

**Melton Borough Council**

**Application for a Premises Licence**

**November 2023**

**Forbidden Festival, The Grounds of Belvoir Castle, Grantham**

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**Executive Summary**

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## **A. Introduction**

1. This is an application for a premises licence by Forbidden Festival Limited, for their Forbidden Festival event which has taken place in the grounds of Belvoir Castle, Grantham since 2022.
2. Forbidden Festival is an electronic dance music festival, which takes place over one weekend each year, usually at the end of May or the beginning of June.
3. The Festival is predominantly a camping festival, and whilst the majority of festival-goers stay for the weekend, day tickets are also sold.
4. The team have many years of experience in the events and festival sector and work with reputable experts and suppliers in the field:
  - (a) Simon Oates is Operations Director for Forbidden Festivals, with over 25 years experience in operating large scale events and festivals.
  - (b) Geoff Feayvour, former Assistant Chief Constable of Leicestershire Police is employed as an independent auditor and consultant.
  - (c) Noise management expertise is provided by F1 Acoustics.
  - (d) SEP Events are responsible for advising on and implementing traffic management plans.
  - (e) Compact provide security.
  - (f) SafetyGeeks are employed to ensure compliance with all health and safety requirements.
  - (g) The event also partners with Big Green Coaches, to provide sustainable travel options to and from the festival.

## **B. Licensing History**

5. The applicants acquired the Forbidden Festival brand in 2021 and applied in that year to move it to the grounds of Belvoir Castle. Belvoir Castle has the benefit of its own licence but Forbidden Festival operates under its own licence.
6. In December 2021, an application for a new, time limited, premises licence was lodged to cover one weekend in July 2022 with a capacity of 14,999 and this was granted.
7. A further application was lodged in August 2022 to make permanent the licence. That licence was granted in October 2022.
8. In September 2023 an application was lodged to vary the licence, to increase the capacity from 14,999 to 24,999. Following objections from nearby Parish Councils, local residents and ward councillors, that application was withdrawn pending consideration of the objections by the applicant.

## **C. New Application**

9. Forbidden Festival are now seeking a new licence, and this summary document accompanies that application.
10. The application seeks the following;
  - (a) A licence for one, 5 day festival (Thursday to Monday), each calendar year, with a capacity of 24,999 for festival goers.
  - (b) The 2024 festival is due to take place between 30 May and 3 June.
  - (c) Subsequent years events will be notified to the authorities at least 6 months before the event.
  - (d) The campsite will open from Thursday until Monday.
  - (e) Licensable activities will be provided on Thursday, Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
  - (f) The hours applied for, for licensable activities mirror those permitted under the existing licence. Live music in the festival area will cease at 11pm as in previous years.
  - (g) An Operating Schedule is submitted with the application with a comprehensive set of conditions.
11. The applicant has taken on board the concerns raised in the letters of objection lodged against the September 2023 application and this has informed the revised application, most notably the inclusion of Thursdays to allow for a festival goers to arrive over a longer period of time, lessening the potential impact on those who live in the vicinity.
12. The report produced by SEP Events sets out that by allowing campers to arrive on Thursday, the volume of traffic arriving on site on the Friday will be halved. No day tickets will be sold for either the Thursday or Friday, thus ensuring that festival goers only arrive on that day and do not leave.
13. Further, the applicant has sought to formalise and strengthen community collaboration in relation to the festival by adding conditions a) constituting a formal community liaison group, b) making specific requirements regarding written notification to the community regarding the events, c) providing a complaints hotline and d) instituting a rapid response service.
14. The report produced by Mr Geoff Feavoyour contains a number of recommendations which the applicants are committed to implementing.
15. In relation to this proposed variation, the applicant sent letters to the community in September 2023 regarding the subsequently withdrawn application and again in November 2023 to advise of the withdrawal and intention to re-submit the application.
16. The applicant remains committed to partnership working and meaningful dialogue with those in who live nearby.

#### **D. The Reports**

17. In support of the application, attached are the following reports:
  - (a) Transport Report from SEP Events.
  - (b) Acoustic Report from F1 Acoustics.
  - (c) Security & Policing Report from Geoff Feavyour, Festival Security Consultant.

#### **E. The Statement of Licensing Policy**

18. The application is lodged having had regard to Melton Borough Council's Statement of Licensing Policy, 2022-2027.
19. It is noted that there is no Cumulative Impact Policy in place for this location, nor indeed for any part within MBC's boundary.
20. It is also noted that there is no policy framework with regards to hours.
21. Para.18.1 covers 'Events in Melton' and the applicant has always engaged fully in Safety Advisory Group meetings.

#### **F. Conclusion**

22. For the reasons listed above, the applicant believes that the grant of this application will not undermine the licensing objections.
23. If the licence were to be granted, the existing premises licence held by the applicants would be surrendered.
24. The applicant welcomes further comment from those who live in the vicinity, parish councils and ward councillors during the consultation process.