

**LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
18 AUGUST 2026**

Present: Councillors Woodward (Chair), Ayub and Keane.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Saadat attended the hearing and, with the consent of the Sub-Committee, represented a constituent who had made a valid representation in relation to the application at item 14.

14. APPLICATION FOR THE VARIATION OF A PREMISES LICENCE - READING FESTIVAL, LITTLE JOHNS FARM, RICHFIELD AVENUE, READING, RG1 8EQ

The Sub-Committee considered a report relating to an application submitted by Festival Republic Limited to vary the premises licence for Reading Festival, Little Johns Farm, Richfield Avenue, Reading, RG1 8EQ.

The report stated that Reading Festival was a large music-focussed event that had been held annually in Reading for over 50 years. The festival took place at Little Johns Farm on land owned by Reading Borough Council and South Oxfordshire District Council.

A copy of the current premises licence (LMV000478) was attached to the report at Appendix RS-1.

A copy of the variation application form submitted by Festival Republic Limited on 26 June 2026 was attached to the report at Appendix RS-2. Appendix RS-2 also contained a supporting letter from the applicant dated 17 June 2026, a Noise Impact Assessment dated 26 June 2026, and a Crowd and Transport Supporting Statement.

The report stated that the application sought to vary the premises licence to add the following to the existing licence:

Provision of Live Music:

Thursday from 17:00hrs until 00:00hrs (Main Stage Only)

Sale by Retail of Alcohol:

Saturday to Monday	from 02:00hrs to 03:00hrs
Wednesday	from 11:00hrs to 00:00hrs
Thursday	from 00:00hrs to 03:00hrs & 10:00hrs to 17:00hrs
Friday	from 00:00hrs to 03:00hrs

The Sub-Committee heard that the application also sought to increase the maximum number of Wednesday early-entry ticket holders from 20,000 to 40,000 and to update and modernise several existing licence conditions.

A schedule setting out the proposed amendments to the licence conditions was attached to the report at Appendix RS-3. The schedule compared the existing licence conditions with

LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES 18 AUGUST 2026

the revised wording proposed by the applicant and agreed with Reading Borough Council Licensing officers. The proposed changes to conditions included the introduction of new conditions, the amendment of existing conditions and the removal of a number of outdated or superseded conditions, with the aim of modernising the licence and to reflect current festival management practices.

A verbal update was provided at the meeting noting that a single condition had been inadvertently omitted from the schedule of proposed conditions attached to the report at Appendix RS-3. The Sub-Committee noted the omission and considered the following condition as part of the application before it:

“On the Thursday of the event the Provision of Live Music shall be restricted to Stage 1.”

The report stated that, during the 28-day consultation period, 13 representations had been received from local residents, including representations submitted by the Warren and District Residents' Association (WADRA) and the Caversham and District Residents' Association (CADRA). The representations were set out in appendices RS-4 and RS-5.

Appendix RS-4 comprised nine representations from local residents and residents' associations objecting to the application. The representations raised concerns regarding the proposed extension of live music to Thursday evening and alcohol sales until 03:00hrs, citing the potential for increased noise and disturbance, anti-social behaviour, adverse impacts on residents' amenity and sleep, additional pressure on transport and emergency services, and wider effects on the local community.

Appendix RS-5 comprised four representations submitted by local residents in support of the application.

The report set out the powers of the Licensing Authority when determining an application for the variation of a premises licence, which were:

- To grant the application as applied for;
- To grant the application with modifications;
- To refuse the application.

The report explained that the Licensing Authority had a duty to carry out its functions with a view to promoting the four licensing objectives, which were as follows:

- The prevention of crime and disorder;
- Public safety;
- The prevention of public nuisance;
- The protection of children from harm.

The report stated that any conditions placed on a premises licence should be appropriate and proportionate with a view to promoting the licensing objectives and that the Licensing Authority could amend, alter or refuse an application if it were deemed appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives.

LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
18 AUGUST 2026

The report also stated that, when determining an application, the Licensing Authority must have regard to the representations received, the Licensing Authority's own statement of Licensing Policy and to any relevant section of the statutory guidance issued to licensing authorities by the Secretary of State.

