

Public Document Pack  
**Blackpool Council**

Dear Councillor

**LICENSING PANEL - THURSDAY, 18TH JANUARY, 2024**

Please find attached additional information for the applicant for the Thursday, 18th January, 2024 meeting of the Licensing Panel, which were received after the agenda had been despatched.

**Agenda No      Item**

4      **APPLICATION FOR A PREMISES LICENCE- TRADES HOTEL (Pages 1 - 32)**

Yours sincerely

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## Written Submission New Application Trades Hotel.

### General Background

1. The documentation is submitted in advance of the hearing scheduled for 10 am on the 18<sup>th</sup> of January 2024 to set out why the Committee should consider the application favourably.
2. The application has attracted 3 objections from interested parties, the contents of which will be addressed in this submission.
3. The application is made by Neil Cropper, who has been involved in the operation of the Trades Hotel for over 15 years.
4. The application was submitted with careful thought and consideration, with planning and preparation beginning in the early part of 2023. It was also important to seek the views of the Responsible Authorities. Extensive dialogue and written exchanges have taken place between the applicant and the Responsible Authorities which have resulted in an agreed position about timings, conditions, and activities.
5. As a result of this diligent and considerate approach no objections have been submitted by the relevant Responsible Authorities.
6. The current position is that the Trades Hotel ( Lord Street ) has a licence for the sale of alcohol and regulated entertainment until 2 am and the Trades Hotel ( Bank Street ) formally known as the Moore's Hotel has a licence for 24 hours for residents and bona fide guests or friends of those residents, condition 5 of that licence is of particular importance which permits the following.
7. *intoxicating liquor shall not be sold or supplied on the premises otherwise than to persons residing there or their private friends, bona fide entertained by them at their own expense, and for consumption by such a person or his private friend so entertained by him either on the premises or with a meal supplied at but to be consumed off the premises.*
8. The discussions with the Authorities centred around the preferred position for 2 hotels side by side operating as one business and the importance of providing clarity and transparency.
9. This application has satisfied the Authorities that transparency and clarity has been achieved and alongside the extensive track record built up by utilising Temporary Event Notices over 2003, a reduction in business responsibilities elsewhere and a comprehensive package of conditions the Licensing Authorities experts have arrived at the position of determining that this application will not have a significant impact on any of the Licensing Objectives, this is of significant importance and should be an influential factor in the decision making.

### Policy and Guidance Considerations

10. The application accords well with numerous paragraphs of the Section 182 Guidance as well as the Statement of Licensing Policy. Paragraphs 8.41-8.44 from the Guidance are shown below with comments (in blue text ) that demonstrate due consideration to best practice has been made.

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8.41 *In completing an operating schedule, applicants are expected to have regard to the statement of licensing policy for their area. They must also be aware of the expectations of the licensing authority and the responsible authorities as to the steps that are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives, and to demonstrate knowledge of their local area when describing the steps they propose to take to promote the licensing objectives. Licensing authorities and responsible authorities are expected to publish information about what is meant by the promotion of the licensing objectives and to ensure that applicants can readily access advice about these matters. However, applicants are also expected to undertake their own enquiries about the area in which the premises are situated to inform the content of the application.*

The applicant was aware of the expectations of Responsible Authorities by conducting pre-application consultation.

8.42 *Applicants are, in particular, expected to obtain sufficient information to enable them to demonstrate, when setting out the steps they propose to take to promote the licensing objectives, that they understand: 56 | Revised Guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003*

- *the layout of the local area and physical environment including crime and disorder hotspots, proximity to residential premises and proximity to areas where children may congregate;*
- *any risk posed to the local area by the applicants' proposed licensable activities; and*
- *any local initiatives (for example, local crime reduction initiatives or voluntary schemes including local taxi-marshalling schemes, street pastors and other schemes) which may help to mitigate potential risks.*

8.43 *Applicants are expected to include positive proposals in their application on how they will manage any potential risks. Where specific policies apply in the area (for example, a cumulative impact policy), applicants are also expected to demonstrate an understanding of how the policy impacts on their application; any measures they will take to mitigate the impact; and why they consider the application should be an exception to the policy.*

8.44 *It is expected that enquiries about the locality will assist applicants when determining the steps that are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives. For example, premises with close proximity to residential premises should consider what effect this will have on their smoking, noise management and dispersal policies to ensure the promotion of the public nuisance objective. Applicants must consider all factors which may be relevant to the promotion of the licensing objectives, and where there are no known concerns, acknowledge this in their application.*

The applicant is very familiar with the local issues and has the competence and understanding to overcome difficulties from his experience of operating the premises for many years.

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11. The Policy areas highlighted largely replicate the requirements of the guidance but provide a useful tick list which again demonstrates the careful and considerate approach to the application.

*4.1.2 The operating schedule must include all of the information necessary to enable the licensing authority, responsible authorities and members of the public to assess whether the steps outlined for the promotion of the licensing objectives are sufficient. This will mean that applicants will need to complete their own risk assessments on their businesses. Where the operating schedule does not provide enough detail, there is an increased likelihood that representations will be made.*

The applicant has produced a detailed and comprehensive operating schedule that has satisfied the Responsible Authorities.

*4.1.3 Applicants are not required to seek the views of responsible authorities before submitting their applications however they may find them a useful source of expert advice about the local issues that should be taken into consideration when making an application. Discussions with the responsible authorities, and where relevant local residents, before applications are submitted may minimise disputes during the application process.*

*4.1.4 The authority will expect that the completed operating schedule is specific to the premises subject to the application and the licensable activities to be carried out rather than containing general or standard terms. Key Message: Applicants are expected to demonstrate knowledge of the local area in which they propose to operate and an understanding of the problems and issues in that area*

The applicant has excellent local knowledge of the area and an understanding of the demographic and issues that he needs to be mindful of.

*. 4.1.5 For an applicant to assess what steps are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives, they must first understand the area in which they intend to operate. By way of example the controls required in an area suffering from a high level of deprivation, alcohol dependency and street drinking may be completely different to those required in other areas. Applicants are expected to make their own enquiries and demonstrate how they have considered the following in the operating schedule:*

- *The layout of the local area and physical environment including crime and disorder hotspots, proximity to residential premises and proximity to areas where children and young persons may congregate;*
- *Any risk posed to the local area by the proposed licensable activities; and*
- *Any local initiatives (for example local crime reduction initiatives or voluntary schemes which may help mitigate potential risks)*

*4.4.1 There are no standard permitted hours for the sale of alcohol prescribed in the Act instead the Council has the power to make decisions on hours based on local knowledge. In some circumstances, staggered licensing hours will allow for a more gradual dispersal of customers reducing potential disorder and disturbance at for example late night food outlets and taxi ranks. There is no general presumption in favour of lengthening licensing hours and the four licensing objectives will be the paramount consideration at all times*

The applicant applied for 9 Temporary Event Notices in 2023, with a terminal hour of 4 am

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No difficulties were experienced, and the trading experience was much the same as it has been during his current hours of operation. The premises were used for 26 days for Temporary Events which is the maximum entitlement in any one calendar year. It should also be of note that almost all the events took place over what would normally be considered higher-risk dates such as Bank Holidays and weekends.

The applicant has a significant evidence base that operating till 4 am on TENs in 2023 revealed no concern for the Authorities. The current application terminates at 3 am, which is only 1 hour later than his current licence at the Trades Hotel. The table below is taken from the Public Licensing Register which shows that all TENs were validated and accepted without objection.

