

Festivals in Bygrave Woods - UPDATE

Introduction

Following two meetings of Licensing Sub-Committees of North Herts Council, changes have been made to the premises licence for the Bygrave Woods festival site. The first meeting (on 17 February 2025) considered the application by Bygrave Parish Council for the licence to be reviewed. The second meeting (on 13 March 2025) considered the application by the licence holder (AE & WA Farr Limited) to vary the licence.

At each meeting, Julie Colegrave (representing Bygrave Parish Council) and Cllr Tom Tyson spoke to support the application to review the licence and to oppose the application to vary the licence. The licence holder was represented by various advisers including a legal adviser.

Both public meetings were all day meetings, after which the Sub-Committee left the Council Chamber to discuss in private what, if any, action they considered appropriate. On each occasion, their deliberations took over 4 hours.

We set out the key changes below.

Night-time music noise (indoors and outdoors)

Set out below are the times by which music must stop under the old licence and under the new licence.

Day	Recorded music		Live music	
	Old licence	New licence	Old licence	New licence
Monday	Midnight	22:00	23:00	22:00
Tuesday	Midnight	22:00	23:00	22:00
Wednesday	Midnight	22:00	23:00	22:00
Thursday	04:00 ^a	23:00	Midnight Sunday ^b	23:00
Friday	09:00 ^a	01:00 ^a	Midnight Sunday ^b	01:00 ^a
Saturday	09:00 ^a	01:00 ^a	Midnight Sunday ^b	01:00 ^a
Sunday	02:00 ^a	23:00	Midnight	23:00

Notes

- a) refers to the following morning
- b) live music was permitted under the old licence from midday on Thursday to midnight on Sunday; 84 hours without stopping
- c) The 01:00 limit also applies on a night leading into an English Bank Holiday

Capacity of events

Set out below are the number and size of events permitted:

Capacity	Old licence	Applied for under the variation	New licence
Under 7,500 people	Unlimited events	Unlimited events	Unlimited events
7,500 people or more	One each year for up to 14,999 people	Four each year for up to 24,999 people	Two each year for up to 14,999 people

Application to extend the festival site

The application to extend the festival site was rejected.

New conditions

A number of new conditions have been introduced, including:

- The Parish Councils of Bygrave, Ashwell and Newnham to receive notice of an event at the same as North Herts Council. The licence requires notice to be at least 6 months for an event for between 7,500 and 14,999 people and 3 months for other events. However, these notice periods can be reduced for specific events by North Herts Council.
- For any event for which more than 3,000 tickets have been sold or supplied, a security patrol vehicle to be stationed in and around the immediate vicinity of the villages of Bygrave, Ashwell and Newnham.
- The licence holder will offer to pay for an officer from North Herts Council to conduct noise monitoring of any event with a capacity of 7,500 or more.
- No one event may last more than 5 days.

Appeal

The licence holder has until 3 April 2025 to appeal the decision. We will let you know if they choose to do this.

Comments

We are appreciative of North Herts Council that both applications received such thorough consideration. We are relieved that the maximum number of people permitted to attend an event has not been increased and that no more than two events with a capacity of 14,999 will be permitted each year. We are pleased with the other changes made to the licence and are hopeful that the impact of future events on villagers will be significantly reduced, especially with regard to night-time noise nuisance.

Thank you to Julie Colegrave and Cllr Tyson for speaking at both meetings and to those of you who made submissions supporting the review and/or opposing the variation. These submissions were invaluable in illustrating the issues, as were the complaints made to the festival hotlines.

Bygrave Parish Council
21 March 2025