

Ref: Notice of Licensing Act 2003 Hearing: Application for a Premises Licence – Forestry England Cannock Chase Winter Event

Dear Cannock Chase Licencing Team,

Further to the submission of the above premises licence application, we are writing to provide a formal update following the resident meetings held on 7 August 2026 and our review of the representations received in relation to the licence application.

We have carefully considered the matters raised by local residents and, in response, have reviewed the proposed operational arrangements to ensure that the proposed illuminated light trail event continues to respond appropriately to local circumstances, residential amenity, highway considerations and the wider premises licence application.

We hope this demonstrates our genuine desire to act as a responsible landowner and business, while also balancing the need for Forestry England to be financially sustainable and self-funded. As an organisation, our objective is to care for the nation's forests and provide access to them for more than 300 million visitors each year across England. This brings significant ongoing costs to ensure our forests and associated facilities remain safe, accessible, suitable and well maintained. Please note, whilst Forestry England receives some government funding, we must generate most of the income needed to care for the nation's forests themselves, through sources such as memberships, timber sales, events and visitor activities. Our proposed family friendly, illuminated light trail falls under once such income generation method to enable us to directly reinvest funds back into the nation's forest for the public to enjoy.

We believe the amendments and considerations outlined below demonstrate our willingness to listen and respond positively, while ensuring that the proposal remains commercially viable and supports our organisation's wider objectives.

We would like to thank those residents who have taken the time to engage with us and provide their views. We hope that this update provides reassurance regarding our approach and our commitment to being a considerate and responsible neighbour.

Formally, we would like to revise the following terms within our premises licence application:

- **Removal of Exhibition of films** as a requested form of regulated entertainment.
- **Reduction in the supply of alcohol timings** to 15:30–22:00.
- **Reduction in recorded music timings** to 15:30–22:30.
- **Reduction of the red-line licensed premises area** to the area shown on the enclosed plan.

We would also like to take this opportunity to clarify a number of points raised within the representations received, and to address some of the concerns that have been highlighted.

We hope that the revisions and additional information provided below demonstrate our willingness to work constructively with the Council, residents and other stakeholders, while ensuring that the event can operate safely, responsibly and with appropriate consideration for the surrounding area.

We have set out our responses to the key matters raised below:

Who we are and why are we doing this proposed event?

Forestry England is part of the Forestry Commission, and we are responsible for managing and caring for the nation's 1,500 forests and woodlands. We look after more land and more trees than any other organisation in the country and welcome 313 million visitors each year.

Whilst Forestry England receives some government funding, we must generate most of the income needed to care for the nation's forests ourselves. Maintaining forests is a year-round responsibility: paths and visitor facilities need upkeep, trees must be planted and protected, habitats require careful management. Public funding only covers a small proportion of this work, so any funds raised are reinvested directly into the forests. Our mission is to connect everyone with England's forests by creating and caring for woodlands, to help businesses grow, and for people to enjoy.

Forestry England collaborates with responsible parties to help generate revenue through commercial activity (such as events) which is essential to sustaining these landscapes for people, wildlife and future generations, keeping forests safe, accessible, healthy and thriving. Introducing new people to the nation's forests is a key objective for us so they too can experience the wellbeing benefits of time spent out in nature.

Addressing concerns around this event:

1) Highways, Traffic and Parking

Parking is one of the principal concerns raised by our neighbours. Having listened carefully to those concerns, we are committed to making practical and proportionate amendments to our proposed operation. We can confirm **that free parking will be offered to customers attending the illuminated light trail**. We have limited the total number of cars per operational event day to 920, with a maximum of 600 cars at any one time. Customers will still be required to obtain a parking ticket in advance; however, this ticket will be provided free of charge with a paid illuminated light trail ticket. This arrangement will enable parking demand to be managed and monitored effectively, while helping to minimise any pressure on surrounding residential streets and the local highway network.

Once the available parking allocation has reached capacity, no further event tickets will be released. This provides a clear operational safeguard to ensure that attendance remains aligned with the parking capacity available on site reducing unmanaged

overspill parking in nearby areas and will removing the incentive to park outside of the forest footprint.

Furthermore, the proposed event would operate on a pulse-format basis. It is therefore materially different from a festival-style event, as visitor arrivals and departures will be staggered throughout the operating hours rather than concentrated into a single arrival or departure window. Based on current parking activity at Cannock Chase Forest, the anticipated level of parking demand would be comparable to a normal, busy weekend which has limited disruption to the highways surrounding the forest. ANPR readings across a 12-month period from 2025-2026 confirms parking regularly exceeds well over 1,000 cars parked over several months of the year, with the record number of cars in 2025 being 1,897.