TE2833	Temporary Event Notice - WITH Alcohol	23/12/2023	27/12/2023		
	<b>Application Type</b>	<b>Application Number</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Receipt of Temporary Event Notice	094183	23/12/2023	27/12/2023	Completed
TE2804	Temporary Event Notice - WITH Alcohol	25/11/2023	27/11/2023		
	<b>Application Type</b>	<b>Application Number</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Receipt of Temporary Event Notice	093656	25/11/2023	27/11/2023	Completed
TE2771	Temporary Event Notice - WITH Alcohol	26/08/2023	28/08/2023		
	<b>Application Type</b>	<b>Application Number</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Receipt of Temporary Event Notice	093018	26/08/2023	28/08/2023	Completed
TE2747	Temporary Event Notice - WITH Alcohol	10/06/2023	12/06/2023		
	<b>Application Type</b>	<b>Application Number</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Receipt of Temporary Event Notice	092241	10/06/2023	12/06/2023	Completed
TE2740	Temporary Event Notice - WITH Alcohol	27/05/2023	29/05/2023		
	<b>Application Type</b>	<b>Application Number</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Receipt of Temporary Event Notice	091904	27/05/2023	29/05/2023	Completed
TE2739	Temporary Event Notice - WITH Alcohol	29/04/2023	01/05/2023		
	<b>Application Type</b>	<b>Application Number</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Receipt of Temporary Event Notice	091902	29/04/2023	01/05/2023	Completed
TE2724	Temporary Event Notice - WITH Alcohol	08/04/2023	10/04/2023		
	<b>Application Type</b>	<b>Application Number</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Receipt of Temporary Event Notice	091645	08/04/2023	10/04/2023	Completed
TE/L0781	Late Temporary Event Notice - WITH Alcohol	25/02/2023	26/02/2023		
	<b>Application Type</b>	<b>Application Number</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Receipt of Temporary Event Notice	091402	25/02/2023	26/02/2023	Completed
TE/L0776	Late Temporary Event Notice - WITH Alcohol	01/01/2023	01/01/2023		
	<b>Application Type</b>	<b>Application Number</b>	<b>From</b>	<b>To</b>	<b>Status</b>
	Receipt of Temporary Event Notice	091046	01/01/2023	01/01/2023	Completed

The 3 Public Objections are set out below with some brief responses which will be amplified at the hearing.

## Public Objection 1

*Hi*

*I live opposite moores hotel on banks st Blackpool, I have noticed trades hotel have taken this over and knocked a hole from lord st trades hotel to bank st moores hotel, so people can walk between the buildings, - At the time of submission ( application submission 22nd November 2023) no doorway between the building was planned but as the build progressed and services such as the fire alarms between the building were connected it became necessary to install an access door for staff only. The door will be controlled by a lockable keypad and be sited behind the bar, no public access will be possible. Sgt Cox and Lee Petrak visited the premises on the 8<sup>th</sup> of December 2023 to look at the door specifically. They were happy with the arrangements. A revised plan is attached to show the location of all entrance/exit points into the premises along with photographs of the door in situ.*

*And now they want to open to sell alcohol, this would be so noisy for me , as I look straight onto the property , loud music*

*A late licence!! I strongly object as children live next door in the new houses " my Blackpool homes have built " The former Moores site is to be arranged as an eating establishment and is conditioned accordingly. In addition to managerial and design controls this half of the premises will also have a door supervisor which was agreed in the mediation document with the Police. The Police, who are the Licensing Authorities' experts on Crime and Disorder Objectives believe that this will achieve the best outcome for all concerned, they have the residents and wider public interests at the forefront of their minds when considering new applications.*

*A disabled child in one house and lots of children in another ,  
We will have taxis cars*

*People shouting this can not happen in our residential street !!*

*Lord st is mainly commercial which is fine, but this section of banks st is residential, Use of the outdoor area has been curtailed at 10 pm, and both premises currently benefit from the exemption under Section 172 (f) of the Licensing Act 2003. If the licence is granted, they will be deprived of this exemption. The issue of people arriving in taxis is beyond the control of the applicant, but the positioning of a doorman will assist in the control of any customers arriving in taxis. The common practice is that customers predominately arrive on foot as the applicant has a local custom base and people staying at the hotel usually walk from the nearby train station. This concern appears to be based on speculation and there has been no evidence produced to support this concern. Jeff next door has older people at his b&b this wouldn't be good for them as no one would stay there with the noise,*

*Public safety will be compromised my car is parked outside I'd be so scared,  
Please don't let this go ahead ..*

*moores hotel should be kept at a private licence , just for the residents- or until 11pm*

*Or it will cause so many problems..*

*Thanks  
Angela meldrum*

## **Public Objection 2**

*Dear Blackpool Planning / licensing Authority*

*I am writing to express my serious concerns and objection to the recent proposal by Trades Hotel to sell alcohol at the newly connected onto Trades hotel by a hole in a corridor Moore's Hotel on Banks Street, Blackpool.*

*As a resident living directly opposite the Moore's Hotel, I have grave concerns regarding the potential noise anti social behaviours that were associated with Kaos and disturbances that the issuance of a late-night alcohol license would bring to our predominantly residential street. The loud music, increased traffic from taxis and cars, and the likelihood of shouting and other disturbances is distressing, especially considering the presence of children and disabled individuals in the neighbourhood. These points largely replicate the matters raised in the 1<sup>st</sup> Objection, the Trades Hotel has operated for decades in this location and the addition of the former Moores is an eating and dining establishment catering to a similar custom base to the Trades Hotel. This is not a premises that attract rowdy or disorderly customers, it is not a night club, nor could it ever be defined as a vertical drinking establishment.*

*Furthermore, several new houses developed by "My Blackpool Homes" are situated next door, including homes with young children and a disabled child. The tranquility of their living environment should be a priority. In addition, the adjacent bed and breakfast, managed by my neighbour Jeff, caters to an older clientele who value peace and quiet. The noise and activity associated with a late-night licensed premises would undoubtedly deter guests, impacting his livelihood.*

*Public safety is another major concern. With increased foot traffic and potential for rowdy behavior, the safety of residents, their properties, and vehicles parked on the street could be at risk.*

*While I understand that Lord Street is more commercially oriented, it is important to recognize that Banks Street, particularly the section in question, is residential in nature. The site that will be licensed is already licensed as a hotel and has been in operation for many decades, close by there are very similar establishments one of which being the Mardi Gras Hotel which was recently granted a 3 am licence for non-residents but this venue did not receive Public Objection. The conditions at the Trades Hotel are more robust than its neighbours and the trading hours are more modest.*

*The introduction of a late-night alcohol-serving establishment would significantly alter the character and atmosphere of our community. There are many licensed establishments already in operation in the*



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vicinity. 20 premises are listed on the Public Register on Banks Street and 32 on Lord Street.

*I urge you to consider the impact this decision would have on the residents of Banks Street and to prioritize the well-being and peace of our community. Please do not let this proposal go ahead.*

*Thank you for your attention to this matter. I look forward to your response and hope for a favorable resolution.*

*Sincerely,*

*Chloe bergin*

### Public Objection 3

*The prevention of crime and disorder.*

*Public safety.*

*There have been 6 recent past crimes at Trades Hotel.*

<https://www.lancashiretelegraph.co.uk/news/23828609.police-appeal-woman-suffered-serious-head-injury-blackpool/>

<https://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/news/crime/man-continued-to-use-names-of-blackpools-trades-hotel-and-kaos-bar-despite-bankruptcy-ruling-3717171>

<https://www.lancs.live/news/lancashire-news/blackpool-hotel-owner-hauled-before-25443164>

<https://www.facebook.com/blackpool/Police/photos/a.382639948432987/2576716169025343/?type=3>

<https://democracy.blackpool.gov.uk/documents/s76213/Appendix%204c%20-%20Police%20representation.pdf>

<https://www.lancs.live/news/lancashire-news/claims-sex-gatherings-blackpool-hotel-18602717>

*Since the 2am stop for residents and guests consuming alcohol has been in force this has stopped the problems, if allowed to go back to 4am, this will start all over again. The application on the table is a terminal hour for alcohol sales to cease at 3 am at the former Trades Hotel and 2 am at the former Moores. The extensive number of days where the premises have operated until 4 am in 2023 demonstrate that no concerns have been revealed. If such problems were evident surely the objector would be able to point to one of the many dates where the premises have already operated until 4 am and provide some examples of the concerns they are fearful of resuming.*

