

**HowTheLightGetsIn Festival**

**APPLICATION FOR GRANT OF PREMISES LICENCE**

**HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**

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**STATEMENT OF MANDY HOUGHTON**

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1. I, **MANDY HOUGHTON**, make this statement in support of an application for a time limited new premises licence application for 5 years from 2024 to 2028 authorising one 4-day event per calendar year to operate the HowTheLightGetsIn Festival at Riverside Festival Site (Hay-on-Wye).
2. This statement is true to the best of my knowledge, information and belief, and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.
3. Some of the information contained in his statement is in line with that which was presented to the Licensing Committee in 2023, particularly in relation to the ethos of the festival and this is included in this statement by way of background.
4. This statement is structured as follows:
  - Executive Summary
  - Personal Background
  - HowTheLightGetsIn - Ethos
  - HowTheLightGetsIn – Background
  - Post 2023 SAG De-brief
  - HowTheLightGetsIn - Plan for 2024
  - HowTheLightGetsIn - Benefit to Local Community
  - Event Safety Management Plan and Noise Management Plan
  - Pre-Application Consultation
  - Submission of the Application
  - Response to Representations & Letters of Support
  - Conclusion

## **Executive Summary**

- HowTheLightGetsIn is a unique philosophy and music festival
- It has been held in Hay since 2009 and at its current location since 2018
- The post event SAG debrief following festival in 2023 was positive
- There were no regulatory enforcement notices served following the 2023 festival (or indeed previous festivals)
- The applicant carried out significant pre application consultation in advance of submitting the application
- The application is supported by a significant schedule of conditions
- An Event Safety Management Plan and Noise Management Plan have been developed which will be the subject of on-going scrutiny from the Safety Advisory Group
- The application has received support from local business and residents
- There are no representations to the application from any of the responsible authorities
- The EHO had asked for an additional condition to be attached to the licence (*The premises licence holder or DPS must immediately comply with any request to adjust noise levels/frequency spectra made by an authorised person (as defined by s13 of the Licensing Act 2003) or the Police*). This has been agreed and the EHO representation has been withdrawn)
- HowTheLightGetsIn provides significant financial and cultural benefit to the Local Community

## **Personal Background**

5. I have been a local resident to Hay since 1987 and prior to working at the Globe at Hay which happened in 2008, I owned and operated a local delicatessen, Hay Deli, for ten years.
6. My role and responsibilities include being:
  - Festival Manager at all previous HowTheLightGetsIn Festivals, i.e. across 2009-2023.
  - Manager of the Globe at Hay, an arts and events venue located in the centre of Hay, which was also the site for the first HowTheLightGetsIn Festivals in Hay.

## **HowTheLightGetsIn – Ethos**

7. HowTheLightGetsIn has a unique identity. It is a philosophy and music festival. It sets out to provide a forum like no other for the discussion of the big ideas of our time. In this respect it is very different from literary festivals like Cheltenham and the Hay Literary Festival. These events are an opportunity for authors to promote their recent books and for the public to meet their favourite authors and get a signed copy of their book. While HowTheLightGetsIn is instead focussed on the ideas and the atmosphere on the festival site.
8. While there are many famous speakers at HowTheLightGetsIn all of the debates and talks do not lead on the celebrity speakers taking part but, on the idea, and topic of the debate or talk. In order to create a positive atmosphere of conversation and debate we do not charge for individual events but encourage people to come for the whole weekend during which they are able to develop friendships and explore

contemporary ideas. In addition, we avoid VIP areas for speakers and encourage them to mix with the public enhancing the freewheeling character of the event.

