

Representations from local residents

1. Anne Hewit

In reference to the above application for a Premises License Variation at Merriscourt Gallery, we are concerned that the application for essentially unrestricted hours and days on which amplified music can be played will have a detrimental impact on the peace and quiet of the Cotswolds AONB. We therefore object to this application.

2. Howard Sherwood

What constitutes the venue?

Please confirm that the licensed venue is Merriscourt Gallery (as stated on the existing licence). I note that this licence names the premises as Merriscourt Gallery. However, in their promotional material for weddings, the applicant refers to The Stone Barn, not Merriscourt Gallery, as the space where amplified music is played:

Please note the third paragraph mentions **“We have no sound restrictions or limiter here at Merriscourt so you are free to have as bigger (sic) party as you like”**. This suggests that there is no sound restriction at any part of Merriscourt either internal or external which appears to breach the existing conditions for Merriscourt Gallery regarding amplified music:

- All external doors and windows must be kept closed, other than for access and egress, in all rooms when events involving amplified music or speech are taking place.

The Licensing Officer has confirmed that the applicant is bound by the existing licence conditions.

I cannot imagine that at the height of summer an indoor disco is likely to comply with this condition! The Licensing Officer suggested that the applicant would have to arrange suitable air-conditioning equipment to avoid breaching this condition. How will the licensing authority enforce this condition?

Does this condition also apply to activities within The Stone Barn or would it be required to have a separate licence?

The variation

I note the applicant’s statement in the Application for Variation:

“Merriscourt is a secluded, rural wedding venue with no close neighbours. We would like to extend our opening and license times to allow brunches in the venue with the option of alcohol, such as bucks fizz, served alongside. We would also like a variation to allow amplified music in the courtyard to allow our couples & their guests to enjoy a variety of background music during the drinks reception. We would also like to extend this area of music being played to our Gallery Garden, which is situated just at the end of The Gallery with views across the Cotswold fields for miles.”

In view of the above statements in the applicant’s marketing material which states that **“We have no sound restrictions or limiter here at Merriscourt so you are free to have as bigger (sic) party as you like”** I suggest that some limits regarding sound levels should be applied with appropriate curfew timings.

The extension of hours/frequency of events

The licence application is for the premises to be open every day from 0800 to 0030 (Sunday–Thursday); 0800–0230 (Friday–Saturday). It also includes; “a performance of amplified live music between 08.00 and 23.00 on

any day on premises authorised to sell alcohol for consumption on those premises, provided that the audience does not exceed 500.” As currently framed, if granted, this licence would permit activities every day of the year which could lead to a significant public nuisance to nearby residents.

The level of traffic to and from the venue

The activities at Merriscourt Gallery are those of a commercial business. With opening times of 0800 to 0030/0230 every day of the year, there may be a significant increase in the level of traffic on narrow unclassified local roads as late as 0300 (a time when during the summer months the agricultural community are just waking up). Merriscourt Gallery is characterised by its rural location and highlights this in its promotional material. That rural location and the associated night-time quiet and absence of street lighting will be disturbed by late-night/early-morning activities as covered by this license.

Sound and light pollution

You may be aware of a recent incident involving pyrotechnics at the Wychwood Golf Club adjacent to the village of Lyneham. The firework display held on 18 February was not only heard as far away as Long Hanborough, but also terrified several horses kept within the village. Within one week there was another firework display, this time held at Merriscourt: although not as spectacular and loud as that at Wychwood Golf Club, it was late at night (around 10:30 pm).

Precedents

I am concerned that, if granted, certain elements of the application would set precedents in terms of other licence applications

3. Judy Lewis

Comments with regard to the above variation to Licence.

With regard to proposed amplified music -

There appears to be no noise leveling restrictions or monitoring imposed at this venue the lack of which, if granted, would set a precedent for future licence applications.

A nearby annual short three day event with music has both restrictions and daily monitoring to make sure noise leveling restrictions are upheld - the same should apply to any amplified music in the rural countryside - so as not to be a public nuisance to others.

I fail to understand THE NEED for amplified music here when the proposed areas for this to take place (the courtyard and gallery gardens) are in such close proximity to the premises so would be clearly heard by the those people listening without the need for amplified music.

Merriscourt is in an elevated situation and in certain weather conditions when large crowds gather there, even voices can be heard in Lyneham village - hence amplified music has the potential to be a public nuisance to those nearby in what is an extremely peaceful area

I regard this application to vary the Licence to be open ended and, if granted, should require strict restrictions and conditions to protect this exceptional tranquil area .

Item 2 seeks to remove un-amplified music

and
item 5 seeks similarly to have the non use of speakers removed

As these two items relate to my concerns I would like my concerns relayed to the Licensing Panel.

Reference is made to "The Designated Premises Supervisor (DPS) or nominated representative shall receive or respond to complaints throughout noise events" - but no contact details are given – please advise if you are able