



Heaven nightclub to reopen after licence hearing Free 281224

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**Popular London nightclub Heaven is allowed to reopen after its operating licence was revoked on public safety grounds following an alleged rape.**

The Metropolitan Police had successfully applied to Westminster Council to suspend the licence of the Villiers Street LGBTQ venue on 15 November after the attack was reported.

A council hearing last month was told a woman was raped near the club by a security guard on 1 November. A member of security staff has been charged with rape, the Met said.

The council agreed on Friday to reinstate Heaven's licence subject to stricter conditions, including "no-entry" after 03:00 as well as other new measures.

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## 'Turning point'

Licensing committee chair Maggie Carman said: "The committee agree with the Metropolitan Police that the premises is associated with serious crime.

"The circumstances around the horrific and traumatic incident suffered by the victim have been uppermost in our minds."

She added: "There is a clear change in the general management of the premises."

Ms Carman added the conditions agreed between the operator, Jeremy Joseph, and the Met Police were a "turning point" for the venue and the LGBTQ community.

Last month, the Met Police said the venue was the "highest crime generator in the borough" but had since agreed to impose stricter security measures.

Among the changes will be to employ all door security staff through a single company, an increased security presence along the queue into the club as well as enhanced welfare policies for patrons.

Revellers will also be banned from drinking in the queue into the venue.

The licensing meeting also heard representations from neighbouring residents who complained about noise levels from the venue. The club operator has agreed to have more engagement with them.

Mr Joseph's representative told the meeting: "Heaven and all of the authorities sitting around this table want the same thing – that visitors should be able to come, have a wonderful time and get home safely."

The meeting heard there would be regular audits by a licensing consultant to ensure all of the new conditions are being adhered to.

It is not clear when the venue will reopen. BBC News has contacted Mr Joseph for comment.

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### Date Created

06/12/2024

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