

Frequently Asked Questions

We have produced this document in response to the objections that we have received to our application to extend our events license at Anglesey Abbey, to include Hoe Fen and The Orchard.

We hope that this document helps to explain the thinking behind our application and sets-out our intentions for the future. We recognise that we will not be able to appease all of the concerns raised but we hope that some of our responses will be reassuring for many neighbours.

We are genuinely committed to being a good neighbour, whilst acknowledging we might have handled this application better.

1. Why do you need to extend the license now?

Our current license does not include the whole Property. For several years now we have successfully applied for temporary events licenses to use The Orchard as part of our Winter Lights event. The primary intention for this application is to 'tidy up' what seems to be an anomaly and reduce the amount of administrative work for both our staff and the Local Authority each year.

2. Why is the Winter Lights running for more nights this year?

We are a charity and the Winter Lights is our biggest fundraiser. Without this event we would find it extremely difficult to keep up with all of the important conservation work required to keep Anglesey Abbey so special.

We know that the event is extremely popular with local people, including many of our closest neighbours. Last year we sold out completely within just a few weeks. We are trying to strike a balance between meeting that local demand, raising the funds that we need for the year and also minimising disruption for neighbours.

By spreading tickets across 14 consecutive nights we are able to accommodate more people without putting additional pressure on local roads and our car parks. It also means we do not need to extend the event times later into the evening.

3. Given how big Anglesey Abbey is, why can't you use other areas which are further away from local residents?

The only event we are currently planning for The Orchard is the Winter Lights. We use this area for the Winter Lights because it is on the Winter Walk which is both accessible and safer for people to use during dark evenings. It is also an area that we can access easily throughout the evening via Lode so that we can stay on top of litter removal and service the Food and Beverage outlets.

It is not always helpful to compare our events to other National Trust sites that hold similar events. We have lots of formal gardens that have high historical significance which limits how they can be used. This is not always the case at other places – especially those that have more open space and countryside. We constantly have to balance the benefits of our fundraising with the potential long-term harm to the gardens.

4. The new license means that you can hold events every night of the year.

We can see how the new application would raise concerns related to more events being held in The Orchard throughout year, which is not our intention. **We will volunteer a condition to our application that restricts the use of The Orchard to a set number of evenings per year.**

5. The smell of food from The Orchard is unpleasant.

Smells can be very subjective – what seems unpleasant to one person might be very appealing or nostalgic to somebody else. As highlighted above, we only have plans to use The Orchard for the Winter Lights which is at a time of the year when most people would have their windows closed and would not be using their gardens to relax in or for drying washing.

6. The music played is too loud and is repetitive.

We are aware that noise could be disruptive to neighbours if not managed correctly. Last year clear measures were taken to minimise the disturbance caused by live music – by facing speakers away from our neighbours, by measuring the noise to ensure it was always within the limits set for this type of event, by selecting musical acts that are more suitable (eg acoustic guitars) and by stopping all music by 9.30pm at the latest.

Whilst we appreciate that the music may seem repetitive, there is a limit to how many songs each performer can play. We can certainly encourage them to vary their sets as much as possible.

Having live music adds real value to the event and helps to create a very relaxed atmosphere. This in turn helps to set the tone for the event and reduces other anti-social problems that other similar events held in other locations have had in the past.

7. No staff are available if we have a problem.

We always have lots of staff and volunteers managing the Winter Lights event who communicate by radio. This includes having somebody permanently stationed in The Orchard.

We also have 3 nominated 'Key Reps' who are members of staff that can respond to any issues or incidents 24/7 throughout the year. All three of our Key Reps live on or within a 2 minute walk of the Property.

We will be very happy to supply local residents with a direct phone number that they can call during events should they have any problems.

8. We believe the Winter Lights event to pose a fire risk.

The National Trust has a dedicated team of Operational Risk Business Partners who advise on all matters relating to health and safety. This includes all events as well as the day-to-day running of Europe's biggest conservation charity. At Anglesey Abbey we run a visitor business that welcomes 400,000 visitors a year and we are open on 362 days a year.

Agenda Item 3 – Further information supplied by the applicant after agenda publication

The Winter Lights event is risk-assessed and appropriate measures are taken to ensure the safety of our staff, volunteers, visitors, neighbours and buildings. All catering suppliers have to meet our standards and we will check all of their credentials before agreeing to them being part of our event.

We note that some neighbours have raised concerns about ‘errant smokers’ dropping cigarette butts but we can confirm that no smoking is allowed at Anglesey Abbey at any time, including during our events.

9. Local roads get blocked by cars accessing events.

We accept that there have been some traffic problems caused by events at Anglesey Abbey in the past, but these were a number of years ago and before we built additional car parking capacity. We are very aware of our responsibilities to minimise disruption and use different methods to manage traffic coming to our site. For a number of years the Winter Lights event has been a ticketed event with defined time-slots for entry to avoid congestion and capacity issues. We also hire professional car park stewards to manage the parking on site and ensure that we can accommodate everybody within our own parking facilities.

We acknowledge that there may be some people who park in Mill Road in order to access land managed by the National Trust which is outside of Anglesey Abbey. This land contains public footpaths and so there is very little that we can do to stop this beyond allowing these walkers to park in our car parks for free – which we currently do during our normal opening hours. We do not see this issue being directly relevant to our application.

10. Bright Lights are very disruptive to neighbouring properties.

The nature of the Winter Lights event means that we will always need to have lights on during the evening. As in previous years we will ensure that no lights are pointing towards neighbouring properties. We are aware that there was one night when some lights were mistakenly left on but this was a single error. We will ensure that all lights are switched off as soon as possible after the event finishes at 9.30pm each night and we will ask our contractors to prioritise the areas closest to the Orchard. By providing neighbours with a dedicated phone number we will be able to respond should any lights be left on in future.