

2 Rock Cottages
Cuckfield Road
Ansty
RH17 5AF

12th March 2021

Dear Sir

Re :- Application for a Premises Licence under the Licensing Act 2003 - Ansty Village Centre - Ref - LI/21/0123

I am resident of Ansty and live in very close proximity to the new Ansty Village Centre Recreation Ground.

I am aware that an application for a premises licence has been submitted to Mid Sussex District Council for this building.

This is a large new building and as such replaces the old members club and village hall. From examining the application, it is clear that the aim is to expand on a commercial basis. The vast majority of those visiting the premises do not live locally but travel to the area.

This will potentially have a profound effect on the local area.

Having examined the application, I wish to make representations on all four of the licensing objectives.

I propose to split these representations into a number of areas of concern.

Hours of operation

The application seeks to have the premises open from 0900 to 2300 with licensable activities namely "The Supply of Alcohol" from 1200 to 2300 7 days a week. In addition to operate until Midnight on up to 12 occasions on a Friday and Saturday night.

This is shown as for "special events such as birthdays parties and Club Award Nights"

In addition, the premises would be permitted 15 Temporary Event Notices. In a worst case scenario, the premises could be split into a different areas for example the village hall could be designated and have 15 TENS, together with 15 for the club room.

This could in effect mean that the majority of weekends would be blighted by late night events causing Public Nuisance to those in the near vicinity, with the added potential for Crime and Disorder from those leaving the venue having had too much to drink.

With this in mind it is asked that the extra hours on up to 12 occasions be refused as there is ample scope within the Licensing Act to cater for events.

The submission of TENs would give the Police and Environmental Health department an opportunity to risk assess and comment on a specific date rather than the random nature of the 12 “special events”.

The application states that there will be a “noise management policy” which DJs, event promoters. This is welcome, but it is asked that during amplified entertainment, music or voice, windows and doors and doors were closed to prevent noise escape at a time when ambient noise is reduced in the evening.

The application states that outside space will cease to be used at 2200. As stated above ambient noise in this area reduces considerably in the evening and noise from this area will travel and effect local residential properties. It is therefore asked with the object of reducing the possibility of Public Nuisance that the use of outside space has a terminal hour of 2100.

External Areas

The application is ambiguous in terms of its interpretation of outside space, it states that the licence will include the balcony, the patio and an area of the recreation ground.

Consumption will be permitted on the balcony, ground floor patio area and when the Centre is running an event an area extending 25 m North but also includes whilst watching the cricket from the boundary.

In terms of the boundary this is a large area playing areas covering 2 fields. Is this whole area to be covered? Presumably any area not inside the plan would potentially be an “off sale”. Off sales have not been applied for.

It is therefore asked if consideration be given to restricting alcohol sales and consumption to the area in the plans rather than the whole of both fields. Further, this would potentially reduce the potential for Public Nuisance and Crime and Disorder as the management at the club would be better able to monitor and intervene where appropriate.

The old village club regularly held Friday cricket clubs for children followed by a BBQ for parents and children. These were predominantly held on the east side of the new building.

These events are great for team building and community (albeit not the Ansty community) spirit, however little heed is paid to the impact on residents who are forced on a summers evening to close windows to prevent the noise impact but worse the smells of the BBQ permeating their houses. Normally this is followed by related detritus being deposited in the field.

A further example of this was the end of season club BBQ 2020. A difficult year for everyone cricketers and residents alike, however no notice was taken of the request to site the BBQ away from residential houses. This resulted in the associated smells as well as noise nuisance close by.

Thankfully, this is only once a year but with the expansion of the centre and a clear commercial emphasis this is likely to be repeated more often. With this in mind it is asked that any such activity be restricted to the area proposed in the application i.e. 25 yards North of the clubhouse and therefore potentially equidistant from residential housing.

This will hopefully assist with compliance with the Public Nuisance objective.

Glass

It is comforting to note that the applicant acknowledges the importance of glass collection and appears to put forward a relatively robust policy towards it.

As stated in the application this a recreation ground and as such a public space used by children, dog walkers and others predominantly from the Ansty area.

The old village club held regular clubs for young persons, one can only assume that this will feature heavily in the new club.

To allow glass to be permitted in this area would be negligent and potentially would impact on all 4 of the licensing objectives, for example

The Prevention of Crime and Disorder - use as a weapon

Public Nuisance - litter and detritus

Public Safety - Injury to members of the public, sports people where discarded glass is left.

Protection of Children - Protection from injury to those taking part in sporting activity as well as children of local residents use this area, the dangers involved are incalculable.

Therefore, it is asked that an alternative drinking vessel is provided outside the clubhouse and a prohibition of all glass bottles and glasses being removed from the clubhouse building. In the interests of the environment this should not be a "one use" item but perhaps a polycarbonate substitute which are virtually indestructible and have some longevity.

Use of club

The application is for what is effectively a public house however it states that access to the club will be restricted to Members and users

How will this be monitored?

What constitutes a User - is it someone who just turns up they would be a user

It is a substantial building with multiple access points, how will this be monitored? If entry and egress from the premises is not monitored the potential for Crime and Disorder is clear.

If the club is permitted to be open later in the evening for events the employment of door staff may be recommended, this will potentially reduce the risk of Crime and Disorder by those employed being able to monitor the behaviour of those entering and leaving the club.

The use of door staff may also encourage patrons to leave quietly and expeditiously late at night to prevent Public Nuisance in the area.

Conclusion

The application is at pains to stress that it is conscious of the need to limit the impact of the club on local residents. This is admirable but somewhat shallow when local residents have not been consulted on what is likely to affect their neighbourhood.

If the committee are minded to grant the application could I ask that the following conditions be considered -

1. A closed-circuit television (CCTV) system shall be installed at the premises. The numbers and position of all cameras shall be noted on a plan of the licensed premises which shall be kept with the licence and provided to the licensing authority.
2. The CCTV system installed at the premises shall be maintained in effective working order, and shall be in operation at all times the premises is open to the public. It should cover all entrance and exit points.
3. All recordings made by the CCTV system shall be retained and stored in a suitable and secure manner for a minimum of 31 days, and shall be made available on request to the Police, the Licensing Authority or other Responsible Authorities.
4. At all times the premises is open to the public a minimum of one member of staff on duty will be able to operate the CCTV system.
5. Notices shall be displayed at all exits from the premises requesting customers leaving the premises late at night to do so quietly and with consideration to nearby residents.
6. The external area will be closed to customers save for those specifically outside to smoke in a designated area from 2100 hours.
7. No glassware or bottles shall be permitted outside the clubhouse,
8. Where events take place inside the premises and there is amplified music and/or voice, all windows shall be closed to prevent noise escape.
9. Where events take place within the premises after 2300 SIA registered door staff shall be employed to monitor entry and egress from the premises.

Yours faithfully

Peter Sparham