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2 February 2023

Your contact is: Julie Quarmby - Committee Services

#### NOTICE OF MEETING - LICENSING APPLICATIONS SUB-COMMITTEE - 10 FEBRUARY 2023

A meeting of the Licensing Applications Sub-Committee will be held on Friday, 10 February 2023 at 9.30 am in the Mayor's Parlour, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading, RG1 2LU. The Agenda for the meeting is set out below.

<u>WARDS</u> <u>Page No</u> <u>AFFECTED</u>

#### 1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

(a) Councillors to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests they may have in relation to the items for consideration;

(b) Councillors to declare whether they wish to speak on the grounds they:

(i) Have submitted a relevant representation; or

(ii) Will be speaking on behalf of someone who has submitted a relevant representation.

#### 2. APPLICATION FOR THE REVIEW OF A PREMISES LICENCE, TODAY'S EXPRESS, 17 DUKE STREET, READING

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To review a Premises Licence in respect of Todays Express, 17 Duke Street, Reading RG1 4SA.

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### LICENSING ACT 2003 HEARING ON 2<sup>nd</sup> February 2023

#### APPLICATION FOR THE REVIEW OF A PREMISES LICENCE LP2002619

1. Premises:

Todays Express 17 Duke Street Reading RG1 4SA

#### 2. Applicants Requesting Review:

Chief Executive of Reading Borough Council

#### 3. Grounds for Review

The application is for the review of a premises licence in respect of the above mentioned premises. The application has been submitted by Reading Borough Council who are a named responsible authority under the Licensing Act 2003, in regard to the objectives of Prevention of Crime and Disorder, Prevention of Public Nuisance, Public Safety and Protection of Children from Harm.

This application for review has been submitted in order to address the failure of the premises licence holder to promote the licensing objectives via their insufficient measures to ensure due diligence or compliance with their licence conditions.

4. Date of receipt of application: 12 December 2022

A copy of the review application received is attached at Appendix MG1

5. Date of closure of period for representations: 09 January 2023

#### 6. Representations received:

During the 28 day consultation period, representations were received in regard to this review application from:

Thames Valley Police. Shown at Appendix MG2

#### 7. Background

The premises are a convenience store with an off-licence located on Duke Street. The Licensing Act 2003 premises licence was first granted on 03 February 2004. The licence was transferred to the current owner on 13/08/2020.

The Premises Licence Holder and Designated Premises Supervisor is: Mr Quais Aziz.

The premises currently has the benefit of a premises licence. A copy of the current licence LP2002619 is attached at **Appendix RS1** 

The times the licence authorises the carrying out of licensable activities Hours for the Sale by Retail of Alcohol Monday to Saturday from 0800hrs until 2300hrs Sunday from 1000hrs until 2230hrs Good Friday from 0800hrs until 2230hrs Christmas Day from 1200hrs until 1500hrs and 1900hrs until 2230hrs

8. Licensing Objectives and Reading Borough Council's Licensing Policy Statement

In determining this application, the Licensing Authority has a duty to carry out its functions with a view to promoting the four licensing objectives, which are as follows:

- the prevention of crime and disorder
- public safety
- the prevention of public nuisance
- the protection of children from harm

In determining this application, the Licensing Authority must also have regard to the representations received, the Licensing Authority's statement of licensing policy and any relevant section of the statutory guidance to licensing authorities.

9. Power of Licensing Authority on the determination of a Review

In determining the application, the sub-committee can take such steps as it considers appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives, which are:

- 1. Take no further action
- 2. To exclude a qualifying club activity from the scope of the certificate
- 3. Modify the conditions on the certificate
- 4. Suspend the certificate for a period not exceeding three months
- 5. Withdraw the certificate

Where the sub-committee takes a step mentioned in 2 or 3 it may provide that the modification or exclusion is to have effect for a period not exceeding three months or permanently.

# Amended Guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 April 2018

Licensing objectives and aims

1.2 The legislation provides a clear focus on the promotion of the four statutory objectives which must be addressed when licensing functions are undertaken.

1.3 The licensing objectives are:

- The prevention of crime and disorder
- Public safety
- The prevention of public nuisance; and
- The protection of children from harm.

1.4 Each objective is of equal importance. There are no other statutory licensing objectives, so that the promotion of the four objectives is a paramount consideration at all times.

1.5 However, the legislation also supports a number of other key aims and purposes. These are vitally important and should be principal aims for everyone involved in licensing work.

They include:

protecting the public and local residents from crime, anti-social behaviour and noise nuisance caused by irresponsible licensed premises.

## <u>Purpose</u>

1.7 This Guidance is provided to licensing authorities in relation to the carrying out of their functions under the 2003 Act. It also provides information to magistrates' courts hearing appeals against licensing decisions and has been made widely available for the benefit of those who run licensed premises, their legal advisers, and the general public. It is a key medium for promoting best practice, ensuring consistent application of licensing powers across England and Wales and for promoting fairness, equal treatment, and proportionality.

1.8 The police remain key enforcers of licensing law. This Guidance does not bind police officers who, within the parameters of their force orders and the law, remain operationally independent. However, this Guidance is provided to support and assist police officers in interpreting and implementing the 2003 Act in the promotion of the four licensing objectives.

## The role of responsible authorities

9.11 Responsible authorities under the 2003 Act are automatically notified of all new applications. While all responsible authorities may make representations regarding applications for licences and club premises certificates and full variation applications, it is the responsibility of each responsible authority to determine when they have appropriate grounds to do so.

# Determining actions that are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives

9.42 Licensing authorities are best placed to determine what actions are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives in their areas. All licensing determinations should be considered on a case-by-case basis. They should take into account any representations or objections that have been received from responsible authorities or other persons, and representations made by the applicant or premises user as the case may be.

9.43 The authority's determination should be evidence-based, justified as being appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives and proportionate to what it is intended to achieve.

## The Review process

11.1 The proceedings set out in the 2003 Act for reviewing premises licences and club premises certificates represent a key protection for the community where problems associated with the licensing objectives occur after the grant or variation of a premises licence or club premises certificate.

11.2 At any stage, following the grant of a premises licence or club premises certificate, a responsible authority, or any other person, may ask the licensing authority to review the licence or certificate because of a matter arising at the premises in connection with any of the four licensing objectives.

### Powers of a licensing authority on the determination of a review

11.16 The 2003 Act provides a range of powers for the licensing authority which it may exercise on determining a review where it considers them appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives.

11.17 The licensing authority may decide that the review does not require it to take any further steps appropriate to promoting the licensing objectives. In addition, there is nothing to prevent a licensing authority issuing an informal warning to the licence holder and/or to recommend improvement within a particular period of time. It is expected that licensing authorities will regard such informal warnings as an important mechanism for ensuring that the licensing objectives are effectively promoted and that warnings should be issued in writing to the licence holder.

11.18 However, where responsible authorities such as the Police or Environmental Health Officers have already issued warnings requiring improvement - either orally or in writing - that have failed as part of their own stepped approach to address concerns, licensing authorities should not merely repeat that approach and should take this into account when considering what further action is appropriate. Similarly, licensing authorities may take into account any civil immigration penalties which a licence holder has been required to pay for employing an illegal worker.

### Reading Borough Council Licensing Policy Statement (2018)

1.6 The predominantly urban nature of Reading as a town means that an appropriate balance needs to be struck between the needs of local businesses and the needs of local residents. This licensing policy seeks to encourage all stakeholders to engage in the licensing process so that the needs of all can be taken into account and issues dealt with in a spirit of partnership and cooperation.

## Crime and Disorder Act 1998

3.2 This Act requires local authorities and other bodies to consider crime and disorder reduction. Section 17 of the Act states that it shall be the duty of each authority, to exercise its various functions with due regard to the likely effect of the exercise of those functions on, and the need to do all that it reasonably can to prevent, crime and disorder in its area (including anti-social and other behaviour adversely affecting the local environment). This links specifically with the licensing objective of prevention of crime and disorder and the licensing authority will take into account all reasonable measures that actively promote this licensing objective.

## **Inspections**

9.6 The Authority will carry out inspections at all premises where a premises licence is in force. Additionally, an inspection may also be carried out where an application for a grant, variation or review is received by the Authority to ascertain the likely effect of granting any application on the promotion of the licensing objectives. Inspections may also be carried out if the Authority or one of our partner agencies/responsible authorities are made aware of complaints or other incidents that undermine the promotion of the licensing objectives.

9.7 Inspections will be carried out solely by the Licensing Authority or in conjunction with other partners such as Thames Valley Police, Home Office Immigration Enforcement and Trading Standards.

### Enforcement Approach

9.12 Where offences are found to have been carried out on licensed premises, the Authority has a number of enforcement options available to it. The Authority will work with partner agencies to determine which enforcement option is appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives. The seriousness of the offences found will be taken into consideration as well as any previous issues of non-compliance or criminality that have taken place at the licensed premises.

9.13 The enforcement options available to the Authority are wide-ranging. The Authority may consider, for example, that a letter detailing the issues found during an inspection followed by a period of time to rectify them is sufficient to promote the licensing objectives. Similarly, the Authority may consider that the breaches are sufficiently serious to warrant an immediate performance meeting with a licence holder so that a discussion can take place about the adequacy of the processes in place at the premises. This could, for example, lead to recommendations being put to the licence holder to implement much more robust conditions and processes to avoid a repeat of the breaches found. The authority may also decide to prosecute relevant persons for offences being carried out on licensed premises. Licence holders should note that the authority can take one or more of these options available to it at the same time for the same offences should it be deemed appropriate to do so.

9.15 Licensed premises that have a history of non-compliance over a period of months and years and/or incidents of serious crime taking place at that premises, will likely find that the Authority will initiate a review with a view to asking for the licence to be considered for revocation.

9.16 When considering what enforcement action to take, the Authority will always consider what is the most appropriate and proportionate step to promote the licensing objectives. The Authority is not required to wait for offences to occur before deciding it needs to take appropriate action. Case law - notably East Lindsey District Council v Abu Hanif - states that the promotion of the licensing objectives requires a prospective consideration of what is warranted in the public interest having regard to the twin considerations of prevention and deterrence. Similarly, the Secretary of State's Guidance to the Licensing Act makes clear that there is no requirement for the Authority to wait for the outcome of any criminal proceedings before it initiates any enforcement action. This is the approach that the Authority will take when considering what, if any, action should be taken when condition breaches and other criminal activity is found at licensed premises.

9.18 Any responsible authority or person defined as 'any other person' within the Act can initiate a review of any premises licence or club premises certificate. When another responsible authority or other person initiates a review, the Authority will deal with it as the Licensing Authority and may also wish to make representation in support of the review within its role as a responsible authority if it has relevant information.