9. Literary festivals in contrast charge by event and since their aim is to sell as many tickets as possible their festival sites avoid offering alternative entertainment during the bulk of the events in the day. While at HowTheLightGetsIn our aim has always been to create a wonderful atmosphere on the festival site offering a whole range of different activities throughout the day and evening in addition to the core philosophy programme.
10. This is why the music and the atmosphere of the festival site is so important and central to the festival. If the provision of music was further restricted the unique character and purpose of the festival would be undermined.
11. Please see below quotes supporting the uniqueness of the festival:
  - *"It's a pretty unique event. I don't know anything quite like it, actually. It's a wonderful, casual, relaxed festival atmosphere, but at the same time there are these intense, very rigorous, very stimulating, very cutting-edge academic debates. It's very rare to get that mixture"*. Philip Goff, Author
  - *"A really inspirational atmosphere"*. Sabine Hossenfelder, Theoretical Physicist and Philosopher
  - *"Ideas are at the heart of it. It's entertaining but not frightened of intellectually grappling with difficult subjects"*. David Baddiel, Comedian
  - *"Variety... all sorts of different viewpoints... stimulating!"*. Roger Penrose, Mathematician and Nobel Prize winner
  - *"The best two days of my year"*. Michael Crick, Broadcaster
  - *"Really important ... Lots of policy ideas for government ... These opportunities are rare and they're becoming even rarer"*. Jess Phillips, Labour MP
  - *"I am on record as being against travel. The only reason I ever travel is to come to HowTheLightGetsIn"*. Stanley Fish, Legal Scholar and Literary Critic
  - *"Asking real questions ... orchestrated much more precisely than is usual in our field"*. Gerard T'Hooft, Physicist and Nobel Prize winner
  - *"A stunning event ... so engaged, so well informed, so switched on"*. Shoshana Zuboff, Psychologist and Author

## **HowTheLightGetsIn - Background**

12. HowTheLightGetsIn was founded in 2008 by Hilary Lawson to encourage public awareness and discussion of big ideas.
13. The first HowTheLightGetsIn Festival took place in Hay in 2009 and it's been held annually in Hay across 2009-2022 (other than a fallow year in 2017 as well as 2020 & 2021 not being possible due to the pandemic). At no point has the festival been profitable. Its deficits have been covered by the wider TVF group and donations from other individuals.
14. The first HowTheLightGetsIn Festivals in Hay were run exclusively at the Globe at Hay, an arts and events venue located in the centre of Hay. During this time there was some disruption to the residential neighbours immediately adjacent to the Globe at Hay, but we looked to take all steps possible to reduce disturbance and we continued to receive support from the community as a whole.
15. As the festival got more popular, in order to minimise disruption to neighbours, we looked for a site with no immediate residential neighbours but also close enough to Hay to benefit the community. After temporarily splitting the festival across the Globe at Hay and a new field adjacent to Hay Bridge, we moved to our current Riverside location from 2018. We also restructured the festival to reduce its duration from 10 days to 4 days.

We chose the Riverside location because it was the best situated to avoid disturbance to neighbours. One side of the location was adjacent to the river with no houses on the opposite bank for 400 yards in either direction. While on the other side it was shielded by a 5 metre bank and immediately adjacent were warehouses and supermarkets. So there was no housing in direct proximity to the site.

16. Since we have been at Riverside we have received very few complaints and the premises has never been the subject of any regulatory enforcement action:
  - a. 2018: Hereford Council EHO received 1 complaint.
  - b. 2019: Hereford Council EHO received no complaints.
  - c. 2020 & 2021: No festival due to Covid.
  - d. 2022: HowTheLightGetsIn received 2 noise complaint calls, and at the licence hearing in 2023 the Officer confirmed that the authority had received 2 noise complaints in 2022.
  - e. 2023: EHO received 1 complaint call regarding noise (this was received when they were in attendance at the event and they did not support it) and 2 calls regarding campsite noise after the event. HowTheLightGetsIn received 5 communications to the dedicated noise complaint hotline in 2023 (3 calls and 2 text messages). 1 of these was regarding campsite noise. 3 were investigated and when sound monitoring was carried out it showed we were within the prescribed limits. The remaining 1 was a text and when we replied no response was received so we could not investigate.

Nevertheless, we have been proactive about putting in place further measures to minimise any disruption, including a review of the close time of the festival for 2022 where despite it being 2am across 2009-2019, for 2022 we moved it to an earlier close time of 1am. We adhered to this earlier closing time in 2023 and it is our plan for future festivals at Riverside.

