



Approval for The Foundry Sheffield to apply for an alcohol licence

Background

The Foundry Sheffield are requesting approval to apply for an alcohol licence. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, 9% of our earned income was through conferences, events and meetings in the Victoria Hall's Main Hall. In the last financial year, where we have been fully operational again, albeit with some social distance restrictions for 7-8 months, the earned income from the Victoria Hall Main Hall totalled 15.6% of our earned income – almost double what it was prior to COVID. Thanks to the support of the Sheffield Methodist District, we have been able to remove the fixed seating from in the Main Hall, which has increased opportunities for multiple uses within the Hall. The Foundry Sheffield feel the next step to increase this further is to offer a limited alcohol serving.

In August 2022 we had 3 big event enquiries which did not convert into bookings due to not having an alcohol licence, these were 2 conferences and a black-tie dinner. This could have generated an increase in earnings of an extra £3,000; over the space of a year this could equate to £36,000. This would double the amount of income generated from Main Hall bookings in the last financial year. Another example of an enquiry we have had is for a regular candlelight classical concert who wanted to offer 1 glass of wine with each ticket. The company originally wanted to secure 12 slots over the next year, however without the alcohol licence, have agreed to just one performance. This would generate sustainable income, which then goes back into the building or supporting the charities that are using the building to help the people of Sheffield who are in dire need.

The intention in having an alcohol licence, is not to generate income from alcohol sales, but to increase the conferences held at Victoria Hall. We will not allow any events where the main focus is alcohol but will be incidental to the event. For example, a beer festival would not be allowed. The amounts of alcohol allowed would be strictly controlled of no more than 2 drinks per person. We will only stock bottled beer, cider and wine; all drinks will be pre-ordered, ideally as part of a ticket and a token system will be used.

The Victoria Hall building is substantial and needs considerable amount of repair and improvement, to enable us to ensure the building continues to be 'an intentional place that demonstrates the love of God (without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, age, race or of political, religious or other opinions) for the City of Sheffield and its gathered communities of partners, stakeholders, leaseholders licensees and clients.'

The Foundry Sheffield need to increase the current offering for conferences and events to encourage more use of the Main Hall space, therefore generating an increased income to reinvest back into the improvement and continued running of Victoria Hall.

Considerations – other users

The Foundry Sheffield prioritises the work and partnerships with voluntary and other organisations and inhabitants of Sheffield in a common effort to relieve poverty and advance education, and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare, recreation and leisure time occupation, and to relieve unemployment, with the objects of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants. Several of the user groups at Victoria Hall work with vulnerable adults who may be at a heightened risk of suffering from addictions, and those who do not drink alcohol due to religious or personal

beliefs and experiences. We will be putting safeguards in place to ensure that any other groups using the building would never be exposed to a setting where alcohol was served or available. The following precautions will be in place;

- Any alcohol stock will be stored in locked cupboards, in Foundry staff areas. It would only be accessible through a member of the Foundry Management team, who holds the key.
- Routine and non-routine stock checks will take place to ensure all alcohol is accounted for.
- No more than 2 drinks per person will be permitted, so as not to promote excessive drinking.
- Where there is an event in the Main Hall, a separate entrance is used so that the crossover of events or activities does not happen. This is already in place as part of safeguarding our vulnerable groups.
- No alcohol will be available or permitted for any church services, events or bookings.
- A rigorous sensible drinking policy will be followed, see the draft policy document in appendix 2.

The Foundry Sheffield value every individual who accesses any service or provision at Victoria Hall and our biggest priority will be to ensure that nobody is negatively affected by the introduction of an alcohol licence.

The Foundry Sheffield will evaluate the effectiveness of these safeguards regularly and provide a report detailing the efficacy of holding a licence after one year if we are given permission to apply for a licence.

Experience From Others

The Foundry Sheffield have drawn on experience from Westminster Central Hall and St Saviourgate York, both of these Methodist Halls operate in a similar way to The Foundry and Victoria Hall Methodist. Both of these venues had to achieve conference centre status to request a licence from TMCP. They adopt a sensible drinking policy and have never had any concerns raised since the licence has been in place. The conditions of the licence in these venues states that alcohol is not allowed in the main worship space, however The Foundry Sheffield would like to be able to serve alcohol in the Main Hall.

Standing order 922 states 'The sale or use of alcoholic drinks is not permitted in that part of the relevant premises in which worship has been identified as the primary use.' The Main Hall is used for worship twice a week on average, however the church congregation utilise 35 Chapel Walk for midweek praise, worship, bible studies and missional outreach work. Up to 6 days per week, the Main Hall is used for orchestra rehearsals, multi-agency charities support drop in, concerts, conferences and meetings.

When asked about how Central Hall Westminster manage the policy day-to-day, Sarah Franczak, CEO said *'From our perspective at Westminster enforcing the policy is straightforward. We mention the 'sensible drinks' approach from the outset of initial enquiry, it's also on our website, in our proposals and our contract so the message is enforced throughout the customer journey. Some clients do ask for more, we have discretion according to the nature of their event, the demographic of those attending, how much food they've eaten etc. If the client clearly wants more or wants to be able to do a cash bar we are comfortable to advise that we are not the right venue for them and turn the enquiry down.'*

Permissions Needed

We have discussed these changes with The Foundry Sheffield board of Trustees and Victoria Hall Methodist Church Leadership Team, acting on behalf of church council who have both supported this application. As per Standing Order 922, The Foundry Sheffield must seek approval from the District Policy Committee, if this approval is given, we will then take it to the Trustees for Methodist Church Purposes.