9.20 The Authority shall endeavour to work with licence holders and applicants where it is believed that steps can be taken to rectify issues identified at licensed premises. However, it cannot merely continue that approach if it has previously failed, or the licence holder is unresponsive. It is the responsibility of all licence holders and responsible authorities to ensure that licensed premises are not undermining the promotion of the licensing objectives and that licensable activity is carried out lawfully. The Authority will work with partners to determine what action is appropriate for each premises where issues are discovered. Each premises and the action required for each will be assessed on its own individual merits.

9.21 The Council, in determining a review application can take the following steps in order to promote the licensing objectives:

- Modify the conditions on the licence
- Exclude a licensable activity from the scope of the licence
- Remove the designated premises supervisor
- Suspend the licence for a period not exceeding three months
- Revoke the premises licence

### Administration, Exercise and Delegation of Functions

10.5 The Licensing Authority has two roles within the Licensing Act 2003. The

second of these is the role as a responsible authority. This means that the authority can make representations and apply for licences to be reviewed if it is of the belief that a premises or licence holder is likely to or already is undermining the licensing objectives. When exercising its role as a Responsible Authority there will be a clear separation of work between the officer acting as the Licensing Authority and the officer acting as the Responsible Authority.

10.6 When considering whether to exercise its role as a Responsible Authority, officers shall ensure that cognisance is taken of the Authority's Licensing policy; the Secretary of State's Guidance; information it has obtained during enforcement visits or joint working with other Responsible Authorities or any other relevant information available to it.

10.7 Decisions as to whether representations are irrelevant, frivolous, or vexatious will be made by officers. All representations must relate to one or more of the four licensing objectives. They will be determined objectively; not based on any political judgements and will take cognisance of the Secretary of State's Guidance which states that in borderline cases the benefit of the doubt should be given to the person making the representation.

10.8 Where an officer of the Authority determines that a representation is frivolous or vexatious, then the person who made that representation will be given a written reason as to why that is the case.

10.9 Only in exceptional circumstances will the Authority remove personal details from representations and then only on the grounds of the potential for fear or intimidation being inflicted on the person making that representation. The Authority will also adhere to its obligations under the Data Protection Act and may redact personal contact details such as phone numbers, email addresses and house numbers.

Relevant Case law for consideration

(R) on the application of Hope and Glory Public House v Westminster City Council (2011) EWCA Civ31

East Lindsey District Council v Abu Hanif (2016)

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Reading Borough Council, Civic Offices, Bridge Street, Reading, RG1 2LU

#### Application for the review of a premises licence or club premises certificate under the Licensing Act 2003

#### PLEASE READ THE FOLLOWING INSTRUCTIONS FIRST

Before completing this form please read the guidance notes at the end of the form. If you are completing this form by hand please write legibly in block capitals. In all cases ensure that your answers are inside the boxes and written in black ink. Use additional sheets if necessary. You may wish to keep a copy of the completed form for your records.

#### I Robert Smalley

#### (Insert name of applicant)

apply for the review of a premises licence under section 51 of the Licensing Act 2003 for the premises described in Part 1 below

#### Part 1 – Premises or club premises details

Postal address of premises or, if none, ordnand Today's Express 17 Duke Street	ce survey map reference or description
Post town Reading	Post code (if known) RG1 4SA
Nome of promises licence holder or shub holdi	ng aluh promises cortificate (if luneur)

Name of premises licence holder or club holding club premises certificate (if known) Mr Quais Aziz

Number of premises licence or club premises certificate (if known) LP2002619

#### Part 2 - Applicant details

1 am	Please tick ✓ yes
1) an individual, body or business which is not a responsible authority (please read guidance note 1, and complete (A) or (B) below)	
2) a responsible authority (please complete (C) below)	$\boxtimes$
3) a member of the club to which this application relates (please complete (A) below)	

#### (A) **DETAILS OF INDIVIDUAL APPLICANT** (fill in as applicable)

Please tick ✓ yes				
Mr Mrs	Miss	□ M	s	Other title (for example, Rev)
Surname			First names	
I am 18 years old	or over			Please tick ✓ yes
Current postal address if different from premises address				
Post town			Post Code	
Daytime contact t	elephone number			
E-mail address (optional)				

## (B) DETAILS OF OTHER APPLICANT

Name and address	
Telephone number (if any)	
E-mail address (optional)	

#### (C) DETAILS OF RESPONSIBLE AUTHORITY APPLICANT

Name and address
Mr Robert Smalley
o.b.o Reading Borough Council - Licensing Department
Bridge Street
Reading
RG1 2LU
Telephone number (if any)
0118 937 2846
E-mail address (optional)
Robert.Smalley@reading.gov.uk

#### This application to review relates to the following licensing objective(s)

	Please tick one or more boxes $\checkmark$
1) the prevention of crime and disorder	$\boxtimes$
2) public safety	$\boxtimes$
3) the prevention of public nuisance	$\boxtimes$
4) the protection of children from harm	$\boxtimes$

**Please state the ground(s) for review** (please read guidance note 2)

Reading Borough Council, as a responsible authority under the Licensing Act 2003 and in order to promote the licensing objectives of prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, prevention of public nuisance and the protection of children from harm make an application for the review of Premises Licence No. LP2002619 (attached as **Appendix RS-1**), for Today's Express, 17 Duke Street, Reading, Berkshire, RG1 4SA.

Reading Borough Council Licensing submit this application for review in order to address the following concerns:

1. Failure of the premises licence holder to promote the licensing objectives via their insufficient measures to ensure due diligence or compliance with their licence conditions. These poor processes have led to the regular supply of alcohol to individuals who are involved in street drinking and its related anti-social behaviour in and around the vicinity of the premises. It is also suspected that the majority of the individuals being sold the alcohol are also intoxicated at the time that the sale occurs. Appendix RS-2 & RS-3 show a regular street drinker exiting the premises with 2 cans of alcohol which are then consumed in Thorn Lane, which is 30 metres northeast of the premises. This location regularly sees street drinkers that get progressively more intoxicated throughout the day and are involved in anti-social behaviour such as littering and disturbing nearby businesses and residents by shouting.

- 2. Information received from Thames Valley Police raises concerns that the premises is involved with the handling of stolen goods. More information on this is contained in **Appendix RS-4**.
- 3. On 28/06/2021, Mr Mohammed Naseri threatened a male that was in the premises with a hammer. Mr Naseri can be seen in Appendix RS-5 following a customer to the door of the premises while holding a hammer. On 18/05/2022, Mr Quais Aziz was involved in an altercation in which he slapped a woman in the face before grabbing her by the neck and throwing her out of the shop. He was later arrested and charged with assault. This incident is currently under active investigation. CCTV of this incident is attached as Appendix RS-6.
- 4. Information received from Thames Valley Police, after having viewed the premises' CCTV footage, reveals that alcohol was sold on this premises beyond the licensed hours. These incidents occurred on 1<sup>st</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> May 2022 and this was viewed by Declan Smyth (TVP). Unfortunately, this footage is no longer available.

It is our recommendation that the only way to prevent further undermining of the promotion of the licensing objectives is for the premises licence to be revoked. Please provide as much information as possible to support the application (please read guidance note 3)

Thames Valley Police's interactions with the premises:

## 28/09/2020

PC Wheeler and PC Moore visited the premises in relation to concerns that the premises was involved in the handling of stolen goods. As a result of this an inspection was carried out of the rear stock area of the store whereby large amounts of canned Red Bull were located. At the time these could not be proven as purchased from reputable distributors, and also of concern was the manner in which they were stored i.e. within cardboard boxes belonging to other products and with numerous cans with different batch numbers and designs. PC Wheeler returned later the same day to carry out a full licensing inspection which found that the premises was operating in breach of 5 of the 10 licence conditions. Details of said breaches are as follows:

- 1. CCTV was shown on the day and appeared to be working \* When recordings were requested the PLH failed to provide. (BREACH)
- 2. No refresher training was available and the excuse provided was that the DPS/PLH had not been in place for more than three months. However, it was confirmed all individuals had been working at the premises prior to the three month period. (BREACH)
- 3. An age verification policy was NOT displayed or available. (BREACH)
- 4. Copies of invoices and receipts for alcohol and tobacco purchases covering the previous six months were NOT available and it was stated they were at the accountants. (BREACH)
- 5. An incident book was shown which was blank and contained NO information. \*pertinent to this are consequent incidents that occurred for which no record was being made. (BREACH)

PC Wheeler spoke to the premises licence holder about the sale of super strength alcohol and how the sale of such products exacerbates issues of anti-social behaviour. Despite signage in the premises stating that cans must be purchased in packs of at least 4, PC Wheeler witnessed the selling of single cans, including to a known street drinker. The premises licence holder explained that he does not always enforce that rule. If properly enforced, this rule would discourage street drinkers from attending this premises, however, whatever selection method the premises licence holder is using when deciding whom to sell to is evidently ineffective to the extent that it appears to actually be undermining the promotion of the licensing objectives. The letter sent to the premises licence holder by PC Wheeler containing the full details of the inspection is attached as Appendix RS-7.

## 20/10/2020

Thames Valley Police officers attended the premises in order to request Page 15

copies of the CCTV relating to 28/09/2020 as well as various times on 20/10/2020 in relation to the handling of stolen goods.

On four of five occasions no handling of stolen goods was observed, however, when viewing the footage within the premises officers noted that known street drinking and prolific begging individuals entered the premises and purchased high strength alcohol (over the 6.5% ABV mark). On one of these occasions the male individual was seen to enter the shop, have an in depth discussion with staff during which he pointed to the stock room where it was suspected goods were often handled.

On the fifth the occasion a prolific town centre shoplifter was seen to enter the store carrying a large rucksack suspected of containing stolen goods. As soon as the male entered the store the CCTV immediately cuts out and does not re-start until he has left the store. This was consistent with the CCTV being switched off at its power source and back on after he had left the store. On viewing the CCTV at the store, officers noted that no other time lapses were observed. The suspicion was that the CCTV was deliberately tampered with at the time of the male's entry. A USB stick was provided in order that all of the requested footage could be downloaded by the premises licence holder as per the GDPR request. Unfortunately, the premises licence holder informed the officers that they were unable to download the footage and that instead the hard drive would be provided. On the 29/10/2020 the premises licence holder provided the premises' hard drive stating that it was being replaced due to a technical error causing the footage to cease recording and skip periods of time. This it was stated was the reason that the video had failed to record all images on the 20/10/2020.

Thames Valley Police have since attempted to interrogate the system but note the following issues with the hard drive as presented to them:

- The outer casing to the system was loose and open.
- The hard drive within the casing had its screws missing and was loose.
- The hard drive port appeared to have a glue like residue within it.

Officers deduced that human intervention had clearly taken place with the hard drive and the system was unable to provide any visual evidence. Unfortunately, this meant that the investigation into the handling of stolen goods could not be pursued and hindered Thames Valley Police's opportunity to either prove or disprove their suspicions relating to the premises.

PC Wheeler then recommends that the premises licence holder update the conditions on their licence in order to prevent further undermining of the licensing objectives. To date, no application to amend the premises licence conditions has been received by Reading Borough Council. The performance letter sent to the premises licence holder by PC Wheeler is attached as **Appendix RS-4**.