17. In 2023 we set up a dedicated noise complaint hotline (details of which were circulated to all local residents in advance of the festival opening) at the suggestion of the EHO. During the course of last year's festival (as noted above) this received three calls and two text messages. All of these interactions were actioned, and none were identified to have exceeded prescribed limits.

### **Post 2023 SAG De-brief**

18. In every festival we have carefully considered impact on our neighbours, including through consultation with Environmental Health Officers and local residents. With respect to the current licence application, EHO have suggested one further condition in relation to noise management which we have agreed and incorporated into our Noise Management Plan.
19. As part of the post event activity in 2023, we actively engaged with the Herefordshire Council SAG. This was due to take place on the 10 July 2023. This meeting was attended by Charlotte Orum (Traffic), Helen Faulkner (Police) and Sophie Hay (Public Health). All confirmed that that they had had no issues with the 2023 festival (see email from Sophie Hay dated 10 July 2023 at **MH1**). Some members of the SAG were unable to attend the meeting on 10 July 2023 so an additional meeting was arranged for 22 August 2023.
20. Copies of the agreed minutes of the meeting on 22 August 2023 can be found at **MH2**. Of note are the comments of Jacqueline O'Mahony, EHO, Jacqueline O'Mahony, EHO, who observed that there had been "far fewer calls...no adverse response from residents of Cusop Parish Council...Overall an improvement on previous years – which is very positive". Elisabeth Laughland commented that "live music tent – noise levels well managed... No issue reported with comms on complaints hotline... Evening not overly populated with people and everyone seemed to be quietly enjoying the events...Steps taken by HTLGI appear to have improved relationships with the local community which is very positive."
21. A copy of the agreed minutes of the meeting on 24 October 2023 can be found at **MH3**. This meeting largely focused on feedback from the Fire Service.
22. As a consequence of the feedback from these meetings the ESMP has been adapted and updated.

### **HowTheLightGetsIn - Plan for 2024**

23. I have attached at **MH4** a copy of the HowTheLightGetsIn 2024 Programme showcasing over 270 individual events of the festival spanning debates, music and other entertainment.
24. As explained in the Ethos section above, evening music and events are critical to the character of the festival and they are part of what makes it unique and different to the Hay Literary Festival. They are also a key component of what our festivalgoers expect and therefore vital to the overall revenue potential and financial feasibility of the festival in Hay.
25. As a result, a requirement to bring forward the close time of the festival earlier than the 1am it was reduced to in 2022, would force us to consider the overall viability of the festival in Hay. Such a change would also create substantial immediate financial and reputational damage to the festival as festival ticket holders will assume a similar music offering and times that have operated in the fifteen years since the festival began.

### **HowTheLightGetsIn - Benefit to Local Community**

26. HowTheLightGetsIn has a major positive impact on Hay, and this ties in with strong positive local support overall for the festival ever since its inception in 2009.
27. In relation to the licence for HowTheLightGetsIn 2024 we are pleased to note letters submitted by some of our nearest neighbours confirming their support of the festival and that they are not disturbed by it. As further evidence of the strength of local support we also know of a number of people that have moved to Hay due to the Globe at Hay and the Festival.
28. To appreciate the Economic impact of HowTheLightsGetsIn on Hay and the local area, please see our Economic Impact Assessment (EIA) at **MH5**. The EIA shows Direct, Indirect and Induced Economic Impact of £1.29 million, £410,000 and £1 million, leading to a combined total impact of £2.7 million per year (the majority of which is with local businesses and individuals) as well as the direct and indirect employment of 43 people, with hundreds affected through employment in the period of the festival itself.
29. The EIA has been put together by the financial director of TVF, Jazz Bhakar, and is based on our actual expenditures from previous festivals together with budgets and forecast final spending for 2024, as well as estimates of resulting indirect and induced further economic impact, based on fair and conservative assumptions.
30. Aside from the economic impacts described in the EIA, there are also important wider impacts on the tourist industry of Hay as well as the cultural & education impact.

