

SIMON ROBSON

STATEMENT

1. I am the Operations Managing Director of the holding company that now manages and operates the wedding venue at Combermere Abbey. Our company took a 20 year lease of the premises on 1st January 2022 and our responsibility for the delivery and management of events commenced at that point too.
2. Previously, events at Combermere Abbey were run by the Combermere Abbey Estate. They offered the hire of the existing pavilion alongside the Glasshouse (which mainly operates as the dedicated licenced civil ceremony area) within the Walled Garden. The client would then appoint separate and independent outside caterers and bar operators, who then in turn would provide services within the pavilion for the event. This was the practice for around ten years.
3. The company operates a number of wedding venues up and down the country including Syrencot, Pelham House and the Old Palace at Chester.
4. We currently manage operations at 13 wedding venues in the UK and understand first-hand the many benefits of having in place a single operator at a site. The most significant advantage is that every event is managed in an entirely consistent format. In turn, this ensures that best practice is employed at all times which, amongst other gains ensures that our crucial responsibilities to neighbours are met reliably every time an event takes place.
5. On 28th October 2020, Cheshire East Council granted planning permission for the erection of a pavilion as replacement of the existing (and current) temporary

marquee at Combermere Abbey. The new pavilion will cover exactly the same footprint as the existing one, but the structure will be more robust and, once constructed, will have better noise attenuation properties than currently exist.

6. The pavilion is scheduled be installed at the start of 2023 between January and March and the scope of the wedding business (i.e., a place to get married and afterward celebrate with family and friends) will remain exactly as before. In the meantime, the existing pavilion remains in use and we will ensure that events that take place in this space will be strictly controlled and regulated. We shall install a noise limiter as an interim measure. It is hoped that the noise levels can be set with the assistance of the EHO.
7. The new pavilion is being designed to better accommodate the demands of a party whilst also creating a space more in keeping with garden itself – all of this whilst being mindful of our overall local responsibilities. We are determined to develop a successful business which will be of increasing value to the local economy.
8. Combermere Abbey Estate engaged with our business early last year, and together we developed a sustainable plan to deliver events and, for the first time, offer food created, cooked and served within the site itself and, wherever possible, by local people.
9. We inherited a number of historic bookings from Combermere Abbey Estate that include the use of fireworks. There are 3 in June (9th, 15th and 30th) one in July (16th) one on September 1st and the final one on 1st July 2023. We have to honour these, but in recognition of the residents' concerns it is our intention to cease all fireworks after 1st July 2023. In the meantime, we have stipulated on these bookings that only the local pyrotechnic contractor and only low noise fireworks can be used. The

displays will last 5 minutes and must be completed by 9pm. We will email all the local residents on the list provided by Combermere Abbey Estate, together with any other email addresses that the council will supply us with. Additionally, our website will contain our email address for any resident that wishes to be kept informed of our events, together with the mobile telephone number of the DPS (Zachary Motrom).

10. Whilst the venue has already operated for the last 30 years with a licence in place, we seek today to simply regularise its terms and, equally, to agree its limits which a) allows us to run a successful local business and b) manage it in such a way so as not to cause a nuisance to our neighbours.
11. Additionally, and in acknowledgement of the representations, we have amended our application and now no longer seek a terminal hour later than that which we already have.
12. All of the above, together with the submission of our noise management plan, is offered within this application in order to provide confidence that the venue buildings and outside spaces will be correctly managed to the complete satisfaction of everyone.
13. We wish to be here for the long term and as a valued part of the local community, coexisting happily with our neighbours and bringing employment, amenity and prosperity to the area as a high-quality hospitality business. The business currently already employs directly on site 6 full time staff and a team of casual workers, with plans to recruit further staff. We already generate significant trade for surrounding suppliers and the tourism and hospitality industry.

14. **In summary:** We are not looking to create an antisocial 24/7 party venue; we simply want to trade successfully, operating in a way that does not create any nuisance to our neighbours.

Simon Robson

Managing Director Operations

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