*Public safety and crime from people both staying and leaving Trades after 4am will once again rise as people will go to Trades and 42 Bank Street after everywhere else closes at 2am already pre-fuelled with alcohol.*

- *The prevention of public nuisance.*

*For Legends Hotel having the bar close at 4am, the taxis, people leaving, screaming shouting and fighting like they did before will return, and the quiet residential area which is assured for our guests will be ruined, also if Trades Hotel and 42 Banks Street gets a 4am licence then this is an opening for Mardi Gras, Rendevous and Blackpool North to apply for similar. Mardi Gars Hotel has recently been granted a licence till 3 am, this is next door to the objector but no*

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concerns were raised by them against the Mardi Gras . The Mardi Gras has obtained an extra 2 and a half hours on its previous terminal hour. The Trades is seeking 1 hour extra on its existing permission and has proved in 2003 it could trade even later than this without too much concern. The applicant has mediated with the Police agreeing on a 3 am terminal hour for the sale of alcohol to continue the positive relationship that has resumed following the regulatory intervention in the latter part of 2022 already referred to in this objectors submission.

*Legends Hotel, 45 Lord Street*

### Conclusion

Passing reference within the submission has been made to the absence of any Responsible Authority in these proceedings. It is of considerable importance to highlight this as they are the Licensing Authorities 'experts in their respective fields.

The case of Daniel Thwaites plc v Wirral Borough Magistrates' Court [2008] EWHC 838 (Admin), CO/5533/2006 deals with many points. The full decision is enclosed.

Commentators will pull out the relevant parts of the case to assist their own arguments one of which is there must be tangible or empirical evidence to support any representations, mere speculation will not be enough.

The GOV.UK web site provides a short narrative about the case which is as follows;

*This case, referred to as 'the Thwaites case', is important because it emphasises the important role that Responsible Authorities have in providing information to decision makers to contextualise the issue before them.*

*This case is sometimes misconstrued as requiring decisions to be based on 'real evidence', and that conditions cannot be imposed until problems have actually occurred. This is wrong. The purpose of the Act is to prevent problems from happening. Decisions can and should be based on well-informed common sense. The case recognises that Responsible Authorities are experts in their fields, and that weight should be attached to their representations. It is most relevant when opposing grant applications.  
The Honourable Mrs Justice Black said:*

*[D]rawing on local knowledge, at least the local knowledge of local licensing authorities, is an important feature of the Act's approach. There can be little doubt that local magistrates are also entitled to take into account their own knowledge but, in my judgment, they must measure their own views against the evidence presented to them. In some cases, the evidence presented will require them to adjust their own impression. This is particularly likely to be so where it is given by a Responsible Authority such as the police.*

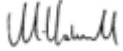
The Government summary of the case focuses on the issue of Responsible Authorities being experts in their respective fields and the absence of those Authorities, in this case, supports the following comments.

The proposal submitted in both pre-application communication and the application itself

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has given the Authorities the necessary confidence that the Licence Objectives will not be harmed

There is a belief that the applicant will deliver on any commitments made or will adjust his style to rectify any concerns raised.



Mark Marshall ( FCILEX)

Date: 10<sup>th</sup> January 2034

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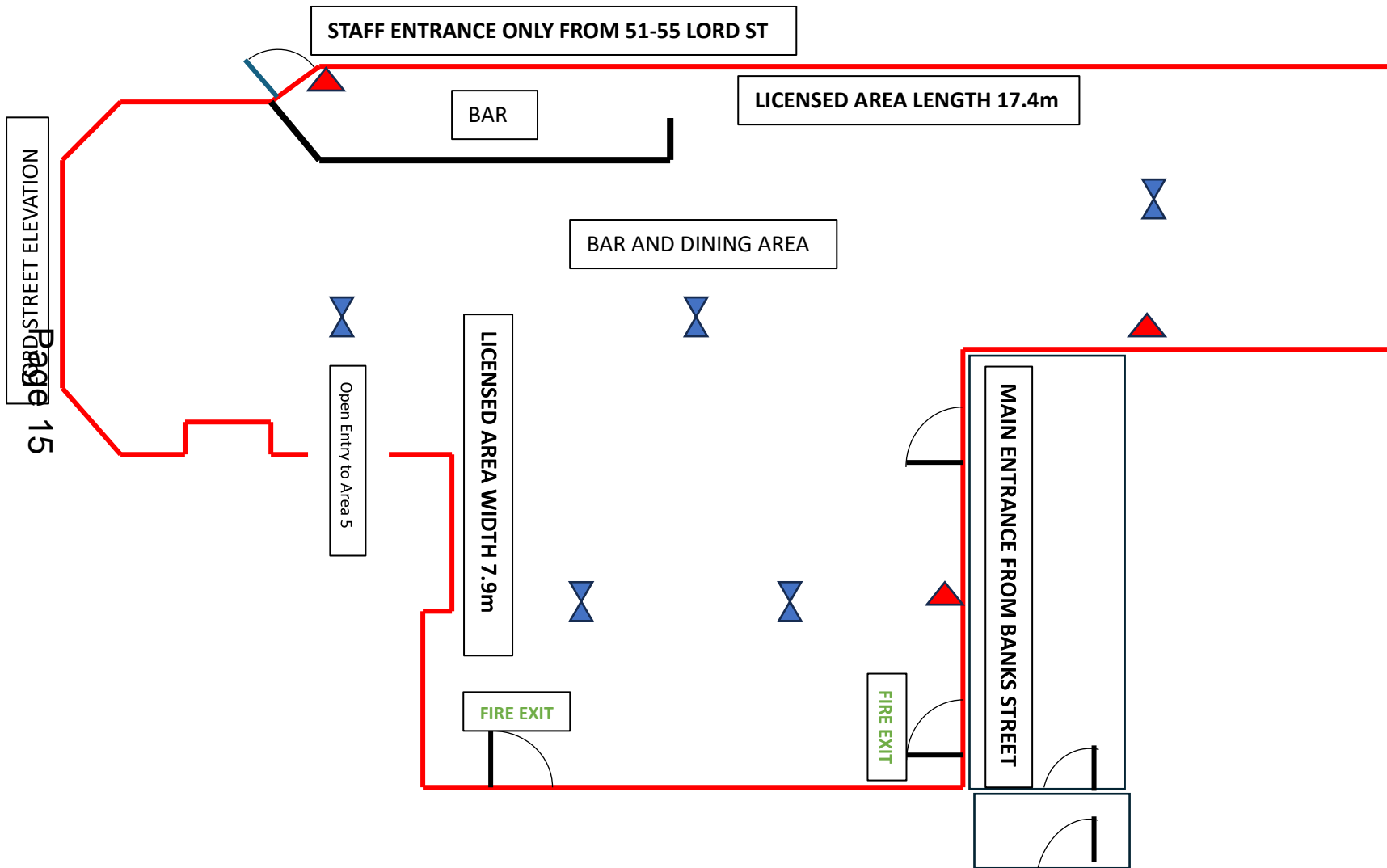


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**KEY**

- Licensed Area 
- Emergency Light 
- Fire Extinguisher 



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All England Official Transcripts (1997-2008)

## **Daniel Thwaites plc v Wirral Borough Magistrates' Court**

*Licensing - Licence - Application for licence - Guidance issued by Secretary of State as to discharge of functions under legislation - Licensing authority granting licence - Local objectors appealing to magistrates' court - Magistrates' court imposing restrictions - Whether restrictions necessary to promote licensing objective - Whether magistrates' court having proper regard to guidance - Whether decision of magistrates' court lawful - Licensing Act 2003, s 4*

[2008] EWHC 838 (Admin), CO/5533/2006, (Transcript: Wordwave International Ltd (A Merrill Communications Company))

### **QUEEN'S BENCH DIVISION (ADMINISTRATIVE COURT)**

**BLACK J**

**10 MARCH, 6 MAY 2008**

**6 MAY 2008**

This is a signed judgment handed down by the judge, with a direction that no further record or transcript need be made pursuant to Practice Direction 6.1 to Pt 39 of the Civil Procedure Rules (formerly RSC Ord 59, r (1)(f), Ord 68, r 1). See Practice Note dated 9 July 1990, [1990] 2 All ER 1024.