Reading Borough Council's interactions with the premises:

<u>19/01/2021</u>

Reading Borough Council Licensing Officer, Robert Smalley, visited the premises following information from Thames Valley Police about their concerns that the premises was not promoting the licensing objectives. During this inspection the following 7 breaches were identified:

- 1. Part A of the premises licence could not be produced. The premises licence holder explained that he had not been sent a copy since transferring the licence in August 2020. A copy of the premises licence was included with a copy of this inspection's results letter, however, it should be noted that the premises licence holder had not made any attempts to contact the council in order to request a copy of the licence, following PC Wheeler's visit in September 2020.
- 2. Part B of the premises licence could not be produced. The premises licence holder explained that he had not been sent a copy since transferring the licence in August 2020. Please see point 1 above.
- 3. The premises licence holder could not demonstrate that his staff were authorised to sell alcohol.
- 4. Condition (c) on page 7 of the licence in respect of staff training was not being complied with. Staff training records were located, however, this was simply a sheet signed by a member of staff to state that they had had training, but it was not clear through questioning what, if any, training had taken place. Template training materials were provided with this inspection's results letter.
- 5. Condition (f) on page 7 of the licence in respect of displaying the premises' age verification policy was not being complied with. A template policy was provided with this inspection's results letter.
- 6. Condition (g) on page 7 of the licence in respect of invoices was not being fully complied with. Invoices for alcohol and tobacco purchases for the months of October, November and December 2020 were not available.
- 7. Condition (h) on page 7 of the licence in respect of signage at the premises was not being fully complied with. There were no 'No Proof of Age, No Sale' signs on shelves containing alcohol.

This inspection highlights that, despite the assistance provided by Thames Valley Police, the premises licence holder was not able to operate the premises within the conditions of their licence. A letter was sent to the premises licence holder containing a list of the condition breaches and with some template policy and training materials in order to assist them to promote the licensing objectives. This inspection results letter is attached as **Appendix RS-8**.

### 28/01/2022

Reading Borough Council Licensing Officer, Robert Smalley, visited the premises to follow up on the inspection that took place in 2021. During this

inspection the following 4 breaches were identified:

- 1. Condition (a) on page 7 of the premises licence in relation to CCTV was not being fully complied with. There were not 31 days of recordings. There was no date and time stamping. The premises licence holder was not able to proficiently operate the CCTV system, and therefore couldn't provide data recordings.
- 2. Condition (c) on page 7 of the premises licence in relation to staff training was not being complied with. There were materials in the licensing folder that had been provided by officer Smalley after the previous inspection, however, the premises licence holder had not been undertaking 3 monthly training refresher sessions.
- 3. Condition (g) on page 7 of the premises licence in relation to having available true copies of invoices etc. for all tobacco and alcohol purchases in the previous 6 months was not being fully complied with. Only 2 months' worth of invoices were able to be produced. The invoices were not stored in a neat, chronological order, as had previously been advised, and the premises licence holder was unsure of where other records were, explaining that they were at home, or with their accountant, or possibly in the shop.
- 4. Condition (i) on page 7 of the premises licence in relation to using an incident book was not fully complied with. There was a general lack of information and there was no recording of the names of the members of staff that had dealt with any incidents.

Other concerns identified during this inspection were:

- 5. A 22 year old fire extinguisher was produced when the premises licence holder was asked to show the officer the premises' firefighting equipment. The pressure gauge needle was within the green segment; however, the extinguisher had not been inspected since 2012. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 states that extinguishers must be serviced every year and an extended life service must be carried out every 5 years.
- 6. The premises licence holder did not have a written fire risk assessment in place. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 states that every licensed premises must have a written fire risk assessment. The assessment should identify any fire risks and how those risks are being mitigated.
- 7. The emergency escape route was blocked with a metal roll cage stock trolley. The officer explained that, in the event of a fire, this could impede escape.

This inspection highlights that, despite the assistance provided by both Thames Valley Police and Reading Borough Council, the premises licence holder was still not able to operate the premises within the conditions of their licence. In fact, the premises licence holder doesn't seem to be able to maintain compliance between inspections. For example, During PC Wheeler's inspection in September 2020, breaches with the CCTV were highlighted, but then, during officer Smalley's inspection in 2021, the CCTV condition was complied with, finally however, during the next inspection in 2022, the system was once again the cause of a breach. A letter was hand delivered to the premises licence holder at the premises containing a list of the condition breaches and is attached as **Appendix RS-9**.

## 17/03/2022

Reading Borough Council Licensing Officer, Robert Smalley, visited the premises to follow up on the inspection that took place in January 2022. During this inspection the following 3 breaches were identified:

- 1. Condition (a) on page 7 of the premises licence in relation to CCTV was not being fully complied with. Only 22 of the required 31 days of recordings were able to be produced. There was date and time stamping, however, the time stamp was 8 hours behind. When playing back footage there appeared to be gaps in the footage as seen by the time stamps. The premises licence holder explained that the cameras were only recording motion which is a breach of this condition which requires the CCTV system to continually record whilst the premises are open to the public. The premises licence holder was not able to proficiently operate the CCTV system, and therefore couldn't provide data recordings.
- 2. Condition (c) on page 7 of the premises licence in relation to staff training was not being complied with. The materials were in the licensing folder and they had been signed, however, when questioned on when any training sessions had taken place and what the contents of the training were, the premises licence holder was unable to provide an answer. This indicates that the documents had been signed in an attempt to appear compliant with the licence conditions, but, in actuality, no training of any form had taken place.
- 3. Condition (i) on page 7 of the premises licence in relation to using an incident book was not fully complied with. There was a general lack of information and there was no recording of the names of the members of staff that had dealt with any incidents.

This outcome of this inspection once again confirms what has previously been stated; the premises licence holder does not appear able to operate a licensed premises within the conditions stated on the premises licence. Where problems are identified and the premises licence holder rectifies the issue, they then appear incapable of maintaining compliance. This is indicative of a licensee that has no intention of continuing to work at ensuring compliance. Many conditions appear as breaches across multiple inspections (CCTV, Staff Training, invoices). The conditions on the licence are not disproportionate, inappropriate or onerous. A letter was hand delivered to the premises licence holder at the premises containing a list of the condition breaches and is attached as **Appendix RS-10**.

#### Summary

Reading Borough Council and Thames Valley Police have, over the last 2 years, attempted to work with the premises licence holder to improve their standards and compliance with their premises licence via inspections and providing recommended conditions and various other materials. The premises licence holder has failed to engage with either the council or the police and unfortunately proof of this can be seen with the persistent state of non-compliance. It is apparent, given the evidence provided in this review application that the premises licence holder is incapable of operating the premises in line with the conditions on the licence.

Furthermore, the violence displayed by the premises licence holder and his employee, as witnessed in the CCTV footage, is gravely concerning. Assuming that they were the only 2 incidents, either could have resulted in serious injury or death. It is not conceivable that a licensee capable of such actions could ever be considered to be promoting the licensing objectives.

Reading Borough Council Licensing consider that the combination of the premises licence holder's poor, inconsistent record of compliance with their premises licence conditions, suspected handling of stolen goods, the very serious and concerning threats of, and actual violent acts carried out by staff, the selling of alcohol to street drinkers and the sale of alcohol outside the hours authorised by the premises licence seriously undermine the licensing objectives of Prevention of Crime and Disorder, Public Safety, Prevention of Public Nuisance and the Protection of Children from Harm.

It is our recommendation that the only measure that the licensing subcommittee can take to prevent further undermining of the licensing objectives is for the premises licence to be revoked.

We appreciate that the determination of this review is solely down to those members of the sub-committee at the hearing, however, we respectfully provide the following breakdown of the powers available to the subcommittee, each accompanied by an explanation as to whether we consider the power appropriate or not to address the current undermining of the licensing objectives:

### • the modification of the conditions of the premises licence;

We do not consider the addition or amending of the conditions attached to the licence to be a pragmatic solution due to the premises licence holder's inability to comply with the current licence conditions which, themselves, are not onerous. The addition of further conditions that are likely to be breached will not assist in the promotion of the licensing objectives.

### • the exclusion of a licensable activity from the scope of the licence;

There is only 1 licensable activity on the licence and therefore this option would render the licence redundant and, in practice, would have the same effect as revocation.

## • Revocation of the licence;

For the previously stated reasons, we believe this is the only way to prevent further undermining of the licensing objectives.

### • the suspension of the licence for a period not exceeding 3 months;

We do not believe that this option would serve as anything other than a punitive measure with the premises likely to return to how it currently operates at the end of the suspension period.

### • the removal of the designated premises supervisor;

There are currently only 2 people that work at this premises, both personal licence holders, and, as seen in the evidence submitted with this review, neither are capable of promoting the licensing objectives. This option would likely require the hiring of new staff, however, those new staff would still report to the current premises licence holder. See 11.22 of the Secretary of State's section 182 guidance.

I submit the following sections from the current Secretary of State's section 182 guidance and the Reading Borough Council statement of licensing policy as relevant to our review application.

#### Secretary of States Section 182 Guidance

11.19 Where the licensing authority considers that action under its statutory powers is appropriate, it may take any of the following steps:

- modify the conditions of the premises licence (which includes adding new conditions or any alteration or omission of an existing condition), for example, by reducing the hours of opening or by requiring door supervisors at particular times;
- exclude a licensable activity from the scope of the licence, for example, to exclude the performance of live music or playing of recorded music (where it is not within the incidental live and recorded music exemption);
- remove the designated premises supervisor, for example, because they consider that the problems are the result of poor management;
- suspend the licence for a period not exceeding three months;
- revoke the licence.

11.20 In deciding which of these powers to invoke, it is expected that licensing authorities should so far as possible seek to establish the cause or causes of the concerns that the representations identify. The remedial action taken should generally be directed at these causes and should always be no more than an appropriate and proportionate response to address the causes of concern that instigated the review.

11.22 Equally, it may emerge that poor management is a direct reflection of poor company practice or policy and the mere removal of the designated

premises supervisor may be an inadequate response to the problems presented. Indeed, where subsequent review hearings are generated by representations, it should be rare merely to remove a succession of designated premises supervisors as this would be a clear indication of deeper problems that impact upon the licensing objectives.

11.23 Licensing authorities should also note that modifications of conditions and exclusions of licensable activities may be imposed either permanently or for a temporary period of up to three months. Temporary changes or suspension of the licence for up to three months could impact on the business holding the licence financially and would only be expected to be pursued as an appropriate means of promoting the licensing objectives or preventing illegal working. So, for instance, a licence could be suspended for a weekend as a means of deterring the holder from allowing the problems that gave rise to the review to happen again. However, it will always be important that any detrimental financial impact that may result from a licensing authority's decision is appropriate and proportionate to the promotion of the licensing objectives and for the prevention of illegal working in licensed premises. But where premises are found to be trading irresponsibly, the licensing authority should not hesitate, where appropriate to do so, to take tough action to tackle the problems at the premises and, where other measures are deemed insufficient, to revoke the licence.