31. A vibrant tourist industry is central to the economic wellbeing of Hay. HowTheLightGetsIn Festival supports this by putting on a festival with unique character that hosts internationally renowned speakers and performers. Many people first visit Hay because of the festival and then return year on year as well as at other times to enjoy the town.
32. The value to the town is also demonstrated by comments in a letters of support received by longstanding local businesses, the Hay Cinema Bookshop and the Poetry Bookshop. These make up 2 of the 13 letters of support attached at **MH6**.
33. Aside from economic and financial benefits, the festival itself delivers a significant cultural and educational event to a rural area for all the residents to benefit from and enjoy, and in order to make the festival accessible to as many local people as possible, the festival additionally offers festival tickets at a 50% discounted rate to local people.

#### **Event Safety Management Plan and Noise Management Plan**

34. I have attached at **MH7** and **MH8** copies of the current Event Safety Management Plan (ESMP) and the Noise Management Plan (NMP) respectively. The Committee will appreciate that these are living documents and are the subject of on-going discussion, development and scrutiny by the Safety Advisory Group (SAG) of the licensing authority. The most recent SAG meeting took place on the 18 April 2024 and the documents are being reviewed in the light of the advice received.
35. Each of these documents have been developed in conjunction with our professional Health and Safety Consultant, Calvin Hanks. Calvin has been closely involved with HowTheLightGetsIn in Hay since 2017 and so is familiar not only with the nature of the festival but the application site. Full detail of Calvin Hanks experience can be found at Appendix 9 to the NMP.

#### **Event Safety Management Plan**

36. The ESMP has been designed in accordance with the Purple Guide, a nationally recognised guide to assist event organisers manage all aspects of health and safety in the setting up and running of events. The Purple Guide has been developed by the Events Industry Forum in consultation with the UK events industry including representatives from regional and national government and other agencies including the Health and Safety Executive.
37. At page 6 of the ESMP is an organogram that sets out the Event Safety roles and responsibilities, and on the subsequent pages details for what each of these roles involves. The festival management team comprises of festival manager, head of security and the safety advisor (Calvin Hanks, or in his absence another member of his team). The overall management of the event is co-ordinated from the Event Control centre (which we also refer to as the Production Office) which is located within the festival site. The organisational structure also includes an Accommodation and Field Manager who has primary

responsibility for the Campsite and Parking. Calvin Hanks will be attending the hearing on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May and can assist in answering any questions in relation to the ESMP and NMP.

38. A first draft of the ESMP, along with the security plan and steward plan was sent to the Licensing Authority on 4<sup>th</sup> April 2024.

#### Noise Management Plan

39. The NMP is referenced in the ESMP at page 44 and along with a number of other management plans is the subject of its own standalone plan.
40. A copy of the NMP can be found at **MH8**. The author of the NMP is Calvin Hanks.
41. The NMP relating to the HowTheLightGetsIn Festival in 2023 benefitted from detailed review by EHO who fed back their suggestions and the NMP was updated in the light of this so that all EHO concerns were addressed. All of those updates have been retained in the NMP attached to the current application. The introduction of a dedicated noise complaint hotline and the updated processes associated with it helped our communication and responsiveness to any concerns made by our neighbours.
42. With respect to the current licence application, EHO have suggested one further condition in relation to noise management, namely that: "The Premises Licence Holder or DPS must immediately comply with any request to adjust noise levels/frequency spectra made by an 'authorised person' (as defined by Section 13 of the Licensing Act 2003) or the Police". We have agreed to this, incorporated it into our NMP and as stated above the EHO representation to the application has been withdrawn.
43. As with HowTheLightGetsIn Festival in 2023, for the duration of the festival there will be a dedicated noise complaint hotline. This will remain in the Event Control Room for the duration of the festival and will be staffed for the duration of the festival. All relevant members of staff who will be working in the Production Office will be provided with training on the Noise Complaint Procedure which will include what action to take on receipt of a noise complaint; who to contact in the event of a noise complaint; to record what remedial action is taken in the event of a complaint and record any follow up action as required.
44. In the light of feedback from EHO and the 2023 SAG De-brief we have made further changes to the NMP for 2024:
- a. The noise complaint hotline will be kept open in the periods between the operating hours of the festival each day. At these times the hotline will be managed by the team operating the festival campsite. A copy of the noise complaint log will be kept on site and made available to members of the authority on request and will be provided to the licensing authority at the end of the festival.