D MW Pickup for the Claimant

The Defendant did not appear and was not represented

D Flood for the First Interested Party

M Copeland for the Second Interested Party

Naphens plc; Kirwans; Wirral MBC

**BLACK J:**

[1] This is an application by Daniel Thwaites plc ("the Claimant") for judicial review of a licensing decision made by the Wirral Magistrates' Court ("the Magistrates' Court") on 5 April 2006 and that court's decision on 21 April 2006 concerning the costs of the proceedings. The Claimant seeks an order quashing both decisions. Permission to apply for judicial review was granted by Pitchford J on 2 November 2006.

#### *THE FACTUAL BACKGROUND*

[2] The Claimant owns the Saughall Hotel in Saughall Massie, Wirral which it operates as licensed premises ("the premises"). It originally held a licence under the Licensing Act 1964. In June 2005, it commenced an application to the Licensing Sub-Committee of the Metropolitan Borough of Wirral ("the licensing authority")

for the existing licence to be converted to a premises licence under the Licensing Act 2003 and for the licence to be varied simultaneously.

**[3]** In essence, the Claimant was seeking to conduct business at the premises for longer hours than were permitted under the original licence. The police did not support the extension of the hours to the extent that the Claimant initially proposed. The Claimant agreed to restrict the hours to those that were acceptable to the police. Accordingly, the licensing authority was asked to grant a licence that would permit music and dancing to 11pm and alcohol sales until midnight on all nights except Friday and Saturday and, on Friday and Saturday nights, music and dancing to midnight and alcohol sales until 1pm, with the doors closing one hour after the last alcohol sale every night.

**[4]** The police withdrew their representations against the modified proposals and did not appear before the licensing authority when the matter was heard on 23 August 2005. No representations were made by the Wirral Environmental Health Services either. However, there was opposition to the proposals at the hearing from the Saughall Massie Conservation Society ("the First Interested Party") and other Saughall Massie residents.

**[5]** The Claimant told the licensing authority at the hearing that the hours of operation at the premises would not vary significantly from the existing hours of operation and that the application for extended hours was to allow flexibility to open later "on special occasions" This was a matter of which the licensing authority took note as is recorded in the minutes of their determination.

**[6]** The licence was granted in the modified terms requested together with an additional hour for licensable activities and an extra 30 minutes for the hours the premises were to be open to the public over Christmas and at the major bank holidays. Special arrangements were also permitted for New Year's Eve. The licensing authority removed certain conditions that had been imposed on the old licence (requiring all alcohol to be consumed within 20 minutes of the last alcohol sale and banning children under 14 from the bar) and imposed other conditions which were obviously aimed at controlling noise, namely that the area outside must be cleared by 11pm, that the premises must promote the use of taxi firms which use a call-back system, that all doors and windows must be kept closed when regulated entertainment was provided and that prominent notices should be placed on the premises requiring customers to leave quietly.

**[7]** The Saughall Massie Conservation Society and "others" appealed against the licensing decision to the Magistrates' Court on the ground that the licensing authority's decision "was not made with a view to promotion of and in accordance with the licensing objectives pursuant to s 4, Pt 2 of the Licensing Act 2003".

**[8]** The appeal occupied the Magistrates' Court from 3 - 5 April 2006. The Respondents to the appeal were the licensing authority and the Claimant which both defended the licensing authority's decision. Witnesses were called including Saughall Massie residents, Police Sergeant Yehya who dealt with the stance of the Merseyside police, and Mr Miller, the manager of the premises.

**[9]** The justices granted the appeal. Their Reasons run to three pages of typescript, one page of which is entirely taken up with setting out the new hours of operation they imposed. These permitted entertainment until 11pm and alcohol sales until 11.30pm on all nights except Friday and Saturday when entertainment would be permitted until 11.30pm and alcohol sales until midnight. The premises could remain open to the public until midnight on all nights except Friday and Saturday when they could close at 1am. Similar provisions were imposed to those imposed by the licensing authority in relation to later opening at Christmas and major bank holidays and the provisions relating to New Year's Eve and the conditions of the licence remained unaltered.

**[10]** The new licence had come into effect on 24 November 2005 so the new arrangements had been running for several months by the time of the hearing before the Magistrates' Court. There had been no formal or recorded complaints against the premises under the old or the new regime as the justices acknowledged in their Reasons. The residents who gave evidence were fearful of problems if the extended hours were allowed in the summer. The Chairman of the Conservation Society, who gave oral evidence, spoke of people urinating in the gardens and a problem with litter. It appears from the statement filed by the Chairman of the Bench for these judicial review proceedings that evidence was also given of interference with machinery on nearby Diamond Farm. The justices' Reasons make no reference at all to these matters. As to the statements of the "Witnesses of the Appellant", they say simply that they have read and considered them but attached little or no weight to them.

**[11]** The justices and their legal advisor have filed a considerable amount of material in response to the judicial review proceedings, in all 31 closely typed pages. These comprise their Response to the Claim, statements from Alistair Beere (who was the chairman of the bench), Mary Woodhouse (another of the bench) and Stephen Pickstock (the legal advisor), and what is said in the index to be a document by Mr Beere from which he prepared his statement. There was limited argument before me as to the status of these documents and the weight that I should give to them. It was not submitted that I should decline to have *any* regard to them although I think it is fair to say that it was common ground between the parties, rightly in my view, that I should concentrate principally on the Reasons. It is established by authorities such as *R v Westminster City Council ex parte Ermakov* [1996] 2 All ER 302, 95 LGR 119, [1996] 2 FCR 208 that the court can admit evidence to elucidate or, exceptionally, correct or add to the reasons given by the decision maker at the time of the decision but that it should be very cautious about doing so. The function of such evidence should generally be elucidation not fundamental alteration, confirmation not contradiction. In the circumstances, I have read carefully what the magistrates have provided but approached its role in the judicial review proceedings cautiously.

#### *THE BROAD NATURE OF THE CLAIM IN RELATION TO THE LICENSING DECISION*

**[12]** The Claimant argues that the Magistrates' Court decision is unlawful for a number of reasons. It is argued that the decision was not in line with the philosophy of the Licensing Act 2003 ("the Act") and imposed restrictions on the Claimant's operation which were not necessary to promote the licensing objectives set out in that Act, that it was based on speculation rather than evidence, that it took into account irrelevant considerations and failed to take into account proper considerations, and that it was a decision to which no properly directed Magistrates' Court could have come on the evidence. In so far as the court imposed conditions as to the time at which the premises must close, it is submitted that this was not a matter which can be regulated under the Act. It is further argued that the magistrates failed to give adequate reasons for their decision.

#### *THE LEGAL BACKGROUND*

**[13]** The Licensing Act 2003 was intended to provide a "more efficient" "more responsive" and "flexible" system of licensing which did not interfere unnecessarily. It aimed to give business greater freedom and flexibility to meet the expectations of customers and to provide greater choice for consumers whilst protecting local residents from disturbance and anti-social behaviour.

**[14]** Note 12 of the explanatory notes to the Act gives an indication of the approach to be taken under the Act. It reads:

"12 In contrast to the existing law, the Act does not prescribe the days or the opening hours when alcohol may be sold by retail for consumption on or off premises. Nor does it specify when other licensable activities may be carried on.