11.24 A number of reviews may arise in connection with crime that is not directly connected with licensable activities. For example, reviews may arise because of drugs problems at the premises, money laundering by criminal gangs, the sale of contraband or stolen goods, the sale of firearms, or the sexual exploitation of children. Licensing authorities do not have the power to judge the criminality or otherwise of any issue. This is a matter for the courts. The licensing authority's role when determining such a review is not therefore to establish the guilt or innocence of any individual but to ensure the promotion of the crime prevention objective.

11.25 Reviews are part of the regulatory process introduced by the 2003 Act and they are not part of criminal law and procedure. There is, therefore, no reason why representations giving rise to a review of a premises licence need be delayed pending the outcome of any criminal proceedings. Some reviews will arise after the conviction in the criminal courts of certain individuals, but not all. In any case, it is for the licensing authority to determine whether the problems associated with the alleged crimes are taking place on the premises and affecting the promotion of the licensing objectives. Where a review follows a conviction, it would also not be for the licensing authority to attempt to go beyond any finding by the courts, which should be treated as a matter of undisputed evidence before them.

11.26 Where the licensing authority is conducting a review on the grounds that the premises have been used for criminal purposes, its role is solely to determine what steps should be taken in connection with the premises licence, for the promotion of the crime prevention objective. It is important to recognise that certain criminal activity or associated problems may be taking place or have taken place despite the best efforts of the licence holder and the staff working at the premises and despite full compliance with the conditions attached to the licence. In such circumstances, the licensing authority is still empowered to take any appropriate steps to remedy the problems. The licensing authority's duty is to take steps with a view to the promotion of the licensing objectives and the prevention of illegal working in the interests of the wider community and not those of the individual licence holder.

#### Reading Borough Council Statement of Licensing Policy

9.1 It is the responsibility under the Act for all responsible authorities; licence holders and prospective licence holders to actively promote the four licensing objectives. The Council along with partner agencies, has a wider responsibility to protect the public as a whole and prevent crime, harm or nuisance from taking place.

9.15 Licensed premises that have a history of non-compliance over a period of months and years and/or incidents of serious crime taking place at that premises, will likely find that the Authority will initiate a review with a view to asking for the licence to be considered for revocation.

9.16 When considering what enforcement action to take, the Authority will always consider what is the most appropriate and proportionate step to promote the licensing objectives. The Authority is not required to wait for offences to occur before deciding it needs to take appropriate action. Case law - notably East Lindsey District Council v Abu Hanif - states that the promotion of the licensing objectives requires a prospective consideration of what is warranted in the public interest having regard to the twin considerations of prevention and deterrence. Similarly, the Secretary of State's Guidance to the Licensing Act makes clear that there is no requirement for the Authority to wait for the outcome of any criminal proceedings before it initiates any enforcement action. This is the approach that the Authority will take when considering what, if any, action should be taken when condition breaches and other criminal activity is found at licensed premises.

#### Relevant Case Law for Consideration

<u>East Lindsey District Council v Abu Hanif (t/a Zara's Restaurant) (2016)</u> this underpins the principles widely acknowledged within the Licensing Act 2003 that the licensing objectives are prospective, and that the prevention of crime and disorder requires a prospective consideration of what is warranted in the public interest, having regard to the twin considerations of prevention and deterrence.

### **Appendices**

Appendix RS-1: Current Premises Licence Appendix RS-2: Video of Street Drinker Appendix RS-3: Photo of Street Drinker Appendix RS-4: Thames Valley Police Performance Letter - 12/12/2020 Appendix RS-5: Video of Hammer Incident Appendix RS-6: Video of Assault Incident Appendix RS-7: Thames Valley Police Inspection Results Letter -28/09/2020 Appendix RS-8: Reading Borough Council Inspection Results Letter -19/01/2021 Appendix RS-9: Reading Borough Council Inspection Results Letter -28/01/2022 Appendix RS-10: Reading Borough Council Inspection Results Letter -17/03/2022

Please	tick	√	yes

Have you made an application for review relating to the premises before

If yes please state the date of that application

Day	Month	Year	

If you have made representations before relating to the premises please state what they were and when you made them

I have sent copies of this form and enclosures to the responsible authorities	$\boxtimes$
and the premises licence holder or club holding the club premises certificate,	
as appropriate	
I understand that if I do not comply with the above requirements my	$\boxtimes$
application will be rejected	

Please tick ✓ yes

#### IT IS AN OFFENCE, UNDER SECTION 158 OF THE LICENSING ACT 2003, TO MAKE A FALSE STATEMENT IN OR IN CONNECTION WITH THIS APPLICATION. THOSE WHO MAKE A FALSE STATEMENT MAY BE LIABLE ON SUMMARY CONVICTION TO A FINE OF ANY AMOUNT.

**Part 3 – Signatures** (please read guidance note 4)

**Signature of applicant or applicant's solicitor or other duly authorised agent** (please read guidance note 5). **If signing on behalf of the applicant please state in what capacity.** 

Signature		
Date	12/ <b>12/2022</b>	
Capacity	Licensing Enforcement Officer	
Contact name (where not previously given) and postal address for correspondence associated with this application (please read guidance note 6)		
Post town		Post Code
Telephone	number (if any)	
If you wou (optional)	ld prefer us to correspond with you	using an e-mail address your e-mail address

#### Notes for Guidance

- 1. A responsible authority includes the local police, fire and rescue authority and other statutory bodies which exercise specific functions in the local area.
- 2. The ground(s) for review must be based on one of the licensing objectives.
- 3. Please list any additional information or details for example dates of problems which are included in the grounds for review if available.
- 4. The application form must be signed.
- 5. An applicant's agent (for example solicitor) may sign the form on their behalf provided that they have actual authority to do so.
- 6. This is the address which we shall use to correspond with you about this application.



## LICENSING ACT 2003 PREMISES LICENCE - PART A

Reading Borough Council being the Licensing Authority under the above Act, HEREBY GRANT a PREMISES LICENCE as detailed in this licence.

Premises Licence Number	LP2002619

Trading name of Premises and Address	
Todays Express	
17 Duke Street	
Reading	
RG1 4SA	
Telephone Number	0118 959 4946

Where the Licence is time limited the dates the Licence is valid N/A

Licensable Activities

Licensable Activities authorised by the Licence Sale of Alcohol by Retail - Off the Premises

Authorised Hours for Licensable Activities

The times the licence authorises the carrying out of licensable activities

Hours for the Sale by Retail of Alcohol

Monday from	0800hrs until 2300hrs
Tuesday from	0800hrs until 2300hrs
Wednesday from	0800hrs until 2300hrs
Thursday from	0800hrs until 2300hrs
Friday from	0800hrs until 2300hrs
Saturday from	0800hrs until 2300hrs
Sunday from	1000hrs until 2230hrs

Good Friday from 0800hrs until 2230hrs Christmas Day from 1200hrs until 1500hrs and 1900hrs until 2230hrs

#### Alcohol

Where the licence authorises supplies of alcohol whether these are on and/or off supplies

Sale of Alcohol by Retail - Off the Premises

Premises Licence Holder

Name, (registered) address of holder of premises licence Name: Mr Quais Aziz Address: Additional Details

Name, address and telephone number of designated premises supervisor where the premises licence authorises the supply of alcohol Name: Mr Quais Aziz Address:

Designated Premises Supervisor

Personal Licence number and issuing authority of personal licence held by the designated premises supervisor where the premises licence authorises the supply of alcohol Personal Licence Number: LP7002381 Issuing Authority: Reading Borough Council

This Licence shall continue in force from **13/08/2020** unless previously suspended or revoked.

Dated: 28 October 2020

Signed on behalf of the issuing licensing authority

Frances Martin Executive Director for Economic Growth and Neighbourhood Services

## **Mandatory Conditions**

#### Supply of Alcohol

#### To be applied where a premises licence authorises the supply of alcohol

- 1 No supply of alcohol may be made under the premises licence:
  - a) at a time when there is no designated premises supervisor in respect of the premises licence, or
  - b) at a time when the designated premises supervisor does not hold a personal licence or his personal licence is suspended
- 2 Every supply of alcohol made under the premises licence must be made or authorised by a person who holds a personal licence.

#### Film Exhibitions

To be applied only where a premises licence or club premises certificate authorises the exhibitions of films

- 1 The admission of children to any exhibition of any film must be restricted in accordance with section 20 of Part 3 of the Licensing Act 2003.
- 2 In the case of films which have been classified by the British Board of Film Classification admission of children to films must be restricted in accordance with that classification.
- 3 In the case of films which have not been classified by the British Board of Film Classification, admission of children must be restricted in accordance with any recommendation made by the Licensing Authority.

#### Door Supervisors

To be applied where a premises licence or club premises certificate includes a condition that any person must be at the premises to carry out a security activity. [Except premises with a premises licence authorising only plays or films or premises used exclusively by a club].

1 Each individual present at the licensed premises to carry out a security activity must be licensed by the Security Industry Authority.

## Responsible Drink Promotions (commencement date 01/10/2014)

1) The responsible person must ensure that staff on relevant premises do not carry out, arrange or participate in any irresponsible promotions in relation to the premises.

2) In this paragraph, an irresponsible promotion means any one or more of the following activities, or substantially similar activities, carried on for the purpose of encouraging the sale or supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises—

(a) games or other activities which require or encourage, or are designed to require or encourage, individuals to-

(i) drink a quantity of alcohol within a time limit (other than to drink alcohol sold or supplied on the premises before the cessation of the period in which the responsible person is authorised to sell or supply alcohol), or

(ii) drink as much alcohol as possible (whether within a time limit or otherwise);

(b) provision of unlimited or unspecified quantities of alcohol free or for a fixed or discounted fee to the public or to a group defined by a particular characteristic in a manner which carries a significant risk of undermining a licensing objective;

(c) provision of free or discounted alcohol or any other thing as a prize to encourage or reward the purchase and consumption of alcohol over a period of 24 hours or less in a manner which carries a significant risk of undermining a licensing objective;

(d) selling or supplying alcohol in association with promotional posters or flyers on, or in the vicinity of, the premises which can reasonably be considered to condone, encourage or glamorise anti-social behaviour or to refer to the effects of drunkenness in any favourable manner;

(e) dispensing alcohol directly by one person into the mouth of another (other than where that other person is unable to drink without assistance by reason of disability).

### Supply of Tap Water (commencement date 01/10/2014)

1. The responsible person must ensure that free potable water is provided on request to customers where it is reasonably available.

## Age Verification Policy (commencement 01/10/2014)

1. The premises licence holder or club premises certificate holder must ensure that an age verification policy is adopted in respect of the premises in relation to the sale or supply of alcohol.

2. The designated premises supervisor in relation to the premises licence must ensure that the supply of alcohol at the premises is carried on in accordance with the age verification policy.