The report set out paragraphs 1.6, 3.1, 3.2, 5.6, 5.7, 5.49, 6.1, 6.2, 6.5, 7.2, 7.6, 7.8 to 7.12, 8.6, 10.1 and 10.3 of the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy. The report also set out paragraphs 1.2 to 1.5, 1.18, 1.19, 8.41 to 8.49, 9.12, 9.38 to 9.40, 9.42 and 9.43 of the Amended Guidance issued under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003. The report also highlighted relevant sections of The Licensing Act 2003 (namely Section 18(6)) and set out relevant case law for consideration.

Robert Smalley, Senior Licensing and Enforcement Officer, presented the report to the Sub-Committee and responded to questions.

Rob Abell, Consumer Protection Group Manager, and Mike Harding and Ben Williams, Licensing Enforcement Officers, also attended the hearing as observers.

Simon Taylor (Solicitor), Melvin Benn (Festival Director) and Harry Lang (Acoustic Expert, Vanguardia) were present at the meeting on behalf of the applicant. All three addressed the Sub-Committee and responded to questions.

Rebecca Carey (local resident), Helen Lambert (on behalf of CADRA), Elisa Miles and Stuart Bartlett (on behalf of WADRA), and Councillor Saadat (on behalf of her constituent David Carey) were present at the meeting. Rebecca Carey, Helen Lambert and Councillor Saadat addressed the Sub-Committee in relation to their respective representations and asked and responded to questions. Elisa Miles and Stuart Bartlett asked questions of the applicant but left the meeting without presenting WADRA's representation.

During the course of the hearing, the applicant indicated that they would be willing to reduce the terminal hour for the Provision of Live Music on Thursday night from 00:00 hours to 23:30 hours. The Sub-Committee noted this amendment and took it into account when determining the application.

Resolved –

DECISION

- (1) That the application to vary the Premises Licence for Reading Festival, Little Johns Farm, Richfield Avenue, Reading, RG1 8EQ, be granted subject to:
- (a) the variation of the Premises Licence to permit the Provision of Live Music during the following additional hours:

Thursday from 17:00hrs until 23:30hrs
(Stage 1 (Main Stage) only)

**LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
18 AUGUST 2026**

- (b) the variation of the Premises Licence to permit the Sale by Retail of Alcohol during the following hours (as applied for):

Wednesday	from 11:00hrs until 03:00hrs
Thursday	from 10:00hrs until 03:00hrs
Friday	from 10:00hrs until 03:00hrs
Saturday	from 10:00hrs until 03:00hrs
Sunday	from 10:00hrs until 03:00hrs

- (c) the conditions and variations as set out in Appendix RS-3;
- (d) the inclusion of the following additional condition, which had been inadvertently omitted from the schedule of conditions contained in Appendix RS-3:

“On the Thursday of the event the Provision of Live Music shall be restricted to Stage 1.”

REASONS:

- (2) That the Sub-Committee reasons be noted as follows:
- (a) The Sub-Committee took into account the Licensing Act 2003, the Secretary of State's Guidance issued under section 182 of the Act, the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy, the written reports before it, including the noise impact assessment, the written and oral representations received from the Applicant and local residents, and the conditions agreed with Thames Valley Police and the Council's Licensing Team.
- (b) The Sub-Committee noted that, during the course of the hearing, the applicant had agreed to reduce the terminal hour for the provision of live music on the Main Stage on Thursday from 00:00 hours to 23:30 hours. The Sub-Committee regarded this amendment as a positive measure and took it into account when determining the application.
- (c) The Sub-Committee noted that the applicant did concede that the sites at Reading and Leeds differed as to the density of the surrounding population.
- (d) The Sub-Committee noted that no objections to the application had been received from Thames Valley Police, Environmental Health or the Licensing Authority and took this into account when determining the application.
- (e) The Sub-Committee noted that the amended conditions included a condition that restricted the provision of live music on Thursday to

**LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES
18 AUGUST 2026**

Stage 1 (Main Stage) only and took this measure into account when determining the application.

- (f) Having considered the likely effect of the application on the promotion of the four licensing objectives, the Sub-Committee was satisfied that it was appropriate and proportionate to grant the variation application, subject to the conditions and modifications set out in the decision at (1) above.

(All parties to the decision have the right to appeal to the Magistrates' Court against the decision of the Licensing Applications Sub-Committee. Any such appeal must be made within 21 days beginning with the day on which the party is notified of this decision in writing.)

(The meeting started at 5 pm and closed at 7.31 pm)