



**T&M Leisure Reading Limited**

**Application for a Premises Licence**

**Applicant's papers for hearing 1<sup>st</sup>  
February 2024**

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John Gaunt  
& Partners

## Licensing Solicitors

Our Ref: LE/LON221/STO230/3  
Contact: Luke Elford

The Licensing Sub-Committee  
Reading Borough Council  
c/o Mr Peter Narancic  
Senior Licensing & Enforcement Officer

**By email only to [peter.narancic@reading.gov.uk](mailto:peter.narancic@reading.gov.uk)**

25 January 2024

Dear Councillors,

**T&M Leisure Reading Limited  
Application for a Premises Licence for Stories in the Park, Palmer Park**

My name is Luke Elford. I am the Licensing Solicitor representing T&M Leisure Reading Limited ("the Applicant") in relation to its application for a premises licence ("the Application") that comes before you for determination at a Licensing Sub-Committee Hearing on the 1<sup>st</sup> of February 2024.

I thought it would be helpful, in advance of that hearing, to write and give some context to the Application, as well as to address some of the concerns that have been raised in relation to the Application. I hope that you find this letter useful, and I look forward to addressing you in person in a week or so.

**The Applicant**

The Applicant is T&M Leisure Reading Limited, but I expect that you would wish to know who the controlling mind is behind the company.

The Applicant is owned and operated by Toby Mullins, with whom you may be familiar. Mr Mullins has been a fixture within the hospitality industry in Reading (and elsewhere) for a great many years.

Indeed, he is the brains behind the existing Stories in the Park festival that already takes place in Palmer Park each year, albeit at a lesser capacity. I will come onto this in due course because it is the crux of the Application.

To give you a flavour of Mr Mullins' expertise when it comes to the hosting of events I draw your attention to just some of his extensive achievements. Mr Mullins has:

- Worked with Thames Valley Police since 2011 on strategy and planning for the "freshers" period for Reading University.

**Partners:**

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- Served as the Vice-Chair of Reading Pubwatch from 2017 to 2021.
- Worked with Reading Borough Council to help the town achieve Purple Flag Status.
- Launched the Good Night Out campaign in 2021 for Reading's venues and promoters.
- Operated three successful venues in Reading Town Centre.
- Been central to the planning and delivery of spectacular events for Reading Borough Council including Her Majesty The Queen's Platinum Jubilee, and more recently, His Majesty The King's Coronation.

I submit, on Mr Mullin's behalf, that he is precisely the kind of Applicant that can be trusted to deliver safe, successful events, that promote the Licensing Objectives.

### **The Application**

The Application you are asked to determine is for a new premises licence for Stories in the Park, which, if you are kind enough to grant it, will be used from 2024 onwards.

Stories in the Park is already a licensed event and has operated successfully within Palmer Park since 2019.

That premises licence was granted with a stringent set of conditions to promote the Licensing Objectives and the event has operated in-line with those conditions. Those conditions (modified slightly in agreement with the Responsible Authorities) will continue to apply if you are kind enough to grant this Application.

There are two differences between the existing premises licence and that which you are asked to grant:

1. An increase to the capacity of the event from 4999 to 9999; and
2. A small increase to the hours of operation on the Sunday of the event weekend.

### **Increase to Capacity**

As highlighted above, Stories in the Park has operated successfully for several years.

The existing festival site could accommodate more attendees and in fact, such is the trust placed in the Applicant by Reading's Events Team, the Applicant has been awarded a larger footprint as part of a 5-year contract moving forward.

The new footprint can comfortably accommodate the increased capacity and all of the measures the Applicant takes to ensure the safety and well-being of its customers have been enhanced also. There will be more availability of drinking water, more security, more stewards, more food etc.

Crucially, what there will not be is increased noise. Noise management is tightly controlled by condition, and it is of significance that your expert Environmental Health Officers have assessed this application and do not object to it.

### **Sunday Hours**

Historically, the Sunday event day has finished earlier than Thursday, Friday, or Saturday. The Applicant has found, in feedback from its customers, that there is significant appetite for a later finish time on a Sunday.