- b. Changes to the positioning of music venues and speakers to reduce sound in direction of residential locations.
- c. More stewards at exits route from the site to reduce noise from those leaving the site late at night.

More details of items b and c above are set out in the section below headed Response to Representations & Letters of Support – see clause 55a.

### **Pre-Application Consultation – Licensing Authority and Local Residents**

- 45. In advance of submitting the application for the premises licence, we engaged in pre application consultation with the licensing authority as well as circulating a residents' engagement letter.
- 46. A pre application consultation email was sent to the Licensing Authority, and responsible authorities, on the 16 January 2024. This included an overview of the basis on which the application for the premises licence was going to be made as well as a copy of the draft operating schedule. A copy of this email can be found at **MH9**.
- 47. The only response received to this pre application consultation was from the Fire Officer who raised concerns about a 2nd fire exit from the site. As a consequence of this feedback we have created a new fire exit from the site which addresses these concerns.
- 48. As in previous years, I attended a Cusop Parish Council meeting where the HowTheLightGetsIn Festival was to be discussed. This year it took place on 13th March 2024. I listened to the concerns of the residents. This year there was more feedback relating to concerns regarding the festival campsite. Whilst the campsite falls outside the festival site (and outside of the scope of activities for which we are seeking a licence), in the light of those concerns, we have modified and improved the way the campsite will be managed this year – further detail on this is included in the Response to Representations & Letters of Support section below.
- 49. The residents and business engagement letter was distributed on the 15 February 2024 to the Bookers Edge housing development, the houses on Newport Street, Nantyglassdwr Lane and Wyeford Road, as well as the Millbank housing development. A copy was emailed to Cusop Parish Council, Hay Town Council and By the Wye Glamping.
- 50. A copy of the residents' engagement letter can be found at Appendix 7 in the NMP.

### **Submission of the Application**

- 51. The application for the premises licence was submitted and accepted by Herefordshire Council on the 7 March 2024.

52. The application was advertised in the Herefordshire Times on the 14th March 2024.

53. I also displayed 20 notices around the perimeter of the premises and photographs of the notices in place were sent to the Licensing Authority.

### **Response to Representations & Letters of Support**

54. We have looked carefully at the 10 representations against the application and 15 letters of support for the application (of which 2 were representations shared with us by Hereford Licencing and 13 which have been sent to us directly by local residents). Please see the 13 letters of support at **MH6**. 4 of the representations against the application were made by the same people who objected to the festival last year, despite there being no verified reports of excess noise made during the festival last year to our dedicated festival complaint hotline or complaints to the local authority. In addition, we have consulted with residents including those who have made representations and sought to include suggestions to further reduce any disturbance.

55. I have set out below our response to the primary issues that have been raised by those who have made representations against the application:

a) Noise

Throughout the history of HowTheLightGetsIn Festival in Hay, we have sought to minimise noise disruption to residents around the Festival site. The positive comments from the SAG de-brief (as set out above) are a demonstration of the festivals on-going commitment to work with the Licensing Authority and local residents.

The current Riverside location of the festival reflects a deliberate move to a site with no immediately adjacent residential dwellings. In addition, the nearest residential dwellings are separated from the festival site by a series of industrial/commercial buildings. Not only that, but the site is on a lower level to the industrial/commercial buildings so there is natural protection which substantially reduces the level of sound that can leave the site. The current festival location compares to where the festival began at the Globe at Hay where there were residential neighbours immediately adjacent to the festival site.