Instead, the Applicant for a premises licence or a club premises certificate will be able to choose the days and the hours during which they wish to be authorised to carry on licensable activities at the premises for which a licence is sought. The licence will be granted on those terms unless, following the making of representations to the licensing authority, the authority considers it necessary to reject the application or vary those terms for the purpose of promoting the licensing objectives."

**[15]** Section 1 of the Act provides:

"S1(1) For the purposes of this Act the following are licensable activities -

- (a) the sale by retail of alcohol,
- (b) [clubs]
- (c) the provision of regulated entertainment, and
- (d) the provision of late night refreshment."

**[16]** To carry on a licensable activity, a premises licence granted under Pt 3 of the Act is generally required, s 2. Application for a premises licence must be made to the relevant licensing authority, s 17(1).

**[17]** By virtue of s 4, the licensing authority must carry out all its functions under the Act (including its functions in relation to determining an application for a premises licence or an application for a variation of a premises licence) with a view to promoting the "licensing objectives". These are set out in s 4 as follows:

"S4(2) The licensing objectives are -

- (a) the prevention of crime and disorder;
- (b) public safety;
- (c) the prevention of public nuisance; and
- (d) the protection of children from harm."

**[18]** In carrying out its licensing functions, by virtue of s 4(3) the licensing authority must also have regard to its licensing statement published under s 5 and any guidance issued by the Secretary of State under s 182.

**[19]** Section 182 obliges the Secretary of State to issue guidance to licensing authorities on the discharge of their functions under the Act. Guidance was issued in July 2004 ("the Guidance"). It was updated in June 2007 but it is the original guidance that is relevant in this case. In any event, none of the changes made are material to the issues I have to determine.

**[20]** The Foreword says that the Guidance:

"is intended to aid licensing authorities in carrying out their functions under the 2003 Act and to ensure the spread of best practice and greater consistency of approach. This does not mean we are intent on eroding local discretion. On

the contrary, the legislation is fundamentally based on local decision-making informed by local knowledge and local people. Our intention is to encourage and improve good operating practice, promote partnership and to drive out unjustified inconsistencies and poor practice."

**[21]** As the Guidance says in para 1.7, it does not replace the statutory provisions of the Act or add to its scope. Paragraph 2.3 says:

"Among other things, section 4 of the 2003 Act provides that in carrying out its functions a licensing authority must have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State under section 182. The requirement is therefore binding on all licensing authorities to that extent. However, it is recognised that the Guidance cannot anticipate every possible scenario or set of circumstances that may arise and so long as the Guidance has been properly and carefully understood and considered, licensing authorities may depart from it if they have reason to do so. When doing so, licensing authorities will need to give full reasons for their actions. Departure from the Guidance could give rise to an appeal or judicial review, and the reasons given will then be a key consideration for the courts when considering the lawfulness and merits of any decision taken."

**[22]** An application to the licensing authority for a premises licence must be accompanied by an operating schedule in the prescribed form including a statement of the matters set out in s 17(4) which are as follows:

- "(a) the relevant licensable activities,
  
- (b) the times during which it is proposed that the relevant licensable activities are to take place,
  
- (c) any other times during which it is proposed that the premises are to be open to the public,
  
- (d) where the Applicant wishes the licence to have effect for a limited period, that period,
  
- (e) where the relevant licensable activities include the supply of alcohol, prescribed information in respect of the individual whom the Applicant wishes to have specified in the premises licence as the premises supervisor,
  
- (f) where the relevant licensable activities include the supply of alcohol, whether the supplies are proposed to be for consumption on the premises or off the premises, or both,
  
- (g) the steps which it is proposed to take to promote the licensing objectives,
  
- (h) such other matters as may be prescribed."

**[23]** Section 18 deals with the determination of an application for a premises licence. Section 35 deals in very similar terms with the determination of an application to vary a premises licence. It will be sufficient only to set out here the provisions of s 18.

**[24]** Section 18(2) provides that, subject to sub-s (3), the authority must grant the licence in accordance with the application subject only to:

- "(a) such conditions as are consistent with the operating schedule accompanying the application, and
  
- (b) any conditions which must under section 19, 20 or 21 be included in the licence."

**[25]** Section 19 deals with premises licences which authorise the supply of alcohol. Such licences must include certain conditions ensuring that every supply of alcohol is made or authorised by a person who holds a personal licence and that no supply of alcohol is made when there is no properly licensed designated premises supervisor. Sections 20 and 21 are not relevant to this claim.

**[26]** Section 18(3) provides that where relevant representations are made, the authority has certain specified obligations. In so far as is relevant to this appeal "relevant representations" are defined in s 18(6) as follows:

"(6) For the purposes of this section, 'relevant representations' means representations which -

(a) are about the likely effect of the grant of the premises licence on the promotion of the licensing objectives,

(b) meet the requirements of sub-section (7),

(c) . . ."

**[27]** Sub-section (7) provides:

"(7) The requirements of this subsection are -

(a) that the representations were made by an interested party or responsible authority within the period prescribed under section 17(5)(c),

(b) that they have not been withdrawn, and

(c) in the case of representations made by an interested party (who is not also a responsible authority), that they are not, in the opinion of the relevant licensing authority, frivolous or vexatious."

**[28]** Where relevant representations are made, the authority must hold a hearing to consider them unless the authority, the Applicant and each person who has made representations agrees that a hearing is unnecessary. By virtue of s 18(3)(b), the authority must also "(b) having regard to the representations, take such of the steps mentioned in sub-section (4) (if any) as it considers necessary for the promotion of the licensing objectives."

**[29]** Section 18(4) provides:

"(4) The steps are -

(a) to grant the licence subject to -

(i) the conditions mentioned in sub-section (2)(a) modified to such extent as the authority considers necessary for the promotion of the licensing objectives, and

(ii) any condition which must under section 19, 20 or 21 be included in the licence;

(b) to exclude from the scope of the licence any of the licensable activities to which the application relates;



(c) to refuse to specify a person in the licence as the premises supervisor;

(d) to reject the application."

**[30]** Conditions are modified for the purposes of sub-s (4)(a)(i) if any of them is altered or omitted or any new condition is added.

**[31]** During the currency of a premises licence, by virtue of s 51, an interested party (broadly speaking, a local resident or business) or a responsible authority (police, fire, environmental health etc) may apply to the relevant licensing authority for a review of the licence on a ground which is relevant to one or more of the licensing objectives. By virtue of s 52, a hearing must be held to consider the application and any relevant representations and the authority must take such steps from a specified list as it considers necessary for the promotion of the licensing objective. The steps range from modifying the conditions of the licence to suspending it or revoking it completely.

**[32]** The Act makes provision in Pt 5 for "permitted temporary activity" which, loosely speaking, is a form of ad hoc licensing to cover licensable activities which are not covered by a more general licence. The system involves proper notification of an event to the licensing authority and the police. Provided the applicable number of temporary event notices has not been exceeded and the police do not intervene, the event is automatically permitted. Temporary event notices can only be given in respect of any particular premises 12 times in a calendar year and the period for which each event lasts must not exceed 96 hours.

**[33]** Section 181 provides for appeals to be made against decisions of the licensing authority to a Magistrates' Court which is, of course, how the decisions in relation to which judicial review is sought in this case came to be made.

#### *THE DETAIL OF THE CLAIM*

**[34]** The Claimant submits that in making its decision to allow the appeal in relation to the premises licence, the Magistrates' Court failed in a number of respects to take account of the changes that the new licensing regime has made and failed to adopt the approach required by the Act. It is further submitted that the magistrates failed properly to consider and take into account the Guidance.