The Applicant has factored that into its programming this year and has secured the appearance of artists such as Blue, Boyzlife (a supergroup comprising Boyzone and Westlife), and Scouting for Girls. The Applicant anticipates great interest in these acts and asks for an increase to hours accordingly.

### **Surrender**

If the Applicant is granted an acceptable licence, it will surrender the existing licence it holds for Stories in the Park. It is not the Applicant's intention to hold multiple licences for this event, or to hoard those licences so be able to put on additional events. I trust this is useful.

### **Concerns**

The concerns expressed in the objections received from the Interested Parties, I suggest, are the types of concerns that are expressed about events up and down the country. There is nothing specific in them to this event. Some of the concerns addressed, for example traffic, parking, and the purposes of parks generally, are not relevant to the Licensing Act 2003 and you will forgive me if I do not address them on that basis.

One of the concerns is that there will be an increase in event days taking place in Palmer Park. This concern is misplaced. I have asked the question of Reading's Events Team who have confirmed that there will be fewer event days in Palmer Park in 2024 than there were in 2023.

Another concern is noise from the event. As explained above, noise from the event is tightly controlled and historically, there have been few complaints (single digits). Advising, as I do, events up and down the country, it is unusual for an event to receive so few complaints and it is testament to the work of Mr Mullins and his acousticians (F1 Acoustics) in the work that they do to keep noise disruption to a minimum.

In terms of concerns about antisocial behaviour away from the event itself, my client quite understands these. With the increase in capacity, my client will be providing additional security and stewarding commensurate with the size of the event and ticket sales. If specific issues are experienced on event days (and are within my client's remit to deal with) we encourage that these are reported to the event hotline. It is notable that there is no objection to the application from the Police, which one would expect if crime and disorder were an issue at these events.

### **Summary**

This is a good application from a hugely experienced operator. It is made with the future of this event and my client's commercial partnership with Reading Borough Council in mind. My client has demonstrated, several times over, that it can deliver a safe, successful, event under the existing licence. On their behalf I ask that you grant this application as it stands before you.

With my best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke, likely belonging to Luke Elford.

**Luke Elford**  
**Partner**  
**John Gaunt & Partners Licensing Solicitors**

**Palmer Park Festival Weekend is a series of events that take place at the same festival site based in Palmer Park every single June. We host 4 different events reaching over 30,000 people from Reading, Berkshire & the surrounding areas. It has become a statement weekend with Reading locals & has grown in popularity & quality every single year since 2019.**





# Palmer Park Festival Weekend is Split Into 4 Different Days

1

## FIGHT NIGHT

Our student boxing event that sells out to 2,500 attendees each year. Students across the university battle it out over x3 2 minute rounds of boxing. They have endured a rigorous 12 week training programme prior to the big day.

\*\*\*\*\*  
**FIGHT  
NIGHT**  
\*\*\*\*\*

2

## LIVE ORCHESTRAL PERFORMANCE

A Friday night live performance. An Urban Soul & Ibiza Orchestra seamlessly integrates the two worlds of classical and house music. They have worked for over 25 years alongside many dance music greats, including Nightmares On Wax, Groove Armada, Ultra Naté, Octave One, Full Intention, Soul II Soul, Robert Miles, Sonique and Spiller.

**LIVE ORCHESTRAL  
PERFORMANCE**

3

## STORIES IN THE PARK

Our independent festival based on community, inclusivity & a passion for live dance music. Founded in 2019 with a capacity of 3,000 it has grown exponentially as a brand to now 10,000 people on the Saturday of the festival weekend. We are known for the highest quality production, artist talent & meticulous planning & delivery.

**STORIES  
IN THE  
PARK**

4

## LIVE CONCERT

Our older generation focused event where we host world renowned artists & musical groups. This year we host the global superstars Blue, Boyzlife & Scouting For Girls with 8,000 people in attendance. An event perfect for all of the family.