Whilst the current Riverside location of the festival provides strong mitigation to noise issues we are always open to carefully considering feedback from residents and responsible authorities. At the SAG Debrief held on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 2023 EHO advised that we should consider repositioning venues used for late night music to reduce noise impact on residents. As a result, this year we have made changes to the festival site plan. We are moving the Arena and Hat to the far end of the site, closest to the sewage works and furthest away from homes (c.200m). Other quieter venues have been moved to the end nearest to the residences. The International Tent – a venue which is used for music and is closer to residences than the newly positioned Arena and Hat - does not have any

events programmed post-10pm. In addition, speakers at our Riverside Disco Tent are no longer facing towards the river and By the Wye Glamping - they are now facing towards the sewage works. Taken together these changes should have a significant impact on reducing the overall sound levels at key sound monitoring locations, especially near homes. We also note several of the representations against the application refer to noise disturbance at local residences close to the festival site, and we hope the changes described above will help address this.

One of the representations suggests replacing the music of the Riverside Disco Tent with a silent disco. We have considered this option but in addition to changing the character of the festival it would be impractical to implement because festivalgoers often move between events on site which is integral to the atmosphere we create and the interaction it encourages between attendees.

We continue to take sound monitoring very seriously and employ a specialist consultant to carry this out. We are pleased to note several of the representations against the application do highlight that sound monitoring arrangements were improved for HowTheLightGetsIn 2023 vs the previous year and it is our intention to continue to treat this as a priority.

In response to specific issues raised in the representations regarding noise from people leaving the site, this year we will deploy more stewards to work alongside our security team in the Coop car park at closing time. They will encourage all our guests to proceed quietly through the town.

We also noted that some of the representations referred to noise on the campsite. We have modified and improved our management plan for the camp site to mitigate these issues. We have a night porter at the main campsite reception who will make hourly patrols on site. We will have a further night porter on the yurt field who will undertake further patrols. From 10pm until 8am there will be a member of the security team stationed on the campsite to support the night porters, with the specific goal of addressing any noise or other disturbance at the campsite.

b) Closing time

Several of the representations include the suggestion that the closing time should be brought forward from 1am to 11pm or midnight, on the grounds of

- (i) preventing crime and disorder; and/or
- (ii) preventing public nuisance due to noise from the festival site and/or those leaving the site.

Taking these in turn:

- (i) Crime and disorder
  - The Police have not made a representation to the application and commented at the SAG debrief that there were “no issues” with the festival in 2023.

- If we were to close at the same time as Hay Literary Festival, this would potentially create a much greater problem for Hay in terms of anti-social behaviour as there will be more people exiting both festivals at the same time. Our attendees may then congregate in the centre of town, which already creates disturbance to residents.
  - Throughout the 4 years the festival has been on the Riverside site (2018, 2019, 2022 and 2023) there have been no cases of crime and disorder on Newport Street. Where there is some disturbance is in the town of Hay itself where people congregate following the end of the Hay Literary Festival, in search of things to do in the late evening.
  - We are careful to deploy late night stewards to manage those leaving the festival, as noted in section 3.2 of our ESMP included at **MH7**. For HowTheLightGetsIn 2024 (and future years), as noted above, we will increase the number of stewards overseeing people leaving the festival site.
- (ii) Preventing public nuisance due to noise from the festival site and/or those leaving the site
- We already have lower decibel levels after 11pm as part of our proposed licence conditions and we deliver against this through our Noise Management Plan at **MH8**.
  - If there is loud conversation when festivalgoers are leaving the site, our late-night stewards ask people to lower their voices, and to ensure there is a positive atmosphere.
  - As described in the HowTheLightGetsIn Festival Background section above, many steps have already been taken over the years - with regards to the location, duration and closing time of HowTheLightGetsIn Festival - with minimisation of disturbance to local residents in mind.
  - The current festival site is further out from the centre of Hay than the Globe at Hay which is where HowTheLightGetsIn started. The duration of the festival is just 4 days (and 3 nights). The last of those has an afternoon closing time, so in practice it is just the first 3 days of the festival which is in question here. That compares to the 10 day festival that HowTheLightGetsIn was previously. In 2022 the closing time was already brought forward to 1am vs the 2am it was for the preceding 10 years, 2009-2019.
  - As explained in the 'HowTheLightGetsIn - Ethos' section above, should the closing time be brought forward further from 1am, it would damage the character of the festival. This would inevitably restrict ticket sales, as the unique atmosphere of HowTheLightGetsIn would be undermined, and the offering to those festivalgoers particularly interested in the evening music would be weakened. In addition, it would put downward pressure on achievable ticket prices

as the overall scale and offering of the festival is reduced. In combination therefore a further pulling forward of the closing time would lead to a substantial reduction in revenue.