**[35]** There is no doubt that the Guidance is relevant in the magistrates' decision making. As I have set out above, s 4(3) requires the licensing authority to "have regard" to the Guidance. By extension, so must a Magistrates' Court dealing with an appeal from a decision of the licensing authority. The Guidance says:

"10.8 In hearing an appeal against any decision made by a licensing authority, the Magistrates' Court concerned will have regard to that licensing authority's statement of licensing policy and this Guidance. However, the court would be entitled to depart from either the statement of licensing policy or this Guidance if it considered it is justified to do so because of the individual circumstances of any case."

**[36]** Mr Pickup submits that although the Guidance is not binding and local variation is expressly permitted, it should not be departed from unless there is good reason to do so.

**[37]** Mr Flood for the First Interested Party submits that the Guidance simply serves to provide information for the magistrates and provided that they have had regard to it, that is sufficient. He also points out that, in

some respects (as is clear from the wording of the Guidance), the Guidance is a statement of Government belief rather than proved fact. Inviting attention to the judgment of Beatson J in *J D Weatherspoon plc v Guildford Borough Council* [2006] EWHC 815 (Admin), [2007] 1 All ER 400, [2006] LGR 767, he identifies that different policy elements in the Guidance may pull in different directions in a particular case, flexibility and customer choice potentially conflicting with the need to prevent crime and disorder. He submits that provided that the magistrates consult the Guidance, they do not need to use it as "a decision making matrix that the deciding Court has to sequentially address in making its decision in the manner it would if considering a section of a statute".

**[38]** There is no doubt that regard must be had to the Guidance by the magistrates but that its force is less than that of a statute. That is common ground between the parties. The Guidance contains advice of varying degrees of specificity. At one end of the spectrum, it reinforces the general philosophy and approach of the Act. However, it also provides firm advice on particular issues, an example being what could almost be described as a prohibition on local authorities seeking to engineer staggered closing times by setting quotas for particular closing times. I accept that any individual licensing decision may give rise to a need to balance conflicting factors which are included in the Guidance and that in resolving this conflict, a licensing authority or Magistrates' Court may justifiably give less weight to some parts of the Guidance and more to others. As the Guidance itself says, it may also depart from the Guidance if particular features of the individual case require that. What a licensing authority or Magistrates' Court is not entitled to do is simply to *ignore* the Guidance or fail to give it any weight, whether because it does not agree with the Government's policy or its methods of regulating licensable activities or for any other reason. Furthermore, when a Magistrates' Court is entitled to depart from the Guidance and justifiably does so, it must, in my view, give proper reasons for so doing. As para 2.3 of the Guidance says in relation to the need for licensing authorities to give reasons:

"When [departing from the Guidance], licensing authorities will need to give full reasons for their actions. Departure from the Guidance could give rise to an appeal or judicial review, and the reasons given will then be a key consideration for the courts when considering the lawfulness and merits of any decision taken."

This is a theme to which the Guidance returns repeatedly and is a principle which must be applicable to a Magistrates' Court hearing an appeal as it is to a licensing authority dealing with an application in the first instance. I agree with Mr Flood for the First Interested Party that the magistrates did not need to work slavishly through the Guidance in articulating their decision but they did need to give full reasons for their decision overall and full reasons for departing from the Guidance if they considered it proper so to do.

**[39]** In this case, Mr Pickup submits that proper attention to the Guidance would have helped the magistrates to come to a correct and reasonable decision and that they have failed to adhere to it without proper reason and failed to carry out their licensing function in accordance with the Act.

**[40]** The foundation of the Claimant's argument is that the Act expects licensable activities to be restricted only where that is *necessary* to promote the four licensing objectives set out in s 4(2). There can be no debate about that. It is clearly established by the Act and confirmed in the Guidance. For example, in the Act, s 18(3)(b), dealing with the determination of an application for a premises licence, provides that where relevant representations are made the licensing authority must "take such of the steps mentioned in sub-s (4) (if any) as it considers necessary for the promotion of the licensing objectives" (the steps in sub-s (4) include the grant of the licence subject to conditions). Section 34(3)(b), dealing with the determination of an application to vary a premises licence, is in similar terms. The Guidance repeatedly refers, in a number of different contexts, to the principle that regulatory action should only be taken where it is *necessary* to promote the licensing objectives. In particular, it clearly indicates that conditions should not be attached to premises licences unless they are necessary to promote the licensing objectives, see for example para 7.5 and also para 7.17 which includes this passage:

"Licensing authorities should therefore ensure that any conditions they impose are only those which are necessary for the promotion of the licensing objectives, which means that they must not go further than what is needed for that

purpose."

**[41]** The Guidance also refers a number of times to the need for regulation to be "proportionate". This is not a term contained in the Act but if a regulatory provision is to satisfy the hurdle of being "necessary", it must in my view be confined to that which is "proportionate" and one can understand why the Guidance spells this out.

**[42]** Mr Pickup submits, and I accept, that the Act anticipates that a "light touch bureaucracy" (a phrase used in para 5.99 of the Guidance) will be applied to the grant and variation of premises licences. He submits that this means that unless there is evidence that extended hours will adversely affect one of the licensing objectives, the hours should be granted. A prime example of this arises when an application for a premises licence is made and there are no relevant representations made about it. In those circumstances, s 18(2) obliges the licensing authority to grant the licence and it can only impose conditions which are consistent with the operating schedule submitted by the Applicant. Mr Pickup says that such a light touch is made possible, as the Guidance itself says, by providing a review mechanism under the Act by which to deal with concerns relating to the licensing objectives which arise following the grant of a licence in respect of individual premises. He invites attention also to the existence of other provisions outside the ambit of the Act which provide remedies for noise, for example the issue of a noise abatement notice or the closure of noisy premises under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. The Guidance makes clear that the existence of other legislative provisions is relevant and may, in some cases, obviate the need for any further conditions to be imposed on a licence. Paragraph 7.18 from the section of the Guidance dealing with attaching conditions to licences is an illustration of this approach:

"7.18 It is perfectly possible that in certain cases, because the test is one of necessity, where there are other legislative provisions which are relevant and must be observed by the Applicant, no additional conditions at all are needed to promote the licensing objectives."

**[43]** The Guidance includes a section dealing with hours of trading which the Claimant submits further exemplifies the philosophy of the Act. It begins with para 6.1 which reads "This Chapter provides guidance on good practice in respect of any condition imposed on a premises licence or club premises certificate in respect of hours of trading or supply."

**[44]** It continues:

"6.5 The Government strongly believes that fixed and artificially early closing times promote, in the case of the sale or supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises, rapid binge drinking close to closing times; and are a key cause of disorder and disturbance when large numbers of customers are required to leave premises simultaneously. This creates excessive pressures at places where fast food is sold or public or private transport is provided. This in turn produces friction and gives rise to disorder and peaks of noise and other nuisance behaviour. It is therefore important that licensing authorities recognise these problems when addressing issues such as the hours at which premises should be used to carry on the provision of licensable activities to the public.

6.6 The aim through the promotion of the licensing objectives should be to reduce the potential for concentrations and achieve a slower dispersal of people from licensed premises through longer opening times. Arbitrary restrictions that would undermine the principle of flexibility should therefore be avoided. We will monitor the impact of the 2003 Act on crime and disorder and the other licensing objectives. If necessary in the light of these findings, we will introduce further legislation with the consent of Parliament to strengthen or alter any provisions."

**[45]** The Claimant submits that in imposing shorter hours than it requested for the supply of alcohol and for entertainment, the magistrates went beyond that which was necessary for these premises and failed to take into account that, as the Guidance explains, longer opening times would in fact reduce the potential for problems arising from licensed premises whereas curtailing operations could run counter to the licensing

objectives.