**LEGACY LIVE**  
EVENTS



PARTNERSHIP DECK 2024

PARTNERSHIP DECK 2024

# MUSIC

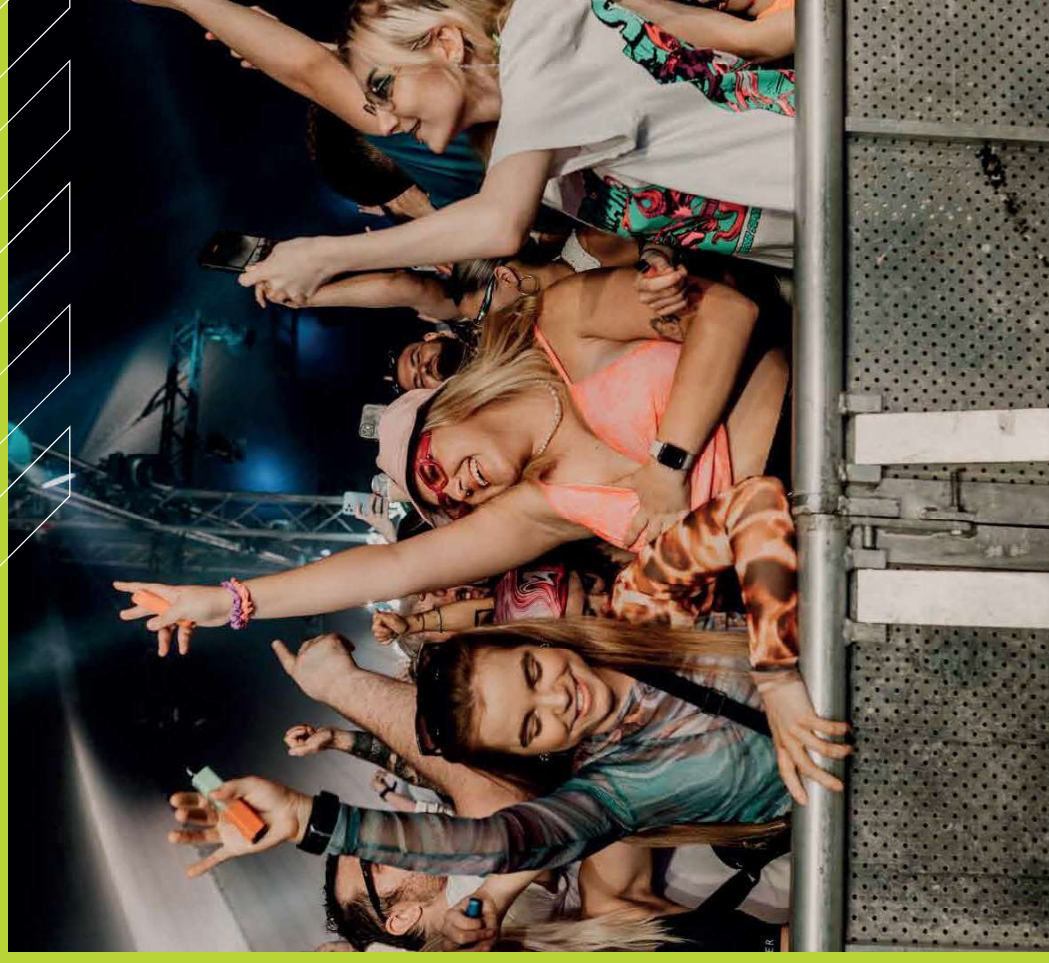
THE HOUSE OF GARAGE

# MUSIC.

Our narrative is focused towards a celebration of different musical genres on each day. The Thursday Fight Night is focused on commercial crowd pleasers whilst our Friday showcases a live classical musical performance that is truly inspiring & exhilarating