- As a result, and given that HowTheLightGetsIn Festival in Hay already runs at a deficit, bringing the closing time forward from the current time of 1am would force us to consider the overall financial viability of the festival.

c) Pedestrian safety

The feedback from Highways following last year's festival was that they had had no issues.

We have again applied for a temporary reduction to 20mph from the Dulas Brook to beyond the festival vehicle entrance which has been approved, along with the provision of traffic lights for a pedestrian crossing.

Whilst highways are not the responsibility of the festival we do deploy late night stewards to manage people leaving the site.

There has been no report of any injury to anyone on Newport Street from previous festivals at the site.

d) Campsite safety

We note campsite safety is referenced in several of the representations. We are therefore pleased to share our already planned steps to enhance the safety of the campsite.

We will have increased staffing levels across the campsite as well as the parking field (which is adjacent to the campsite), to ensure tents are only erected in designated camping areas, all of which are suitably separated from the parking field. Furthermore, we will have new and improved signage in the parking field which says 'no camping'.

We will have in place specific processes for identifying which traders and artists will need space for the campervans and have a designated area for this.

e) Parking

One of the representations queries the provision of parking and how this is communicated. We provide parking for over 450 cars within easy walking distance to the HowTheLightGetsIn Festival site. This parking is advertised on the festival website as well as through physical signage during the festival. Our provision of parking is also referred to our ESMP (section 9.1 of the Event Management Plan at **MH7**). Our experience from previous festival is that the parking provision is

more than sufficient and we do not run out of space. Furthermore, we are always able to increase the parking space available by extending further into the field so will never be in a position that we are full.

Six of the representations make comments about illegal parking and suggest the provision parking cones on Newport Street and Bookers Edge. We have responded to the requests from some of the Bookers Edge residents regarding parking cones for within the Bookers Edge estate and we have already purchased these and we will ensure they are distributed in advance of the festival.

We will of course continue to work with the Police and Highways in relation to the issue of parking.

f) Broken glass

One of the representations states that there is evidence of broken glass in the area surrounding the festival site. At the festival bars we already decant all our drinks into biodegradable disposable containers. We do offer bottles of wine and champagne for sale but the number of these sold is minimal (less than c.20 of each over the entire weekend). However, in order to monitor this situation this year we will ensure our stewards in the arrivals tent confiscate any visible glass from festival goers as they leave the site.

In addition, our little pickers will, from this year, be doing a street patrol between the Riverside Festival Site and the Globe each morning of the festival.

g) Glamping business opposite festival site

One of the representations is from Dawn Farnworth of By The Wye Glamping site which is a glamping business located on the opposite side of the river to the HowTheLightGetsIn Festival site, and offers 6 glamping tents.

Creation of the By The Wye glamping site came after the festival was first held at its current location, hence the By The Wye glamping site was built in the knowledge that it was opposite a site used for a festival which took place annually.

By The Wye glamping site is not one of the noise monitoring locations. The noise monitoring points were agreed with in consultation with the EHO for the HowTheLightGetsIn Festival. Nevertheless, we have always been open to responding to their concerns including attendance by our noise management consultant.

We have also, on several occasions, sought to engage with By The Wye Glamping in the light of their concerns.

