
Brafferton Suite A	120
Residents Lounge	25
Restaurant	40
Conservatory	50
The Secret Garden 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 Hall Garth Golf and Country Club 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