**[46]** The magistrates' Reasons record their acceptance that there had been no reported complaint in regard to public nuisance and that the extended hours had operated without any incidents. The magistrates also record in the Reasons, as I have already said, that they had attached little or no weight to the statements from witnesses of the Appellant. Nothing is said about difficulties mentioned in evidence by the witnesses. As it was clearly incumbent on the magistrates at least to advert in broad terms to those matters that they took into account, it is fair to conclude in the circumstances that they proceeded upon the basis that there was no reliable evidence of actual problems linked to the premises either under the old licence or under the new revised licence. This was in line with the oral evidence of Police Sergeant Yehya (as recorded in the rather truncated notes of the legal advisor):

"1. reported incident for the site. No other incidents or complaints have been received. There are none in my file. There are no incidents we can directly link to the Saughall Hotel since previously open. There have been incidents locally but not linked to these premises."

**[47]** To judge by the Reasons therefore, what led the magistrates to impose restricted hours of operation was their forecast as to what would occur in the future in association with the premises, notwithstanding the absence of reliable evidence of past problems. The First Interested Party observes that the manager of the premises had given evidence that he intended in the summer to "make hay while the sun shines" and submits, correctly in my view, that the magistrates were entitled to take this apparent change of emphasis into account. However, Mr Flood further submits that the evidence of what had happened in the winter months was therefore of "little evidential value" in determining what was likely to happen in the future and I cannot wholly agree with him about this. Undoubtedly the fact that the Claimant intended in future to make more use of the extended hours reduced the value of the premises' past record as a predictor of the future but it could not, in my view, be completely discarded by the magistrates. They still had to take into account that there had been extended hours for some months without apparent problems.

**[48]** It is plain that the magistrates' particular concern was "migration" rather than problems generated by those coming directly to the premises for their evening out. Under the heading "The Four Licensing Objectives", they say that they accept that there have been no formal or recorded complaints against the premises "but feel that because of the concept of migration that public nuisance and crime and disorder would be an inevitable consequence of leaving the hours as granted by the Local Authority". Under the heading "Migration/Zoning" they begin:

"The Saughall Hotel due to its location and the fact that a number of license premises in the surrounding area have reduced hours to that of the Saughall Hotel we believe that as a consequence of this would be that customers would migrate from these premises to the Saughall Hotel. [sic]"

and end:

"We appreciate that the extended hours have been in operation for several months without any incidents but have taken into consideration this was during the Winter months and inevitable numbers will increase in the Summer causing nuisance/criminality."

**[49]** They reiterate their concern under the heading "Nuisance (Existing/Anticipated)" saying that they "feel that public nuisance will be inevitable".

**[50]** The Claimant complains that the magistrates' treatment of the issue of "migration" was fundamentally flawed on a number of grounds.

**[51]** Firstly, it submits that there was no evidence on which the magistrates could find that customers *would* come to the premises when other premises in the vicinity closed or cause trouble and their concerns were no more than inappropriate speculation. The Claimant's position was that there was no evidence of migration to their premises. There were no recorded complaints of any kind about the premises let alone specifically about migration. Ms Lesley Spencer who lives opposite the premises and is the Secretary of the Saughall Massie Conservation Society gave evidence of her fear that customers would migrate but said that she did not think there had been any migration.

**[52]** Apart from their own local knowledge, the only material on which the magistrates could possibly have formed their views about migration was what Police Sergeant Yehya said in evidence. According to the legal advisor's notes, whilst being cross-examined by Mr Kirwan, the sergeant gave evidence about the other licensed premises operating in the vicinity (which I have seen marked on a local map and which were within walking distance of the premises) and their closing hours and said that there were three assaults each week at one of the premises. The legal advisor records that he also said:

"We have staggered closing. This could cause problems it has the potential to cause difficulties in the area. I have a list of considerations but none would rank as high as crime, not even noise. No complaints have been made to me even regarding noise. One concern was dispersal. We gave people one hour to disperse and therefore reduced from 2.00am to 1.00am. 1.00am closing at 2. 280 people leaving premises. Other premises subject to high levels of crime *migration not an issue.*" [my italics]

**[53]** I appreciate that this evidence acknowledged that staggered closing *could* cause problems but, had migration been a significant issue as opposed to a mere possibility, one can, I think, assume that the police would have made representations on that score, particularly given that they had plainly considered the impact of trading hours specifically and *had* initially objected to the even longer hours originally proposed by the Claimant. It is noteworthy that even when they were in opposition to the plans, it was never on the basis of migration of disruptive characters from other licensed premises and always simply on the basis of late noise from ordinary customers of the premises dispersing. The absence of police objections before either the licensing authority or the Magistrates' Court seems to have surprised the magistrates who said so in their Reasons, commenting "We were surprised that the Police originally objected to the application but withdrew that objection after a slight variation of the terms." In so saying, they convey, in my view, not only their surprise about the Police approach but also their disagreement with it.

**[54]** It was not open to the magistrates, in my view, to elevate what Sergeant Yehya said in the witness box to evidence that a problem with migration could reasonably be expected, nor do they say anything in their reasons which suggests that they did rely on his evidence in this way. The only concerns about migration were therefore the magistrates' own with perhaps some fears expressed by local residents though not on the basis of firm historical examples of migration to the premises.

**[55]** It is clear from the Guidance that drawing on local knowledge, at least the local knowledge of local licensing authorities, is an important feature of the Act's approach. There can be little doubt that local magistrates are also entitled to take into account their own knowledge but, in my judgment, they must measure their own views against the evidence presented to them. In some cases, the evidence will require them to adjust their own impression. This is particularly likely to be so where it is given by a responsible authority such as the police. They must also scrutinise their own anxieties about matters such as noise and other types of public nuisance particularly carefully if the responsible authorities raise no objections on these grounds. These magistrates did recognise the absence of police objections which caused them surprise and they chose to differ from the police in reliance on their own views. The Claimant submits that in so doing they departed into the realms of impermissible speculation not only in concluding that there would be migration but also in concluding that in this case it would generate nuisance and disorder. The First Interested Party is correct in submitting that the Guidance accepts a link between migration and a potential breach of the licensing objectives but it is also clear from the Guidance that each case must be decided on its individual facts so the magistrates could not simply assume that if people came from other premises, there would be

trouble.

**[56]** The Claimant complains that the magistrates' treatment of the migration issue also flies in the face of the Guidance because firstly it was an improper attempt to implement zoning and secondly it ignored the general principle of longer opening hours.

**[57]** Zoning is the setting of fixed trading hours within a designated area so that all the pubs in a given area have similar trading hours. The problem created by it, as demonstrated by experience in Scotland, is that people move across zoning boundaries in search of pubs opening later and that causes disorder and disturbance. The Guidance says, at para 6.8:

"The licensing authority should consider restricting the hours of trading only where this is necessary because of the potential impact on the promotion of the licensing objectives from fixed and artificially-early closing times."

It stresses that above all, licensing authorities should not fix predetermined closing times for particular areas.

**[58]** I am not convinced that the magistrates' limiting of the Claimant's operational hours can properly be described as implementing zoning which, in my view, is a term that is more appropriate to describe a general policy imposed by a licensing authority for a defined area than an individual decision of this type, albeit made with reference to the opening hours of other premises in the vicinity and having the effect of imposing the same hours as those premises.

**[59]** What has more weight, however, is the Claimant's submission that the magistrates failed to give proper weight to the general principle of later opening hours and to the intention that the approach to licensing under the Act would be to grant the hours sought for the premises unless it was necessary to modify them in pursuit of the licensing objectives. The Reasons include a heading "Flexibility" under which the magistrates say simply "We have considered the concept of Flexibility." In so saying, they may be referring to the sort of flexibility to which reference is made, for example, in para 6.6 of the Guidance (see above) but their shorthand does not enable one to know to what conclusions their consideration of the concept led them in this case nor whether they had reliably in mind that the starting point should be that limitations should not be imposed upon the licence sought unless necessary to promote the licensing objectives rather than that the licensing authority or the court should form its own view of what was necessary for the premises and only grant that.