2) Length of the event run

A further matter raised related to the length of the tenancy. The indicative operational live period comprises 61 operational days between 22 October 2026 and 3 January 2027 including the 1 night which is exclusively for select residents to experience the illuminated light trail free of charge before opening to the public. While the original proposal sought flexibility to extend beyond 3 January 2027, we can now confirm, in direct response to resident feedback, that no such extension will be pursued (subject to adverse weather cancellation). This amendment is intended to provide certainty for residents and to lessen the overall duration of the event.

3) The impact of access for visitors coming to Cannock Chase

The illuminated light trail will occupy less than approximately 0.5% of the Forestry England managed Cannock Chase area while it is operational. Forestry England manages around 1,793 hectares of freehold land at Cannock Chase for open access, where the public has a right to roam. The area subject to restricted access for the illuminated light trail will be approx. 7.5 hectares. Although this represents only a small proportion of the wider managed area, access to the restricted event trail area will still remain open to visitors from dawn/early morning until early afternoon, with the exact timings to be confirmed. Anticipated access times are:

Dawn to early afternoon – open to non-ticket holders

Early afternoon to gate open – phased closures to allow event preparation

Gate open to gate closed – event ticket holders only

Please note the vast majority of amenities at Cannock Chase will remain open throughout the event run, these include:

- Cafe, Bike shop and Go Ape including sundown sessions
- Welcome point and forest office normal working hours

- Toilets VC
- Main car park during normal opening but early closing events parking from 4pm
- Room on the broom trail (updated new winter version)
- Main play area
- Den building area
- Pedal and play excluding leaf zone
- Gruffalo orienteering open till 3pm
- Dog Agility
- Ladyhill Trail (accessible trail) open until lunchtime
- Pine needle glade bookable learning and wellbeing space
- Disc golf 5 out 9 holes reduce price during events run
- Fair oak trail
- Perry's Trail
- Follow the Dog
- Monkey trail
- Running trails
- Concert open space
- Heritage trail

4) Noise and light pollution

Lighting and Light Spill

The trail is designed to light the visitor route and the installations only. Lighting is directed downward and inward, with shielding, snoots and barn doors used to control spill into surrounding woodland and habitat. No sky-tracking beams, searchlights or upward-directed high-output effects are used. There are no lasers used as part of the installation

All event lighting is extinguished once the trail is clear of the public each evening, and technical infrastructure is closed in line with the 22:30 curfew, so that the site returns to dark for the majority of each night. Working lights during build and de-rig are directed to the working area only and are switched off when not in use.

Noise Management Plan

Continuous noise monitoring will be carried out throughout the event using a static sound meter located on the boarder of the site at the nearest noise sensitive property. A live feed will be remotely monitored by a Marshall Grey (competent acoustic consultants) engineer throughout the event with trigger levels identified based on the existing ambient sound levels in the area and the results of the sound propagation testing prior to the event.

The Marshall Grey engineer will notify the Production team in the unlikely event that the sound levels at the monitoring location approach the agreed limits.
Baseline sound levels taken on 17 August 2026.

Start Time	Sound Pressure Level, dB re: 20µPa			
	L _{Aeq,T}	L _{AFMax,T}	L _{AFMin,T}	L _{A90,T}
16.00	49	73.1	30.1	32.3
16.15	42	60.3	30.5	33.3
16.30	39	52.3	30.6	33.1
16.45	39	64.2	28.8	33
20.00	42.4	63.8	30.1	32.8
20.15	42.3	60.4	28.9	31.3
20.30	42.8	64.4	29.1	32.1
21.00	43.8	61.1	30.6	32.9

5) Security and responsible service of Alcohol

The event is intended to be a family-friendly, illuminated light trail. Based on our experience from similar winter events we have hosted previously, only around one in five customers typically purchase an alcoholic drink, and this is normally limited to a single hot alcoholic beverage, such as a mulled wine. This is largely due to the event taking place outdoors during the winter and the nature of the family experience.

Over the eight years we have hosted these illuminated light trail events, we have had no incidents of anti-social behaviour. We believe this is reflective of the low-risk audience profile, with visitors attending primarily to enjoy the light trail and the family experience, rather than to consume alcohol.

Nevertheless, we take the safety and security of our visitors, staff and the wider site seriously. We will appoint a reputable security provider and have CCTV in operation onsite to help ensure appropriate security measures are in place and maintained throughout the event.

We will also ensure that alcohol is served responsibly and in accordance with all relevant requirements. As part of the event paperwork that we are required to provide to the local authority and Safety Advisory Group, we have submitted an Alcohol Management Plan outlining the measures we will have in place to manage the responsible sale and consumption of alcohol during the event.

We have adopted several conditions, recommended by Staffordshire Police, as part of the licencing consultation.

6) Ecology

While ecology is not a licensing condition, we appreciate concerns raised in relation to ecology and the potential impact of the event on the local environment.