3. The policy must require individuals who appear to the responsible person to be under 18 years of age (or such older age as may be specified in the policy) to produce on request, before being served alcohol, identification bearing their photograph, date of birth and either—

(a) a holographic mark, or

(b) an ultraviolet feature.

## Drink Measurements (commencement date 01/10/2014)

1. The responsible person must ensure that-

(a) where any of the following alcoholic drinks is sold or supplied for consumption on the premises (other than alcoholic drinks sold or supplied having been made up in advance ready for sale or supply in a securely closed container) it is available to customers in the following measures—

(i) beer or cider: 1/2 pint;

(ii) gin, rum, vodka or whisky: 25 ml or 35 ml; and

(iii) still wine in a glass: 125 ml;

(b) these measures are displayed in a menu, price list or other printed material which is available to customers on the premises; and

(c) where a customer does not in relation to a sale of alcohol specify the quantity of alcohol to be sold, the customer is made aware that these measures are available."

#### Minimum Permitted Pricing (commencement 28th May 2014)

1. A relevant person shall ensure that no alcohol is sold or supplied for consumption on or off the premises for a price which is less than the permitted price.

2. For the purposes of the condition set out in paragraph 1-

(a)"duty" is to be construed in accordance with the Alcoholic Liquor Duties Act 1979;

(b)"permitted price" is the price found by applying the formula-

 $\mathsf{P} = \mathsf{D} + (\mathsf{D}\mathsf{x}\mathsf{V})$ 

where-

(i) P is the permitted price,

(ii) D is the rate of duty chargeable in relation to the alcohol as if the duty were charged on the date of the sale or supply of the alcohol, and

(iii) V is the rate of value added tax chargeable in relation to the alcohol as if the value added tax were charged on the date of the sale or supply of the alcohol; (c) "relevant person" means, in relation to premises in respect of which there is in force a premises licence—

(i) the holder of the premises licence,

(ii) the designated premises supervisor (if any) in respect of such a licence, or (iii) the personal licence holder who makes or authorises a supply of alcohol under such a licence;

(d) "relevant person" means, in relation to premises in respect of which there is in force a club premises certificate, any member or officer of the club present on the premises in a capacity which enables the member or officer to prevent the supply in question; and

(e) "valued added tax" means value added tax charged in accordance with the Value Added Tax Act 1994

3. Where the permitted price given by Paragraph (b) of paragraph 2 would (apart from the paragraph) not be a whole number of pennies, the price given by that sub-paragraph shall be taken to be the price actually given by that sub-paragraph rounded up to the nearest penny.

4. (1) Sub-paragraph (2) applies where the permitted price given by Paragraph (b) of paragraph 2 on a day ("the first day") would be different from the permitted price on the next day ("the second day") as a result of a change to the rate of duty or value added tax.

4. (2) The permitted price which would apply on the first day applies to sales or supplies of alcohol which take place before the expiry of the period of 14 days beginning on the second day.

#### Annex 2

#### Conditions Consistent with the Operating Schedule

#### General

(a) The Premises Licence Holder shall ensure that the premises operates a digitally recorded CCTV system. Cameras shall continually record whilst the premises are open to the public and recordings kept for a minimum of 31 days with accurate time and date stamping. Data recordings shall be made available without undue delay and no later than 24 hours from initial request to an authorised officer of Reading Borough Council or Thames Valley Police. Facilities for viewing the CCTV recordings shall be made available in the event a request is made for the purpose of the prevention or detection of crime or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders or to check that the CCTV system complies with the requirement of this condition;

(b) Persons authorised to sell alcohol shall be trained to BIIAB Level 1 Award in Responsible Alcohol Retailing, or any other similarly recognised nationally approved accreditation curriculum. Records of the training shall be kept and made available to an authorised officer of Reading Borough Council or Thames Valley Police on request;

(c) All staff shall be refresher trained in the law relating to the Licensing Act 2003 every three months. Records of the refresher training and the topics covered shall be kept and made available to an authorised officer of Reading Borough Council or Thames Valley Police on request;

(d) The premises shall at all times operate a Challenge 25 policy. Customers who attempt to buy alcohol who appear under the age of 25 shall be prevented from purchasing alcohol until they have first provided proof of age. Only a valid British driver's licence, showing a photograph of the person, a valid British passport or proof of age card bearing the "Pass" hologram or any other nationally accredited card are to be accepted;

(e) Notices advertising the Challenge 25 policy to customers shall be displayed in a prominent position on the premises;

(f) The Premises Licence Holder shall display in a prominent position a copy of their age verification policy;

(g) The Premises Licence Holder shall have available on the premises, for inspection by an authorised officer of Reading Borough Council or Thames Valley Police at any reasonable time, true copies of invoices, receipts or other records of transactions for all tobacco and alcohol products purchased in the preceding six months.

(h) Clear signs shall be displayed at the front entrance of the premises, on shelves containing alcohol and at all till points stating "No Proof of Age No Sale".

(i) All incidents which impact on any of the four licensing objectives shall be recorded in a register kept at the premises for this purpose. The names of the person recording the incident and those members of staff who deal with any incident shall also be recorded. Where known any offenders name shall also be recorded. This register shall be made available to authorised officers of Reading Borough Council and Thames Valley Police upon request.

(j) A refusal log, either electronic or written, detailing any attempted sale of alcohol that have been refused by staff members shall be kept and maintained on the premises. This log shall be made available to authorised officers of Reading Borough Council and Thames Valley Police upon request.

## Annex 3

# Conditions attached after a hearing by the Licensing Authority

Annex 4

# <u>Plans</u>

As attached plan no. ED 15001, dated  $10^{\rm th}$  July 2005





Mr Quais Aziz

PC 5787 Wheeler Reading Licensing Dept

Reading Police Station Castle Street Reading Berkshire RG1 7TH

Tel: 101 Email: simon.wheeler@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

### Saturday 12th December 2020

Licensing Act 2003

#### Premises Licence Number: LP2001975

Premises: Daniel Convenience Store

Premises Address: 17 Duke Street, Reading, RG1 4SA

Dear Mr Aziz

On the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 your premises was visited by PC Moore in relation to concerns that you were carrying out licensable activity during which time staff were suspected of handling stolen goods. As a result of this an inspection was carried out of the rear stock area of the store whereby large amounts of canned Red Bull were located. At the time these could not be proven as purchased from reputable distributors, and also of concern was the manner in which they were stored i.e. within cardboard boxes belonging to other products and with numerous cans with different batch numbers and designs.

As a result of this initial visit I attended the shop later in the day to perform a full licensing inspection. At the time of the inspection I was initially assisted by Mr Mohammed Naseri and later also by the Designated Premises supervisor (DPS) Mr Aziz.

The results of the inspection were as follows:

Conditions (a) – (j)

- a) CCTV was shown on the day and appeared to be working \* When recordings were requested the PLH failed to provide. (BREACH)
- b) Staff member had level 2 certificate. (COMPLIANT)
- c) No refresher training was available and the excuse provided was that the DPS/PLH had not been in place for more than three months. However it was confirmed all individuals had been working at the premises prior to the three month period. (BREACH)
- d) Challenge 25 was in operation. (COMPLIANT)
- e) Challenge 25 posters were displayed. (COMPLIANT)
- f) An age verification policy was NOT displayed or available. (BREACH)

- g) Copies of invoices and receipts for alcohol and tobacco purchases covering the previous six months were NOT available and it was stated they were at the accountants. (BREACH)
- h) Proof of age signage was displayed to the front of the shop. (COMPLIANT)
- An incident book was shown which was blank and contained NO information.
   \*pertinent to this are consequent incidents that occurred for which no record was being made. (BREACH)
- j) A refusals log was shown (COMPLIANT)

The result is that 50% of your current licence conditions were found to be in breach.

Further areas of concern that were noted include:

- Your Section 57 notice was displayed but not operated as Part A of the licence could not be readily accessed.
- Only one page of your Premises licence summary was on display.
- You were displaying a sign stating that high strength alcohol would only be sold in packs of four. This policy was observed to not be in operation when an individual known to us a street drinker and person who proxy purchases for other street drinkers was observed purchasing two single individual cans including a can of super strength Omega White Cider with an ABV of 7.5%. (This alcohol was discovered after the inspection to have been supplied by him to a beggar seated outside of Subway in Duke Street within the vicinity of the premises and within the Reading Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) area, and thus increasing anti-social behaviour within the area).

On the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020 Officers re-attended your premises to present a GDPR compliant data protection request for CCTV relating to the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 regarding to our suspected handling stolen goods investigation.

Further to this, the request also provided for the viewing and disclosure of CCTV relating to various times on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020 whereby it was suspected goods again may have been handled within the store.

On four of five occasions no handling of stolen goods was observed, however when viewing the footage within the premises it was noted that known recognisable "Street Drinking" and prolific begging individuals entered the premises and purchased high strength alcohol (over the 6.5% ABV mark). On one of these occasions the male individual was seen to enter the shop, have an in depth discussion with staff during which he pointed to the stock room where it was suspected goods were often handled.

At the end of the conversation the male walked over to the alcohol refrigerator and picked up a can of lager. He again engaged in conversation with staff and then left the shop without paying for the alcohol.

No complaint was made in relation to this as a theft, and no record of this had been made within the incident book. This may suggest that the action by this individual had been allowed and raises concerns as to why this would have been allowed to take place. On the fifth occasion a prolific town centre shoplifter was seen to enter the store carrying a large rucksack suspected of containing stolen goods.

As soon as the male entered the store the CCTV immediately cuts out and does not re-start until he has left the store. This was consistent with the CCTV being switched off at its power source and back on after he had left the store.

On viewing the CCTV at the store it was noted that no other time lapses were observed. The suspicion at this time is that the CCTV was deliberately tampered with at the time of the males entry.

A USB stick was provided in order that all of the requested footage could be downloaded by you as per the GDPR request.

Unfortunately you informed us that you were unable to download the footage and that instead the hard drive would be provided.

On the 29<sup>th</sup> October 2020 you provided the premises hard drive stating that it was being replaced due to a technical error causing the footage to cease recording and skip periods of time. This it was stated was the reason that the video had failed to record all images on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020.

Thames Valley Police have since attempted to interrogate the system but note the following issues with the hard drive as presented to us:

- The outer casing to the system was loose and open.
- The hard drive within the casing had its screws missing and was loose.
- The hard drive port appeared to have a glue like residue within it.

Human intervention had clearly taken place with the hard drive and the system was unable to provide any visual evidence. Unfortunately this meant that the investigation into the handling of stolen goods could not be pursued and hindered our opportunity to either prove or disprove our suspicions relating to your store.