In the lead up to HowTheLightGetsIn 2022, we enquired about purchasing their accommodation as part of what we provide to our speakers. However, we were informed that wasn't possible as their accommodation had already been booked. Following issues raised by By The Wye Glamping after the 2022 festival, in June 2022 we expressed interest in purchasing all their accommodation for the next festival (2023), however this offer was not taken forward. The same is true in respect of the upcoming festival in 2024. We have expressed interest in purchasing their accommodation and have not heard back.

h) Laser lighting

The representation from By The Wye Glamping mentions the use of laser lighting. We only did this in two former festivals both of which were pre Covid. We have not used laser lighting in festivals held in 2022 and 2023 and we do not intend to do this again.

i) 5 year application

HowTheLightGetsIn initially operated on a Temporary Event Notice, and as the festival developed we moved on to an annual premises licence. Having now successfully had annual premises licences for several years, it is a sensible and natural progression for this established festival to move to a 5 year licence. This is also in line with our lease for the Riverside Festival Site which is long term and covers all of the next 5 years.

3 of the representations raise concern that the application is for 5 years, on the basis that this will prevent further consultation or review over the 5 year period. This is not the case.

Firstly, following each festival we will engage with the SAG by way of a de-brief as we did following the festival in 2023, and will adapt and update our operating practices as appropriate as we have done for this year's festival following feedback received.

Secondly, I am advised that anyone (be it the licensing authority, responsible authority, local businesses or residents) can bring the licence back before the licensing committee by way of a review. We have shown an active commitment to work with all stakeholders and this will continue should the licence for 5 years be granted.

### Response to the Letters of Support

- 56.** We have received 15 letters of support (2 were Representations in support of the licence, and 13 are letters of support sent to us directly). We have attached the 13 letters of support sent to us directly at **MH6**. 11 of these are from our residential neighbours and 2 are from local businesses.

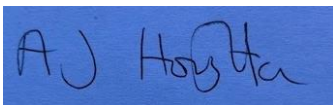
This feedback clearly indicates that many of the residents of Bookers Edge, Newport Street and Millbank development that are closest to the HowTheLightGetsIn festival site do not find the festival intrusive in relation to late night noise, antisocial behaviour or disturbance from traffic.

The letters of support also refer to the cultural benefits HowTheLightGetsIn brings to the community and several of the letters additionally refer to the employment benefits to the local area as well as the wider economic contribution to the shops and businesses in town.

## **Conclusion**

- 57.** HowTheLightGetsIn is a philosophy and music festival with unique character which over the years has built up a significant following and reputation being able to attract high profile speakers and performers to the event.
- 58.** The feedback from the 2023 event was positive and that the updated policies and procedures had led to, in the words of the EHO at the SAG de-brief, an “overall an improvement on previous years – which is very positive.”
- 59.** We are confident that with the robust procedures that we have in place, including and in particular those stated within the further enhanced ESMP and NMP, that the event will be a success, causing minimal if any disruption to the local residents.
- 60.** HowTheLightGetsIn Festival has a substantial positive impact on Hay and the local area. This is demonstrated both through our Economic Impact Assessment and strong local support over many years.
- 61.** The closing time of the festival was already brought forward from 2am to 1am in 2022 and any further requirement to bring the closing time earlier would damage the unique character of the festival and its revenue potential, and would therefore force us to consider the overall viability of the festival in Hay.
- 62.** We have considered the 10 representations made against the licence carefully and responded to all the points made.
- 63.** More widely on the subject of noise disturbance this is something we take very seriously and act on wherever possible as can be seen by the changes made in previous years to the location, duration and closing time of the festival as well as the further changes as outlined above that we propose for the 2024 festival.
- 64.** We will continue to work with the Licensing Authority, SAG and local residents in bringing to Hay a festival that will benefit the wider community and one that Hay can be proud to host.





**Mandy Houghton**

**Dated the 24 April 2024**

**Attachments**

**MH 1 – Email form Sophie Hay dated 10 July 2023**

**MH 2 – Minutes from SAG De-brief August 2023**

**MH3 – Minutes from SAG De-brief October 2023**

**MH4 – HowTheLightGetsIn 2024 Hay Print Programme**

**MH5 – Economic Impact Assessment**

**MH6 – Letters of support**

**MH7 – Event Safety Management Plan**

**MH8 – Noise Management Plan**

**MH9 – Pre application consultation email**