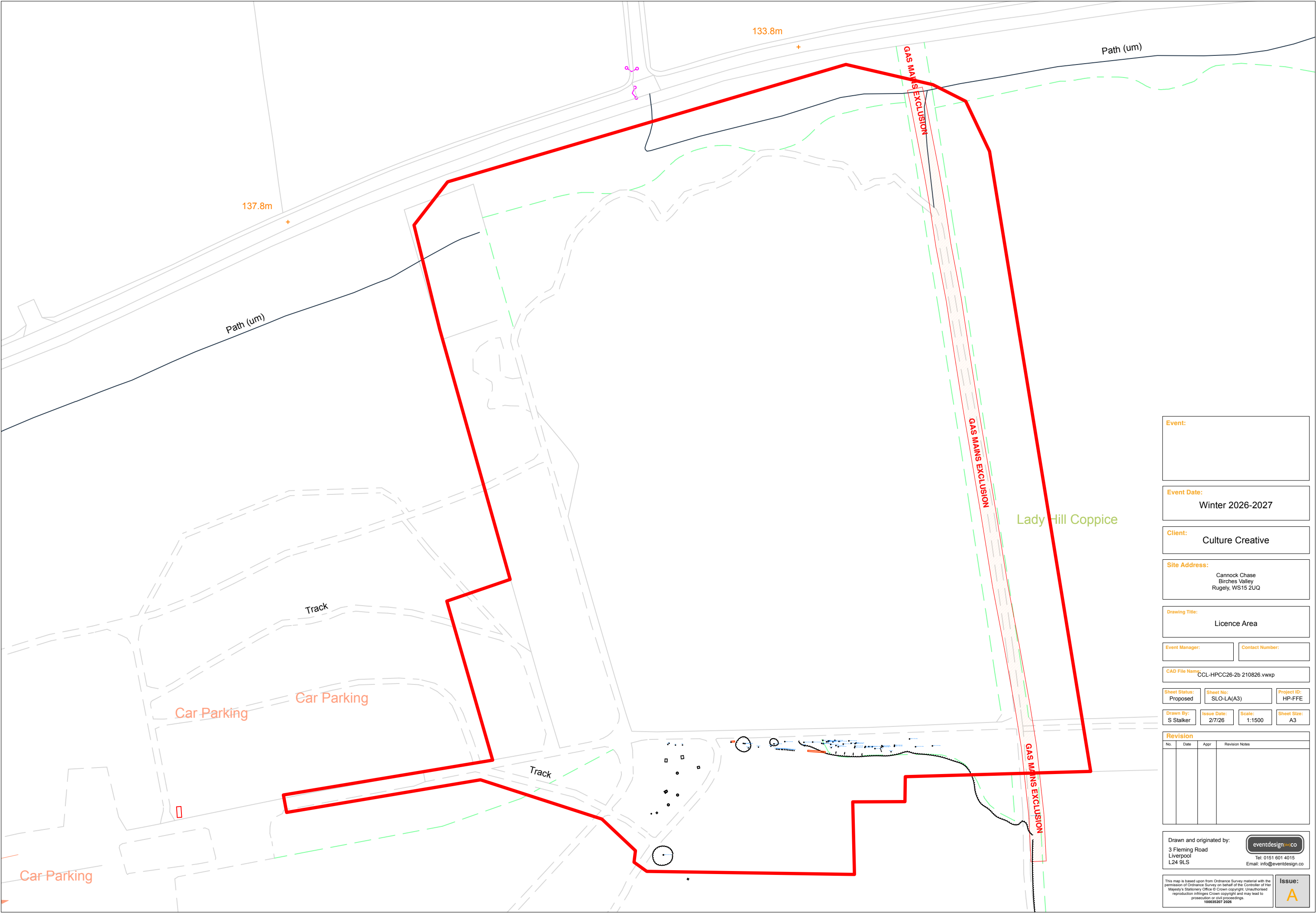
Forestry England's expert ecology team undertook a Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) and report which concluded there would be no adverse ecology impact on the proposed trail route.

Forestry England's District Wildlife Manager and local Wildlife Ranger also reviewed the potential impact of the proposed illuminated light trail on wild deer. They consider that the proposed mitigation measures, shared with appropriate local authority departments, provide a proportionate and managed approach.

Furthermore, a reputable and professional waste management contractor will be appointed to ensure that appropriate litter and waste management measures are maintained across the site throughout the event. This will include the ongoing monitoring and removal of litter and waste to help ensure the site is kept clean and well managed.

We trust that these amendments further clarify and demonstrate a constructive and responsive approach to the matters raised and will assist the Council in its ongoing assessment of the application.

Kind regards,
Forestry England Events Team



Event:

Event Date: Winter 2026-2027

Client: Culture Creative

Site Address:
Cannock Chase
Birches Valley
Rugely, WS15 2UQ

Drawing Title: Licence Area

Event Manager: **Contact Number:**

CAD File Name: CCL-HPCC26-2b 210826.vwxp

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