The outcome of the interventions that have been taken to date have raised concerns in relation to the following areas:

- 1. Concerns surrounding suspected handling of stolen goods which can now unfortunately neither be proven nor disproven.
- 2. Failure to provide CCTV in order to support the Police investigation into this allegation; which is also a breach of condition a) of your licence.
- 3. Concerns that you are regularly selling high strength alcohol above 6.5% ABV in single cans and bottles to individuals involved in street drinking, begging and anti-social behaviour.
- 4. General failures to ensure compliance with your licence conditions.

In response we consider it a necessary step for some amendments to be made to your premises licence in order to address the serious concerns outlined above. The amendments are set out below and a further explanation and full rationale shall be provided within this letter.

#### Replace condition a) page 7 within your current premises licence with:

The premises licence holder shall ensure the premises' digitally recorded CCTV system cameras shall continually record whilst the premises are open to the public and recordings shall be kept for a minimum of 31 days with time and date stamping. <u>The entire licensable area and store room</u> shall be covered by the CCTV and an appropriate number of cameras shall be installed to cover the <u>external areas</u> <u>immediately outside of the premises to the front and rear</u>. Data recordings shall be made immediately available to an authorised officer of Thames Valley Police or Reading Borough Council together with facilities for viewing upon request, subject to the provisions of the Data Protection Act. Recorded images shall be of such quality as to be able to identify the recorded person in any light. At least one member of staff on the premises at any time during operating hours shall be trained to access and download material from the CCTV system;

This condition has been specifically designed to ensure the promotion of the licensing objectives and specifically the prevention of crime and disorder by providing sufficient CCTV coverage preventing the potential for the handling of stolen goods and to support staff ability to say "no" if they are approached either inside or outside of the store with offers to purchase cheap stolen articles. This shall also improve your ability to ensure that your stock is not being purchased and consumed in the vicinity, leading to anti-social behaviour and breaches of the PSPO.

# Replace condition b) and c) on page 7 within your current premises licence with:

Staff employed to sell alcohol shall undergo training upon induction before they are allowed to sell alcohol. This shall include, but not be limited to:

- The premises age verification policy
- The Four Licensing objectives
- Dealing with refusal of sales
- Proxy purchasing
- Recognising valid identity documents not in the English language
- Identifying attempts by intoxicated persons to purchase alcohol
- Identifying signs of intoxication
- Conflict management

• How to identify and safeguard vulnerable persons who attend and leave the premises

b)Signed induction and refresher training records are to be kept for a minimum of 2 (Two) years of the date of training and made available for inspection by a Police Officer or authorised officer of Reading Borough Council upon request

c) All staff authorised to sell alcohol shall be trained to a minimum of BII Level 1 award in responsible alcohol retailing (ARAR) <u>or any other similar curriculum</u> within four weeks for existing and subsequent employees and provide evidence of such training having been undertaken to Thames Valley Police and any authorised officer of Reading Borough Council's licensing team upon request;

The condition above is designed to strengthen your ability to deliver sufficient training, and allows you to determine your own training program for delivery on immediate employment of staff, as well as providing you more choice in relation to your ongoing training provider.

#### The following two new conditions to be included:

1. No beers, lagers and ciders of 6.5% ABV and above shall be sold at any time during permitted licensing hours, in line with Reading Borough Council's current policy;

This condition shall ensure that you promote the licensing objectives relating to the prevention of crime and disorder and the prevention of public nuisance in that Officers have identified via direct evidence from your store that you are supplying individuals involved in anti-social behaviour such as begging, street drinking and begging whilst street drinking. This conditions both supports the PSPO, the local statement of licensing policy and promotes the licensing objectives.

We also believe that this condition shall reduce incidents of anti-social behaviour and public order that may be directed towards your staff by de-incentivising individuals likely to act in that manner from entering the store.

2. A current written authorisation list shall be kept in the Licensing File on the premises confirming the details of all current staff that have been authorised to sell alcohol by a Personal Licence Holder. The authorisation list shall include, the name of the staff member authorised, the name and personal licence details of the person authorising them to sell alcohol. This list shall also contain the date and signature of the staff member authorised and countersigned by the authorising Personal Licence Holder;

This condition is being offered specifically to aid you in your due diligence as at the time of our initial inspection a written authorisation list was not available and it is important that both staff and authorised officers are able to determine who has authorisation to sell alcohol and whom has provided that authorisation in order to ensure that any sales that take place are not otherwise than in accordance with a licence.

As a reminder please be aware that it is a prosecutable offence under Section 136(1) of the Licensing Act 2003 to carry out unauthorised licensable activity whilst otherwise than in accordance with the authorisation of your premises licence. This means that whilst you are not in compliance with all of the conditions contained within your current premises licence you may be prosecuted for this offence.

Please ensure that you work through the conditions on page 7 of your premises licence and also pay cognisance of all mandatory conditions set out within your premises licence and ensure that they are all 100% complied with.

Thames Valley Police believe that in order to promote the four licensing objectives, and specifically to ensure the prevention of crime and disorder that it is both reasonable and proportionate for the inclusions and amendments set out to be added to your premises licence.

We would ask that you seriously consider applying for a minor variation to both support this process and avoid a review of the premises licence as part of a tiered stepped approach to resolve these very serious concerns.

I also wish to reiterate that Reading has a Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) in place which identifies the street consumption of alcohol as an issue serious enough to be included within the local legislation, and of course your agreement to reduce the strength of alcohol that you sell would also support this local legislative initiative as well as allay the concerns that we have identified relating to the regular sale of super strength alcohol by staff at your premises to individuals involved in anti-social behaviour and drunkenness within Reading town centre and immediately in the vicinity of your premises (specifically Duke Street and Subway).

Please consider this proposal in detail and I would encourage you to contact us to either discuss any concerns you may have in relation to this proposal, or your intention to support this process and agree to the provision of a minor variation as described.

We are willing to discuss this with you as part of a formal performance process, and the Reading Borough Council enforcement department shall also be involved with those discussions.

You may wish to consider obtaining some licensing advice in the meantime and we would encourage you to do that if you have any concerns surrounding your understanding of this process.

However, we would ask that you please contact us no later than 29<sup>th</sup> December 2020 (via email response or other written confirmation) with your decision to either agree to the condition amendments as proposed. Or to request a further formal performance meeting with Thames Valley Police and Reading Borough Council to discuss this matter.

As previously mentioned Thames Valley Police are making this proposal as part of a formalised stepped approach. As such a failure to address the identified concerns in this letter via the manner proposed (via voluntary agreement) may result in further action being considered if it is deemed necessary to ensure the promotion of the four licensing objectives.

Thames Valley Police are keen to work in partnership with licensees to promote the licensing objectives and improve both the standards of your operation whilst addressing community concerns regarding the sale of alcohol in the area. You shall receive a copy of this letter at your premises (as we currently do not have the updated premises licence with your current DPS/PLH address) as well as via email to the address provided at the time of the inspection.

Along with the email you shall also find a helpful basic training document that you may find useful, a section 57 notice, written authorisation list, written age verification policy and Community alcohol Partnership poster that may be beneficial.

I urge you to make use of the documentation that has provided in order to aid your promotion of the licensing objectives.

Yours Faithfully

ani-5707.

PC 5787 Simon Wheeler





PC 5787 Wheeler Reading Licensing Dept

Reading Police Station Castle Street Reading Berkshire RG1 7TH

Tel: 101 Email: simon.wheeler@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Mr Quais Aziz

Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Licensing Act 2003

Premises Licence Number: LP2001975

Premises: Daniel Convenience Store

Premises Address: 17 Duke Street, Reading, RG1 4SA

Dear Mr Aziz

On the 28<sup>th</sup> September 2020 I inspected your premises licence.

During the inspection I was assisted by your shop manager Mr Mohammed Naseri and also had the opportunity to speak with yourself in your capacity as both the Designated Premises Supervisor and Premises Licence Holder.

Whilst conducting the inspection some areas of concern were discovered regarding non-compliance with four of your premises licence conditions.

I also recorded poor levels of due diligence that impact negatively upon your ability to promote the licensing objectives.

On arrival it was noted that the summary of your licence (Part B) was incorrectly displayed. Only the first page was visible and advice was provided to separate and display all pages so that they were viewable in full.

Part A of your licence although eventually produced was not available immediately and appeared difficult to locate, requiring the inspecting officers help to locate and collate the relevant licence pages for you.

The licence provided was the previous copy of your premises licence which detailed Mr Ashrafi as the Premises Licence Holder and Designated Premises Supervisor. You explained that due to the coronavirus situation that the Reading Borough Council had failed to provide you with an updated copy of the licence since you had been transferred into both of these positions.

You were displaying a Section 57 notice; however this was not being operated correctly. No person was aware of the contents of the licence or the conditions that were required to be complied with.

Advice was provided regarding the storage of Part A of your premises licence, the legal requirement to produce it and how the provision of a section 57 notice can improve your ability to recall where it is located and whom is aware of its content.

In relation to your licence conditions the following applied:

- a) Your CCTV was compliant.
- b) You stated that you only have one member of staff (the manager Mr Naseri) and he has a Level 2 qualification so this was compliant.
- c) No 3 monthly refresher training was provided, but it was stated that at the time of the inspection you had not been the Premises Licence Holder for longer than 3 months. We shall provide you via email with a basic training document that you may find useful with regards to this, however please be aware that this contains the minimum standard of refresher training.
- d) Challenge 25 was in operation.
- e) Challenge 25 notices were displayed.
- f) An age verification policy was not displayed and not available. This condition was therefore not complaint. We shall send an age verification policy via email to aid you in this aspect.
- g) You were unable to provide true copies of receipts and invoices etc for all alcohol and tobacco purchases for the preceding 6 months stating they were with your accountant.
- h) You were displaying signage stating No ID no sale at the front of the shop.
- i) An empty incident book was shown with no entries completed. Advice was provided as to a minimum requirement to note that no incidents occurred each day and to sign off by the duty manager in order to show due diligence.
- j) A refusals log was provided when requested and completed.

Furthermore and surrounding other aspects of knowledge and due diligence I recorded the following:

- The DPS was aware of all of the four licensing objectives.
- Your fire exit was denoted by an A4 slip of white paper with Fire Exit handwritten on the front. The rear fire door had a single green sticker but no emergency lighting was available.
- Your two fire extinguishers had not been checked since 2011.
- Although not a pre-requisite due to only having two staff you did not have a written fire risk assessment.

Finally, we discussed the super strength alcohol products (above 6.5% abv beers and cider) that you were displaying for sale, and I raised concerns that the sale of these products may be exacerbating community issues surrounding alcohol related anti-social behaviour in the area and asked you to consider risk assessing selling these products.

You were actually displaying a handwritten sign stating that certain high strength cans were only to be sold in packs of four rather than single cans. This would have Page 45

been part of the reduce the strength program and suggested that you were supporting that scheme and in turn promoting the licensing objectives.

However, I witnessed single cans being sold by your staff that were listed on the handwritten poster and on one occasion two single cans were sold to a member of the street drinking fraternity. It was then also confirmed by yourself that you do not always enforce the rule and that you subjectively decide who to sell single of high strength alcohol cans to and who not to sell them to. This process in our opinion undermines rather than promotes the licensing objectives.