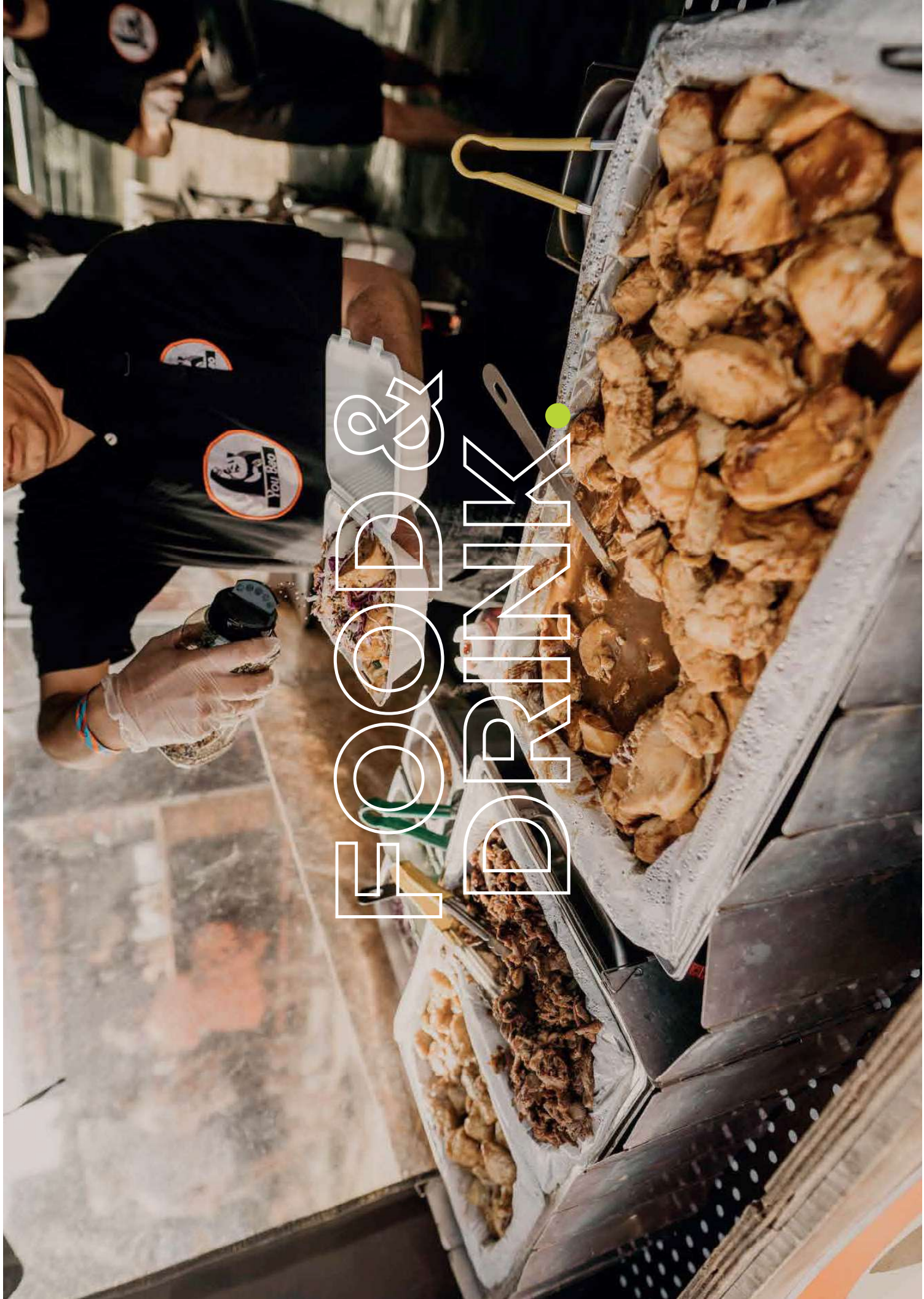
Our Saturday event Stories In The Park has played host to the biggest names in the music industry; Chase & Status, Shy FX, Andy C, Sub Focus, Nathan Dawe, Flava D + More. It also strives to promote young emerging talents that are pathing their way in such a competitive industry. We provide a platform for them to showcase their talents. The Sunday focus on world renowned groups & DJ performances that the whole family will know & enjoy (Wait until you hear this year's headline performance).

As a weekend we are not focused just on DJ's or just on one genre of music. We want to celebrate the variety & diversity that our music industry possesses. We have a truly jaw dropping line up of Headliners for this year's festival weekend. It is set to be our biggest weekend of events.

