

**From:** [Nicholas Bennett](#)  
**To:**  
**Cc:** [Jon Bryant](#)  
**Subject:** Handcross Club, Licence Variation REF LI/23/1048  
**Date:** 24 August 2023 17:03:43  
**Attachments:** [image001.jpg](#)

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**APPLICATION FOR THE VARIATION OF A PREMISES LICENCE, HANDCROSS CLUB, HIGH STREET, HANDCROSS, RH17 6BJ**

Dear Jon,

I write as a representative of the Environmental Protection team, part of the Council's Environmental Health dept, to **object** to the granting of the above application to vary the premises licence. The objection is on the grounds of the licensing objective of the Prevention of Public Nuisance.

We have no objection to the principle of varying the hours, but have serious concerns regarding the actual hours applied for and the removal of the condition requiring smokers not to take drinks outside.

Handcross is a village setting and the club is set back off the High Street in a cul-de-sac which is predominantly residential. The club is approx. 150m from the A23 trunk road and during daytime traffic noise is clearly audible. However, as would be expected, background noise levels drop significantly at night-time.

Representations from residents have been received, raising issues including loud talking, laughing and socialising as concerns, particularly if late at night, as well as possible ASB. We know, from having dealt with numerous complaints of this type of noise, that it can be very intrusive, causing annoyance and anxiety and is likely to disturb sleep if at night. It is established that alcohol consumption reduces inhibition, and often leads to louder voices and more boisterous social interaction. Nonetheless, we want to support local businesses where possible and it should be noted that I can find no record of previous noise complaints on the EP database. I understand that there has been one complaint to our Licensing team regarding noise, in April 2023. The club denied that it was their customers that were responsible.

Balancing the rights of neighbours to a reasonable level of peace and quiet, as well as the right to a good night's sleep, against the social and economic benefits of licensed premises is often a complex task, one where both sides are rarely satisfied and often neither are. With regard to the specific changes applied for:

- Removal of the condition not allowing smokers to take drinks outside – we would object to the condition being removed, but understand that the applicant has confirmed that there is no longer any intention to remove this condition.

- Change to allow live music until 00.30 hrs – we object to this change. Live music typically tends to be louder than recorded and by definition the volume is harder to control. Given the proximity of the residential properties, extension of live music hours is not appropriate on any day in our view as it would be likely to cause a public nuisance.
- Sale of alcohol till 00.30 hrs Mon – Sat and 00.00 hrs Sun – we object to these hours. Customers will be using the outside area and also leaving the premises in a state of “refreshment”. From experience we know that signage, whilst it can help, is no guarantee of compliance. Customer noise would be likely to cause a public nuisance.
- Opening hours – 01.00 hrs Mon – Sat and 00.00 hrs Sun - we object to these hours. Customers will be using the outside area and also leaving the premises in a state of “refreshment”. From experience we know that signage, whilst it can help, is no guarantee of compliance. Customer noise would be likely to cause a public nuisance.
- Change to allow recorded music till 00.30 hrs – we have no objection to this change in principle, but it will need to match the opening hours.

Those who live near to licensed premises must accept that there will sometimes be an element of noise and disturbance. Nonetheless, these types of premises should not be given free reign to do as they wish - the licensing objectives make it clear that there are limits and there is clearly a responsibility to have due regard to residential neighbours.

On balance, our view is that the application in its current form is not appropriate or acceptable. However, if the applicant were to agree to amend the application so that Sun to Thurs remained as on the existing licence, and Friday, Saturday and any Sunday followed by a bank holiday Monday were recorded music till 00.30 hrs, sale of alcohol till 00.00 hrs and opening until 00.30 hrs, we would feel that this was a fair and reasonable compromise and would support such an application.

In such a case we would request conditions requiring windows and doors to be kept shut, and no drinks outside after 23.00 hrs on any day.

I hope that this is clear, but please contact me if any further details are needed.

Kind regards

**Nick Bennett**

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