**[60]** The Claimant was seeking to have the freedom to open later on certain occasions when the trade justified it or, as the magistrates put it, "the application for extended hours was to allow *flexibility* to open later on certain occasions". As the First Interested Party would submit, the magistrates may have inferred from Mr Miller's comment about making hay that the premises would *often* be open late rather than this happening only infrequently in accordance with the picture presented to the licensing authority. If this was their inference, however, it is odd that they considered that the Claimant could deal with the position by applying for a temporary certificate because this would have allowed the premises to open later on only a limited number of occasions. They make no express finding in their Reasons as to the frequency on which they considered the Claimant intended to keep the premises open late. This was material not only to the degree of disturbance that might be caused generally by late opening but also specifically to the issue of whether there would be migration. It would seem unlikely that customers from nearby pubs would bother to walk or even drive to the Saughall Hotel in search of another drink at the end of their evenings unless the Saughall Hotel was open late sufficiently frequently to lead them to a reasonable expectation that their journey would be worthwhile.

**[61]** The magistrates' comment about the temporary certificate also seems to me to be an example of a

failure by them to adopt the lighter approach that the Act dictated and to allow flexibility to those operating licensed premises unless the licensing objectives required otherwise. Temporary certificates would be a cumbersome and restricted means of achieving flexibility, not responsive to the day to day fluctuations in business, only available a limited number of times, and not in line with the philosophy of the Act.

**[62]** There is no consideration in the magistrates' decision of whether the imposition of conditions to control noise or other nuisance (which were going to be imposed) would be sufficient to promote the licensing objectives without reducing the operating hours of the premises. Given that the Act dictates that only such steps as are necessary should be taken with regard to the variation of the terms of operation sought, such consideration was required.

### *MY OVERALL CONCLUSIONS*

**[63]** It would be wrong, in my judgment, to say that the magistrates failed to take account of the licensing objectives. At the outset of their Reasons, they correctly identify those which are relevant. Similarly, as the First Interested Party submits, whilst they did not *articulate* that the curtailment of the hours sought was "necessary" to promote those objectives, it is implied in their decision that they did take this view and it can also be inferred from their comment that because of the concept of migration, public nuisance and crime and disorder would be "an inevitable consequence" of leaving the hours as granted by the Local Authority. However, in my view their approach to what was "necessary" was coloured by a failure to take proper account of the changed approach to licensing introduced by the Act. Had they had proper regard to the Act and the Guidance, they would have approached the matter with a greater reluctance to impose regulation and would have looked for real evidence that it was required in the circumstances of the case. Their conclusion that it was so required on the basis of a risk of migration from other premises in the vicinity was not one to which a properly directed bench could have come. The fact that the police did not oppose the hours sought on this basis should have weighed very heavily with them whereas, in fact, they appear to have dismissed the police view because it did not agree with their own. They should also have considered specifically the question of precisely how frequently the premises would be likely to be open late and made findings about it. They would then have been able to compare this to the winter opening pattern in relation to which they accepted there had been no complaints and draw proper conclusions as to the extent to which the summer months would be likely to differ from the winter picture. Having formed a clear view of how frequently late opening could be anticipated, they would also have been able to draw more reliable conclusions about the willingness of customers from further afield to migrate to Saughall Massie. They proceeded without proper evidence and gave their own views excessive weight and their resulting decision limited the hours of operation of the premises without it having been established that it was necessary to do so to promote the licensing objectives. In all the circumstances, their decision was unlawful and it must be quashed.

**[64]** I have said little so far about what appears in the magistrates' response for the judicial review proceedings. The various documents comprising the response did nothing to allay my concerns about the magistrates' decision. Indeed quite a lot of what was said reinforced my view that the magistrates had largely ignored the evidence and imposed their own views. They refer in their response to incidents about which the residents had given evidence and to the residents not having complained formally for various reasons, for example because it was Christmas or because there was thought to be no point. If the magistrates considered these matters to be relevant, it was incumbent on them to say so clearly in their reasons whereas they there recorded their acceptance that there had been no formal or recorded complaints, that the extended hours had been in operation for several months without incidents and that they had attached little or no weight to the statements of the witnesses of the Appellant. They also refer extensively in their response to their thoughts on migration, including that people may come from further afield than the pubs in the vicinity in cars. Particularly concerning is that they refer repeatedly to a perceived issue over police resources which is not something that, as far as I can see, had been raised by Sergeant Yehya or explored with him in evidence. Mr Beere says in his statement for example, ". . . there is also the question of Police resources and

their ability to effectively police this area especially at weekends with already stretched resources being deployed in Hoylake."

**[65]** Reference is made in the response documents to the court feeling that the Brewery's proposed opening hours contradicted the acceptable activities of a family pub and that the Saughall Hotel is "a village pub and not a night spot in the centre of town". For the court to take matters such as this into account seems to me to be an interference with the commercial freedom of the premises of a type that was not permissible under the Act unless it was necessary to promote the licensing objectives. I appreciate that the magistrates' response seems to suggest that they feared that a different type of customer was being courted or would invite themselves once it got too late for families but this does not seem to have been founded on anything that was given in evidence so was really not much more than speculation.

**[66]** Mr Beere's statement ends with a reference to the Brewery wanting to make hay while the sun shines, of which he says, "I believe that this statement was indicative of the Brewery's attitude to local residents and to the general management of the premises." Given that problems with or in the vicinity of the premises had been almost non-existent and that the magistrates had not seen fit to make reference in their Reasons to any difficulties caused by the Hotel, it is hard to see how this belief could be justified but it does perhaps exemplify the approach of the magistrates.

**[67]** I have considered quite separately the argument as to whether the hours of opening can be regulated as part of the licensing of premises as opposed to the hours during which licensable activities take place. It was suggested during argument that there was no power to regulate the time by which people must leave the premises. I cannot agree with this. Clearly keeping premises open (as opposed to providing entertainment or supplying alcohol there) is not a licensable activity as such. However, the operating schedule which must be supplied with an application for a premises licence must include a statement of the matters set out in s 17(4) and these include not only the times when it is proposed that the licensable activities are to take place but also "any other times during which it is proposed that the premises are to be open to the public". On a new grant of a premises licence, where there are no representations the licensing authority has to grant the application subject only to such conditions as are consistent with the operating schedule. I see no reason why, if it is necessary to promote the licensing objectives, these conditions should not include a provision requiring the premises to be shut by the time that is specified in the operating schedule. If representations are made and the licensing authority ultimately grants the application, it can depart from the terms set out in the operating schedule when imposing conditions in so far as this is necessary for the promotion of the licensing objectives. It must follow that it can impose an earlier time for the premises to be locked up than the Applicant wished and specified in its operating schedule. It is important to keep in mind in this regard that the role of the licensing authority and, if there is an appeal, the court, has two dimensions: the fundamental task is to license activities which require a licence and the associated task is to consider what, if any, conditions are imposed on the Applicant to ensure the promotion of the licensing objectives. A requirement that the premises close at a particular time seems to me to be a condition just like any other, such as keeping doors and windows closed to prevent noise. I see no reason why a condition of closing up the premises at a particular time should not therefore be imposed where controlling the hours of the licensable activities on the premises (and such other conditions as may be imposed) is not sufficient to promote the licensing objectives.

#### *THE COSTS ARGUMENT*

**[68]** In the light of my conclusion that the magistrates' decision is unlawful and therefore must be quashed, it is not appropriate for me to consider the arguments in relation to their costs order further. The Appellants had given an undertaking to the Licensing Authority that they would not seek costs against the Licensing Authority and they sought the entirety of their costs of the appeal from the Claimant. The magistrates granted that order and the Claimant submits that that was not an order that was open to them. Whatever the merits of that argument, the magistrates' order in relation to costs cannot now stand. The basic foundation for the



order for costs was that the appeal had succeeded and the Claimant had lost. That position has now been overturned and the costs order must go along with the magistrates' main decision. The magistrates would have had no reason to grant costs against the Claimant if the appeal had been dismissed.

*Appeal dismissed.*

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