In actual fact to support this concern having left the shop after the inspection I discovered one of the cans of "Omega" cider that was purchased whilst I was in the shop being consumed by a beggar seated outside of the Subway restaurant approximately twenty feet from your shop.

It was confirmed to me by the beggar that the male I saw purchase the alcohol actually purchases the cans on their behalf and then distributes them to the drinkers.

Please be aware of this process and include this in your risk assessment for the sale of high strength alcohol.

Please also be informed that due consideration shall be given in relation to potential future recommendations for you to cease the sale of such products in order to promote the licensing objectives. In relation to this we may recommend that you include a condition via minor variation to address this issue, and shall contact you in due course to further discuss that option.

In conclusion along with this letter I have provided you with a number of helpful documents to enable you to begin improving your processes and due diligence. These have included examples of authorisation Sheets, basic training documents, section 57 notice and a written age verification, as well as advice on displaying and securing both Part A and Part B of your licence.

A failure to address the identified concerns and breaches of licence condition immediately may result in further action being considered if it is deemed necessary to ensure the promotion of the four licensing objectives.

Thames Valley Police are keen to work in partnership with licensees to promote the licensing objectives and improve both the standards of your operation whilst addressing community concerns regarding the sale of alcohol in the area leading to incidents of antisocial behaviour.

Yours Faithfully

ani-5707

PC 5787 Simon Wheeler (Q.Inst.Pa)



	Reading Borough Council Working better with you		Frances Martin Executive Director of Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services Civic Offices, Bridge St, Reading, RG1 2LU	
Г		Г	2 0118 937 3787	
E mailed to a			Our Ref: 054837 e-mail: robert.smalley@reading.gov.uk	
E-mailed to:			<b>2</b> 0118 937 2846	
			Date: 27/01/2021	
L				
Your contact is:	Robert Smalley, Licensing			

Dear Sirs,

#### Licensing Act 2003 Premises Name: Today's Express Premises Address: 17 Duke Street, Reading, RG1 4SA

On **19/01/2021**, I visited your premises to ensure you are complying with the above premises licence and to advise on any matters that may arise during the inspection.

During the inspection, I found a number of items that require your attention as outlined below:

#### Mandatory conditions

- Part A of your licence could not be produced at the time of the inspection. Part A of the licence needs to be available to authorised officers at all times during your operating hours even when you are not on the premises. You explained that you had not been sent the current version of the licence, so I have included a copy with this letter. Please print this off and keep at the shop.
- Part B of your licence was not on display. It is a requirement that this document is on display in a prominent position so that your customers can see it. All pages must be displayed. You explained that you had not been sent the current version of the licence, so I have included a copy with this letter. Please print this off and keep at the shop.
- It could not be demonstrated that any of your staff had been authorised to sell alcohol. You
  may be aware that the mandatory conditions attached to your licence state that all sales of
  alcohol shall be made by, or authorised by, a personal licence holder. The best way to
  demonstrate compliance with this condition is to do a written authorisation list. If staff have
  not been authorised then they will not be permitted to sell alcohol. This is a breach of
  condition and should be rectified immediately. I have included a template authorisation list
  with this letter, please complete this and keep at the shop.

#### Conditions agreed with licensing

- Condition C on page 7 of your licence in respect of staff training was not being complied with. Staff training records were located, however, this was simply a sheet signed by a member of staff to state that they had had training, but it was not clear through questioning what, if any, training had taken place. This is a breach of condition and should be rectified immediately. I have included some training material with this letter.
- Condition F on page 7 of your licence in respect of displaying your age verification policy was not being complied with. I have included a template policy for you to edit and put on display.
- Condition G on page 7 of your licence in respect of invoices was not being fully complied with. Please send me copies of invoices for alcohol and tobacco purchases for the months of October, November and December 2020.
- Condition H on page 7 of your licence in respect of signage at your premises was not being fully complied with. You must put up signs that state 'No Proof of Age, No Sale' on shelves containing alcohol, including shelves in the fridges.

Whilst we consider what, if any, further action to take in respect of the findings detailed in this letter, <u>please rectify all of the above within 28 days</u>. Once you believe all of the above has been rectified, please contact me so that we can arrange a re-inspection.

If you have any questions in relation to the contents of this letter then please contact me.

Yours faithfully

Robert Smalley Licensing Enforcement Officer

Appendix RS-9

	ading gh Council g better with you		Frances Martin Executive Director of Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services Civic Offices, Bridge St, Reading, RG1 2LU
г		-	會 0118 937 3787
		I	Our Ref: 055270
	Hand Delivered		e-mail: robert.smalley@reading.gov.uk ☎ 0118 9372 846
			Date: 8 February 2022
L		_	
Your contact is:	Robert Smalley, Licensing		

Dear Sirs,

#### Licensing Act 2003 Premises Name: Today's Express Premises Address: 17 Duke Street, Reading, RG1 4SA

On **28/01/2022**, I visited your premises to ensure you are complying with the above premises licence and to advise on any matters that may arise during the inspection.

During the inspection, I found a number of items that require your attention as outlined below:

#### Conditions agreed with licensing

- Condition (a) on page 7 of your premises licence in relation to CCTV was not being fully complied with. You did not have 31 days of recordings. There was no date and time stamping. You were not able to proficiently operate the CCTV system, and therefore couldn't provide data recordings.
- Condition (c) on page 7 of your premises licence in relation to staff training was not being complied with. You had the materials in your licensing folder that I provided you with after my previous inspection, however, you had not been undertaking 3 monthly training refresher sessions.
- Condition (g) on page 7 of your premises licence in relation to having available true copies of invoices etc. for all tobacco and alcohol purchases in the previous 6 months was not being fully complied with. You were only able to produce 2 months' worth of invoices. The invoices were not stored in a neat, chronological order, as I had previously advised, and you were unsure of where other records were, explaining that they were at home, or with your accountant, or possibly in the shop.

• Condition (i) on page 7 of your premises licence in relation to using an incident book was not fully complied with. There was a general lack of information and you were not recording the names of the members of staff that dealt with any incidents.

#### **Other Concerns:**

- You had a 22 year old fire extinguisher (manufactured in 2000). The pressure gauge was within the safe limit, however, the extinguisher had not been inspected since 2012. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 states that extinguishers must be serviced every year and an extended service must be carried out every 5 years.
- You did not have a written fire risk assessment in place. The Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 states that every licensed premises must record any risks they identify and how they are mitigating those risks.
- Your emergency escape route was blocked with a metal roll cage storage trolley. As I explained to you, in the event of a fire, this could impede people's escape.

Whilst we consider what, if any, further action to take in respect of the findings detailed in this letter, <u>please rectify all of the above by 18/02/2022</u>. I will be visiting your premises again on this date.

If you have any questions in relation to the contents of this letter then please contact me.

Yours faithfully

Robert Smalley Licensing Enforcement Officer

# Appendix RS-10



Frances Martin Executive Director of Economic Growth & Neighbourhood Services Civic Offices, Bridge St, Reading, RG1 2LU 2018 937 3787

Our Ref: 055270

Hand Delivered

e-mail: <u>robert.smalley@reading.gov.uk</u> **@** 0118 9372 846

Date: 17 March 2022

L

**[** 

Your contact is: Robert Smalley, Licensing

Dear Sirs,

Licensing Act 2003 Premises Name: Today's Express Premises Address: 17 Duke Street, Reading, RG1 4SA

On **17/03/2022**, I visited your premises to ensure you are complying with the above premises licence and to advise on any matters that may arise during the inspection.

During the inspection, I found a number of items that require your attention as outlined below:

#### Conditions agreed with licensing

- Condition (a) on page 7 of your premises licence in relation to CCTV was not being fully complied with. You only had 22 of the required 31 days of recordings. There was date and time stamping, however, the time stamp was 8 hours behind. When playing back footage there appeared to be gaps in the footage as seen by the time stamps. You explained that the cameras were only recording motion which is a breach of this condition which requires the CCTV system to continually record whilst the premises are open to the public. You were not able to proficiently operate the CCTV system, and therefore couldn't provide data recordings.
- Condition (c) on page 7 of your premises licence in relation to staff training was not being complied with. You had the materials in your licensing folder and they had been signed, however, when I questioned you on when any training sessions had taken place and about the contents of the training, you were unable to answer my questions. This leads me to believe that the documents had been signed, but that no training of any form had taken place.
- Condition (i) on page 7 of your premises licence in relation to using an incident book was not fully complied with. There was a general lack of information and you were not recording the names of the members of staff that dealt with any incidents.

If you have any questions in relation to the contents of this letter then please contact me.

Yours faithfully

Robert Smalley Licensing Enforcement Officer

# THAMES VALLEY POLICE

Division/Station : Reading Police Station Licensing Dept

From: C2107 Declan Smyth

Subject :

#### To : Reading Borough Council

Ref : Today's Express, 17 Duke Street, Reading, RG1 4SA Date :6<sup>th</sup> January 2023

# Supportive review representation

To whom it may concern

I C2107 Declan Smyth on behalf of the Chief Officer of Police for Thames Valley wish to provide this representation in support of the review process relating to Today's Express (Daniel Convenience Store), 17 Duke Street, Reading, RG1 4SA

This representation gives due regard to the failure of this premises to support the licensing objective the prevention of public nuisance and the prevention of crime and disorder as well as impacting negatively on all other licensing objectives.