Appendix 1: Standing Order 922

Intoxicants. (1) Subject to clauses (3) and (4) below and to Standing Order 926 the supply, sale or use of intoxicants on Methodist premises is not permitted in any circumstances, nor may Methodist premises be used in such a way as to advertise or promote, whether directly or by means of sponsored events, the sale or use of intoxicants. Activities forbidden on Methodist premises by this Standing Order may not take place elsewhere in the name of the Church, with certain exceptions (S.O. 014(3)). For those recommendations of the 1987 report upon responsible attitudes to alcohol (Through a Glass Darkly) directed to be printed in this volume by the Conference of 2000, see Book VII C, Part 12, below. (2) In the sacrament of the Lord's Supper the wine used shall be non-alcoholic. (3) Clause (1) shall not preclude the use of alcoholic drinks on domestic occasions in private homes, nor the lawful supply, sale or use of such drinks in other residential premises with the consent of the trustees and subject to such conditions as they may prescribe. (3A) Clause (1) above shall not preclude the lawful supply, sale or use of alcoholic drinks on Methodist premises (other than any part of the relevant premises in which worship has been identified by the trustees as the primary use) if: (i) a significant part of the mission and activity of the Methodist Church carried out on the relevant premises involves use of the premises as a conference centre; (ii) such supply, sale or use is solely in connection with an event taking place on those premises as part of such use; and (iii) such supply, sale or use is with the consent of the trustees given for the specific event and subject to such conditions as they may prescribe. (3B) Where the relevant premises are local, circuit or district property, the trustees may treat the condition specified in clause (3A)(i) above as satisfied only if the appropriate district authority so determines. In all other cases, the trustees may treat that condition as satisfied only if the appropriate connexional authority so determines. The 'appropriate district authority' is the district Policy Committee or its delegates (S.O. 960(1)). The 'appropriate connexional authority' is the Methodist Council or its delegates (S.O. 909)

Appendix 2: Draft Example of The Foundry Sheffield Alcohol Policy

The Foundry Sheffield acknowledges that The Methodist Church's Standing Orders (SO922) state that alcohol cannot be supplied, sold or used on Methodist premises, unless permissions has been given due to the premises being used as a conference centre, nor may Methodist premises be used to promote the use of sale of intoxicants.

The Foundry Sheffield does not promote the use of alcohol and seeks to understand its potential for negative impact upon individuals and recognises that of misused, it can contribute to the diminution of wholeness and wellness for all.

We aspire to be a place which promotes renewal, justice, wholeness, and healing. In that context, our conversations about alcohol, substance misuse, or addiction are not simply about treatment. The following is a draft version of the policy The Foundry Sheffield will follow if we get approval of an alcohol licence.

The Policy is as follows:

1. The Foundry Sheffield aims to provide a safe and welcoming environment for all people, including people in recovery.
2. All applicable government and local laws will be obeyed, including those governing the serving of alcoholic beverages to minors.
3. When alcohol is served, it will be monitored, and those showing signs of intoxication will not be served. Attendees will be limited to two servings of up to approximately 5 units of alcohol in total. This is closely monitored and reported upon regularly to the Chair of Trustees.
4. When alcohol is served, The Foundry Sheffield will appoint an employee who has received the full licencing training from The Foundry Sheffield to oversee its serving. All incidences of alcohol consumption under this policy will be recorded and reported in writing to the Chair of Trustees as the body ultimately responsible for the policy.

5. We offer wine (including sparkling), bottled beer and bottled cider. Spirits and 'alcopops' will not be served.
 6. If minors are present at an event, alcohol must be served at a separate station that is monitored at all times to prevent underage drinking.
 7. Alcoholic and non-alcoholic beverages will be clearly labelled as such.
 8. When alcohol is served, appealing non-alcoholic alternatives will be offered with equal prominence and accessibility.
 9. The serving of alcoholic beverages will not be widely advertised.
 10. The Foundry Sheffield will only allow the purchase of alcohol in advance of an event, and will operate a token system by ways of controlling the amount of alcohol consumed.
 11. The supply and consumption of alcoholic beverages will not be permitted at any event held or accountable to the Church Council of Victoria Hall Methodist Church
 12. In the Sacrament of The Lord's Supper the wine used shall be non-alcoholic.
 13. Hirers of the hall will be sent a copy of The Foundry Sheffield Alcohol policy and agree in writing to its conditions, prior to the start of the booking. Copies of these agreements to be kept separately in the Foundry Offices and available for inspection by any member of the Foundry Board, upon request.
 14. Alcoholic beverages will not be available to any user of the building unless it is clearly stated as part of an events booking.
 15. The consumption of alcoholic beverages by an employee of The Foundry Sheffield during working hours is strictly prohibited and failure to comply will result in disciplinary action.
 16. Alcoholic stock shall be stored in a locked cupboard within The Foundry offices, with access controlled by The Foundry Sheffield Management team. Close stock control to be maintained in an appropriate register, open for inspection by an appointed member of the Foundry Board.
- The service of alcohol by The Foundry Sheffield is never primarily to generate income but is rather to offer appropriate hospitality to the market that we serve. To that end, we do not accept bookings for companies whose primary business is in alcohol production or sale (eg. Breweries), nor would we accept a booking which purpose was to promote alcohol (e.g. a wine tasting)
- Potential customers will be made aware of our policies at the time of enquiry, or as soon as it is evident that service of alcohol is part of the booking