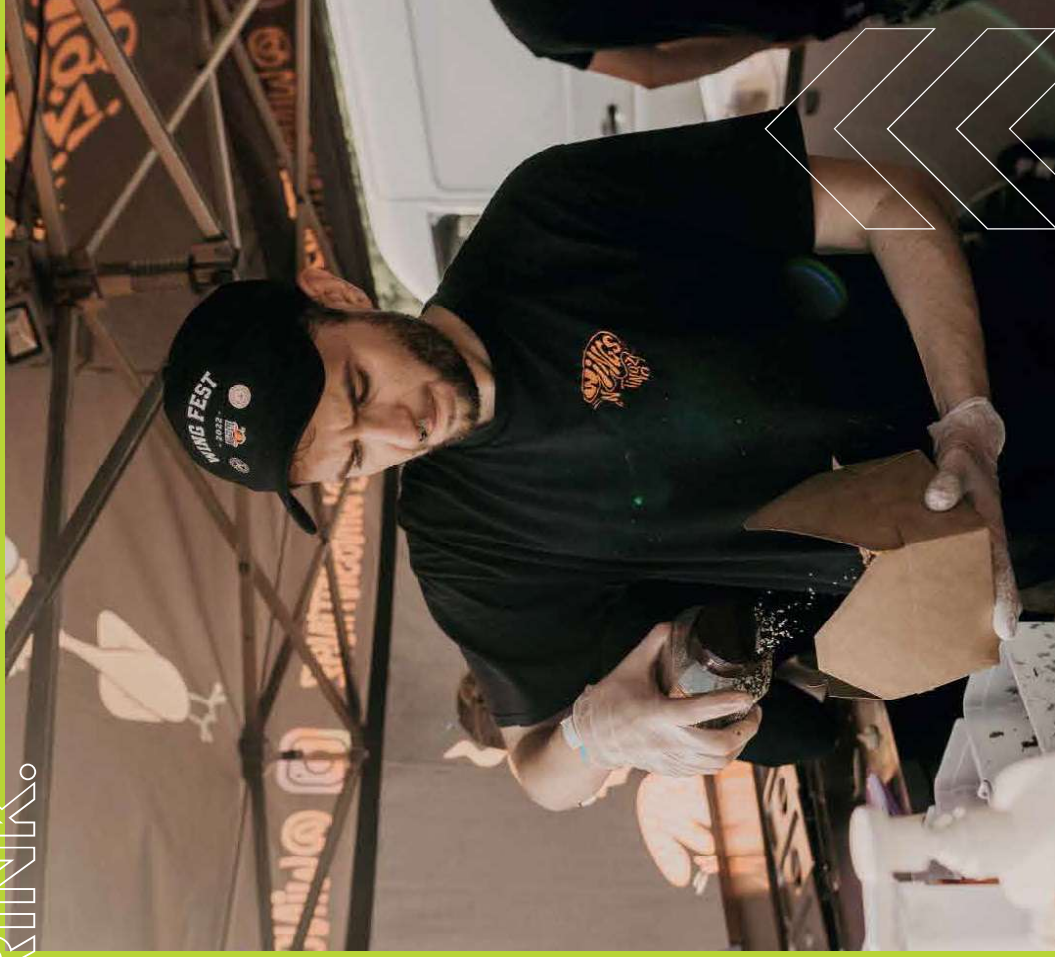




# FORN &







Palmer Park festival weekend has set the bar high with our desire to be more than just focused on music. We place great interest in partnering with a vast selection of food vendors all locally based. We partner with local & independent vendors in & around Reading. We encourage attendees to enjoy our wonderful food options so they have a well rounded experience at any of our events.

Our festival has reached an average spend per head of £60 including food & drink.

# PRODUCTION & STAGION

PARTNERSHIP DECK 2024

PARTNERSHIP DECK 2024



# STAGES & PRODUCTION.

**PARTNERSHIP**DECK**2024**



Customers arrive at our Festival site which reveals a large open green space with 3 stages of music & culture. We have a number of seating areas for people to relax in the park & take a rest from all the excitement.

Impressive stage design has always been paramount to our vision. We want people to leave the festival not only wanting to come back next year but we want them to spread the word & tell stories to friends about the wonderful experiences they have had with us. Each stage is focused towards a different genre of music, we design them to reach maximum intimacy & we use the very best production companies to make sure the technology is up to the highest possible standard. We're here to blow our customers away with state of the art sound & lighting.

