

From: [Justine Johnstone](#)
To: [licensing](#)
Subject: VARIATION APPLICATION BY ROYAL OAK INN, POYNINGS
Date: 15 August 2022 14:19:05
Attachments: [Royal Oak outdoor bar 2.docx](#)

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15 August 2022

Dear Mid Sussex Licensing Dept.

VARIATION APPLICATION BY ROYAL OAK INN, POYNINGS

We are writing to object to the renewed application from the Royal Oak Inn, The Street, Poynings, West Sussex, BN45 7AQ, for permission to serve alcohol from a second, outside bar.

We live in a house directly opposite the pub and regularly experience a lot of noise and disruption from customers (and sometimes staff) leaving the pub late, slamming car doors, singing, shouting, swearing etc, not to mention endless litter of crisp and sauce packets, napkins and so on blowing or being dropped in our garden, and very smelly barbeque grilling. This has been increasing over the summer and is even worse when the pub hosts events with amplified music in the garden, when the racket makes it impossible to enjoy that whole side of our garden or to hold a conversation there, listen to the radio etc. These events even cause significant noise inside our house, which disturbs us when going to sleep as it carries into our bedroom. Also parking and traffic flow through The Street have steadily worsened due to the pub, and on summer weekends there is often major congestion outside our driveway, making it very difficult for us to get in and out, and forcing cars and trucks onto our driveway in an attempt to get past one another.

As we previously wrote to you in responding to the pub's initial variation application, it seems obvious to us that enabling the pub to serve alcohol from a garden bar will make all these problems much worse. If permitted we would essentially have not one but TWO pubs in the village, both directly opposite our house. Alcohol will be more easily and quickly accessible if pub customers can get served both inside and outside, and they will consequently drink more, and more people will be attracted to the venue. The impact on neighbouring properties like ours will be very significant and existing traffic problems will be exacerbated. It is essentially a new premises that they are applying to license, and one that will greatly change the nature of our village and what has until now been a quiet country pub, not a loud music venue. This is wholly wrong for the tiny village of Poynings and its location in the heart of the National Park. It is also a very significant change and one that seems to us to require a new licence application, not just an attempt such as this to push it through as a variation. As your application form states:

“This application cannot be used to vary the licence so as to vary substantially the premises to which it relates. If you wish to make that type of change to the premises licence, you should make

a new premises licence application under section 17 of the Licensing Act 2003.”

The outdoor licence also needs to be considered in relation to the question of amplified music, since this is a feature of the pub garden at present and undoubtedly will only increase if they are able to serve alcohol outside as well as inside. We note that Mid-Sussex Council's licensing policy Appendix 9 relating to Beer Gardens states:

Premises that have beer gardens and children's play areas may cause noise nuisance if residential premises are nearby. This problem will be exacerbated in the summer months.

Tips to control noise from beer gardens and children's play areas:

- 1. Music should not be played in these areas. Doors leading onto the beer garden/play area should be kept closed, in order to contain the noise.*
- 2. Management should control customers behaviour in order to ensure it does not give rise to noise nuisance.*
- 3. Access to these areas should be restricted, particularly at night, to ensure noise is controlled.*

Allowing an outside bar in the Royal Oak garden will turn this area into a beer garden and thus according to your policy music should not be played here. However the Royal Oak *DO* regularly have loudly amplified music in their garden and this is clearly not going to stop if they are able to serve alcohol from an outside bar! In fact it seems certain that an outside bar will increase the number and scale of noisy events. Permitting this variation to their licence would therefore seem to be in direct contravention of your own policy that music should not be played in beer garden areas.

The pub have recently posted on Facebook that there is no music amplification system **installed** in the new bar or garden. This is highly disingenuous as obviously bands can and do bring their own sound systems. And of course the pub could decide at any time to put in such a system. The lack of a built-in system has not stopped incredibly loud events taking place in the past and will not stop them in the future. It seems to us that the pub's Facebook statement is however an implied admission that amplified music is inappropriate in this village setting. If an outdoor bar is now going to be added in to the mix we would like the whole issue of amplified music also to be reconsidered as part of a full review.

These are not one-off issues either. The pub has consistently ignored planning regulations for example in constructing the outside bar and the solid base for the gazebo without the necessary permission, having amplified music inside the gazebo, and encroaching on the neighbouring field for parking and drinking. We understand that a number of contravention notices are in the offing. It seems that the owners are trying to turn what was a quiet country pub into a very different and much noisier venue that is totally unsuited to the Royal Oak's position at the heart of a small village in a National Park. We therefore for the second time strongly oppose the opening of an outside bar as this will inevitably increase the problems already being caused.

Yours sincerely
Peter Holy
Justine Johnstone