# AUDIENCE PROFILE.

PARTNERSHIP **DECK 2024**



**90% Students • 10% Other**  
With most ages being between 18-25

LIVE ORCHESTRAL  
PERFORMANCE

**80% Between 21-45**  
with most ages being between 25-35



**50% Students • 50% Local Young People**  
With 95% being between 18-25



**Ages Range From 5 - 50**  
With all of the family welcome



**Demographic:** Reading Berkshire & Surrounding Areas

## **T&M Leisure Reading Limited**

**18 January 2024**

Dear Interested Party,

### **Re: Stories in the Park – Application for a Premises Licence**

I write in relation to your representation raising concerns over our application for a new premises licence for Stories in the Park, a music festival which takes place in Palmer Park.

Firstly, I would like to thank you for taking the time to comment on the application and for articulating your concerns. This is useful feedback for me and my team and I hope that within this letter I can alleviate your concerns and reassure you how we intend to operate the event and our ethos as the management team.

As you will be aware, this festival has been running successfully since 2019. We pride ourselves on being a niche music festival known for its intimacy, artists, production and relaxed atmosphere and we are proud of how the festival attracts such a diverse mix of music and people.

We acknowledge the unique location of where we host our festival in the wonderful Palmer Park and note that one of the concerns raised within your representations is the need to preserve the area. We would like to reassure you that we are committed to reducing our environmental impact and we are constantly striving to become more sustainable to protect the natural environment of the park. We are working collaboratively with the council to achieve this and have introduced various policies such as no single use plastics, 75% of our food and drink offerings being locally sourced, and as much waste as possible from the site will be converted into fuel rather than landfill.

The application we have made does not seek to increase the hours or licensable activities and is limited to the capacity of the event. In terms of the number of events that take place in Palmer Park, that is not something that we (as a business) can control. Usage of Palmer Park is managed by the Council's Events Team and they determine how many events can take place there.

The current premises licence for this event is bound by numerous strict conditions that we must adhere to when the event is in operation and these will also apply to the new application. As previously mentioned, it is not our intention to remove or amend these conditions and we have included these as part of this new licence application. I attach a copy of the conditions as you may not have seen these.

I acknowledge that you have raised concerns over the issues of drugs and we would like to draw your attention to condition 15 which states:

*The Premises Licence Holder shall implement a written search policy to minimise the risk of illegal weapons and drugs being brought onto the premises, including search, detection, confiscation, storage, and disposal of drugs procedures. For events identified as '18+' the search policy shall provide, as minimum:*



- a) For 100% bag search of all customers attempting to enter the premises;*
- b) Randomised customer searching of at least 1 in every 3 customers;*
- c) For the operation of intelligence lead searches of any customer as required;*
- d) Re-admittance for existing customers leaving the premises is permitted and*

*where appropriate, shall be subject to a search by the door supervisors when re-entering the premises/area.*

*For all other events the search policy shall provide, as minimum:*

- a) For 100% bag search of all customers attempting to enter the premises;*
- b) Randomised customer searching of at least 1 in every 3 customers over the age of 18;*
- c) For the operation of intelligence lead searches of any customer as required;*
- d) Re-admittance for existing customers leaving the premises is permitted and*

*where appropriate, shall be subject to a search by the door supervisors when re-entering the premises/area.*

This search policy must be submitted and approved by Thames Valley Police. In addition, the festival will always have multiple SIA registered security on site as well as stewards monitoring the area. We encourage anyone who witnesses the taking of illegal substances to report the incident to the police, as we too, do not condone this type of behaviour.

I appreciate that this event will have some impact on the local area, but it is our intention that this be a positive impact by supporting local suppliers and businesses and we hope that this letter offers some reassurance in how we intend to operate and manage this much-loved festival.

I hope that this letter has been useful in terms of explaining our approach and why this application is being made. If you now feel able to withdraw your objection to our application, I would be grateful if you would confirm that in writing to the Licensing Officer.

With my best wishes.

Yours faithfully,

Toby Mullins  
Director  
T&M Leisure Reading Limited