**On 9th December 2022** (a) 14:18 – (43220554262) – Thames Valley Police officers received information that a known shoplifter has entered into the premises known as Todays Express on Duke Street with a full bag, a short time later he has exited the store with an empty bag. Officers have gone to the store to review CCTV however upon reviewing the footage it would appear that that CCTV camera on the shop floor gets turned off when the male enters the store and goes back on again when he leaves. Due to this the CCTV system has been seized for further investigation. (Appendix TVP DS1 22-12-09 MG11 Witness Statement Redacted)

I have view the CCTV from the premises, the following observations have been made:

Todays Express, Duke Street - CCTV Scanning

• The CCTV System is only partial recording on 8th November to 9th December -31 days recording but major gaps throught the premises opening hours

• 10/11/22 @ 09:46 Known street drinkers - enter premises -purchasing K Cider 9%. Again @ 18:39 known street drinker purchasing super strength beer & cider

• 10/11/22 @ 22:57:25, splitting a pack of super strength cider for sale

• 12/11/22 @ 00:05 to 00:10, Smirnoff Ice & WKD Blue Sales, 1.5Ltr Captain Morgan Spice Rum – Sales of alcohol past permitted hours

• 12/11/22 @ 00:24, cans of Gordons & Tonic -Sales of alcohol past permitted hours - DPS

• 12/11/22 @00:26, Whisky Sales of alcohol past permitted hours - DPS

• 12/11/22 @ 00:32, Cans of super strength, Sales of alcohol past permitted hours - DPS

• 12/11/22 @ 00:40, Cans of super strength, Sales of alcohol past permitted hours –DPS

• 12/11/22 @ 00:42 Stella, Sales of alcohol past permitted hours – DPS

• 13/11/22 @ 00:07 Single sales of alcohol, sales of alcohol past permitted hours – DPS

• 13/11/22 @ 00:22 Small bottle of Vodka, Sales of alcohol past permitted hours –DPS

• 13/11/22 @ 00:31 Super strength cans, sales of alcohol past permitted hours – DPS

• 13/11/22 @ 00:33, Bottles of Bub, sales of alcohol past permitted hours - DPS

• 13/11/22 @ 00:48, Cans of Gin & Tonic, Sales of Alcohol – DPS

• 26/11/22 @ 00:01, Customer purchase a can of super strength beer and was drinking said can on the premises - Mr. Nasari

• 26/11/22 @ 00:05, Wine and cans of beer and Bud, Sales of alcohol outside permitted hours – Mr. Nasari

• 26/11/22 @ 00:07, Bottle of vodka, Sales of alcohol outside permitted hours – Mr. Nasari

• 26/11/22 @ 00:15, Bottle of whiskey, Sales of alcohol outside permitted hours – Mr. Nasari

• 26/11/22 @ 00:16, Cans of K cider & supper strength lager, Sales of alcohol outside permitted hours – Mr. Nasari

• 26/11/22 @ 00:21, Cans of lager, Sales of alcohol outside permitted hours - Mr. Nasari

• 26/11/22 @ 00:24, Cans of spirits and mixer, Sales of alcohol outside permitted hours - Mr. Nasari

• 26/11/22 @ 00:26, 2 x Cans of Lager/beer, Sales of alcohol outside permitted hours - Mr. Nasari

• 27/11/22 @ 00:08, Small bottle of spiced rum, sales of alcohol past permitted hours - DPS

• 27/11/22 @ 00:20, 2 x Cans of Beer/Lager, sales of alcohol past permitted hours - DPS

• 02/12/22 @ 00:06, Can of Beer/lager, sales of alcohol past permitted hours - DPS

• 02/12/22 @ 00:07, 1.5 Liter of Bacardi Spice Rum, sales of alcohol past permitted hours - DPS

• 03/12/22 @ 00:10, 2 x cans Super strength cider & 2 cans Lager/Beer, sales of alcohol past permitted hours – Mr. Nasari

• 03/12/22 @ 00:14, Small bottle of Jack Daniels whisky, sales of alcohol past permitted hours – Mr. Nasari

• 04/12/22 @ 00:15, 1.5 Liter white wine, small bottle brandy, can of JD & Cola, sales of alcohol past permitted hours – Mr. Nasari

• 04/12/22 @ 00:21, large bottle of fruit cider, sales of alcohol past permitted hours – Mr. Nasari

• 04/12/22 @ 00:23, Small bottle of spice rum, sales of alcohol past permitted hours – Mr. Nasari

• 09/12/22 @ 00:09, 1.5 Liter red wine, sales of alcohol past permitted hours – DPS

• 09/12/22 @ 00:18, 1.5 Liter red wine, sales of alcohol past permitted hours – DPS

I Declan Smyth have viewed hours of CCTV relating to the sale of alcohol at the premises and worringly at no stage did the staff or management operate Challange 25.

**On 18th May 2022** (*a*) **22:48 - (43220217776)** – Thames Valley Police were made aware of a verbal altercation between a female and the DPS Mr. Quais Aziz at the premises resulting in an Assault.

The CCTV of this incident appears to show that the male and female have attended the premises and engaged in a conversation with the store manager/owner/DPS. Both the male and female then leave and come back to the shop. The female's male partner has grabbed 3 bottles of Gin and has then ran from the store without making payment for the goods. The female tried to walk out of the store, the store keeper/DPS has slapped her across the face, grabbed her around her neck and has then literally thrown her out onto the street.

### (Appendix TVP DS2 22-05-18 Disorder Redacted)

Thames Valley Police seized the hard drive containing the CCTV footage of the incident so as to aid in the investigation. It has been noted that the CCTV system/hard-drive did not record continuously.

The current CCTV condition on the premises licence reads: "The Premises Licence Holder shall ensure that the premises operates a digitally recorded CCTV system. Cameras shall continually record whilst the premises are open to the public and recordings kept for a minimum of 31 days with accurate time and date stamping. Data recordings shall be made available without undue delay and no later than 24 hours from initial request to an authorised officer of Reading Borough Council or Thames Valley Police. Facilities for viewing the CCTV recordings shall be made available in the event a request is made for the purpose of the prevention or detection of crime or the apprehension or prosecution of offenders or to check that the CCTV system complies with the requirement of this condition"

The premises has not complied with this condition, which is the main condition on its licence to aid in the prevention of crime and disorder.

Thames Valley Police suggests that the management and staff power off the harddrive/cameras so as to prevent full and continuous coverage. In viewing the CCTV footage, Declan Smyth witnessed, that on numerous days the system fails to record for extended periods of time. Having viewed the premises CCTV footage, it also reveals that alcohol was sold on this premises beyond the licensed hours. These incidents occurred on 1st, 7th, 13th and 14th May 2022 and this was viewed by Declan Smyth. Unfortunately, this footage is no longer available.

**On 28th June 2021** (a) 17:41 – (43210284976) – Thames Valley Police were made aware of an incident that occurred at the premises resulting in Pubic Disorder.

A Known male entered the premises and requested beers without having to make a payment, stating he would pay tomorrow - Staff refused, leading to an argument between the male and the staff member – The male has armed himself with a metal item form his rucksack, the staff member has armed himself with a hammer that was located and retrieved from behind the till. No complaint has been made by either, passers-by were distressed by the incident.

# (Appendix TVP DS3 21-06-28 Disorder Redacted)

**On 28th January 2022** (a) **21:29** – (**43220042096**) - Thames Valley Police were made aware of a Shoplifting incident that occurred at the premises resulting in an Assault Without Injury to a staff member.

Four IC3 youths have gone into the shop and have stolen some crisps from the shelf nearest to the entrance/exit of the premises. The victim has challenged these youths and retrieved his stock back, the victim has then attempted to remove these youths from the shop by going hands on with them. It is unknown which but one of the youths has then punched the victim in the face and kicked his hand to aid their escape. The youths have then made off into town and the victim has called 999.

After reviewing the CCTV it is not clear enough to identify any of the youths. The victim does not have any injuries. The OIC has given the aggrieved safety advice around not challenging anyone and calling 999 if a crime is in progress and to update the location of his CCTV in order to capture an image of the suspects face.

**On 23rd August 2018** (a) **15:20** – **(43180266018)** – Thames Valley Police recorder the sale of alcohol to a person under the age of 18, during test purchase operation.

During a test purchasing operation a young 15 year old male member of staff served two children (YP01 and YP02) under the age of 18 with alcohol having not asked to see or checked any identification.

During the sale an adult male member of staff identified as the deputy manager was stood next to the child (his son), and on one occasion the adult member of staff asked the test purchaser "Would you like a bag" to carry the alcohol!

The 15 year old staff member served YP02 1 x bottle of Bulmers (abv 4.0%), and YP01 with 4 x cans of high strength Mocne Debowe (abv 7.0%).

Street drinkers also seen purchasing alcohol throughout the process.

# (Appendix TVP DS4 18-08-23 TVP TP Operation Redacted)

In conclusion we at Thames Valley Police have a host of issues relating to this premises including the day to day management of the premises, security of the premises, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance and the prevention of crime and disorder. The premises licence holder has failed to adhere to the recommendations from both Thames Valley Police and Reading Borough Council. The premises continual dependence on the sale of alcohol to nominals & street drinkers has led to disorder, handling of stolen goods and public nuisance.

We suspect the premises representatives will say that they have implemented all conditions placed upon them and that these are having a positive influence.

You may also be told in their defence that these are isolated incidents and the venue has not provided many other incidents of crime and disorder. Unfortunately we suggest that this is far more a consequence of the fact the venue regularly suffers incidents but that the staff and management fail to report to the police and local authority.

Unfortunately it appears that the poor performance of the store as a business is leading them to continue to sell alcohol to "higher risk" individuals which leads to attracting a demographic of customer with a propensity for extreme and repeat violence.

If this premise licence is allowed to remain in force we have a strong belief that the management/ownership and staff of Todays express, will;

- Continue to undermine the four licence objectives by continuing to pursue a policy of "high risk" sales leading to yet further incidents of crime and disorder. This will continue to put members of the public, staff and Police officers safety at risk.
- Continue to operate in a manner that suggest that the handling of stolen goods is an integral part of the business. This will continue to contribute to the exploitation of vulnerable people in the town centre and fuel the practice of handling of stolen goods.
- Continue to open, operate and sell alcohol beyond their permitted hours. This is a continuation of the ownership/management and staffs bad practices and poor due dilligance resulting in regular breachs of the premises licence

Thames Valley Police would like to recommend revocation as the only guarantee available to safeguard members of the public whilst this business is operating in its current format and ownership. This page is intentionally left blank

MG11 WITNESS STATEMENT Criminal Procedure Rules, r 27.2; Criminal Justice Act 1967, s.9; Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5B						
Occurrence Number: 43220554262	URN:					
Statement of:						
Age:	Occupation: Security guard					
Remote Witness Statement: Yes						
the contents of the statement and confirm that the con	C Vincent Moore. I have had the opportunity to review tents are accurate and true. d belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in					
evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have will do not believe to be true.	•					
The content of this statement has been prepared by i statement was then typed not in the presence of the the statement is logged below. Any changes are reco	witness. The time and date that the witness reviewed					
I am the above named person and my details are know	own to the police.					
years. I am therefore very familiar with numerous sho I have worked with have all been members of the Re group of retailers within the town that share intelligen	ther retailers in Reading town centre over the last five oplifters within Reading town centre. The retailers that ading Business Against Crime consortium which is a ce with each other to try and prevent / reduce / detect safe" radio system that we all use. The council CCTV					
On Friday 9th December 2022 I was off duty. At about male that I know by the name <b>second second</b> .	It 14:00 hours I was in Broad Street when I noticed a					
rucksack, and walking very quickly. I decided to follow him to see where he was going. I followed him from the PRET shop on Broad Street the short distance to the "Red Shop" which is number 17 Duke Street.						
I saw him enter the store, still with his full looking rucksack. This store is known to have a very bad reputation for taking in stolen goods, so I decided to observe what was happening.						
I saw the male that was working in the store talking whis rucksack. I could not make out what the items we some bank notes. Again I could not tell how much.						
I used my mobile telephone to record a short video of clearly see counting out some £10 bank no						
I have uploaded this footage to the police secure digi LG/01 Phone footage 17 Duke Street 09122022 at 14						

I can described the male working in the store as an Asian male in his 50s, large build and balding. He was wearing a dark sweatshirt with white writing on the front.

When I was stood outside the store, I could clearly see what was happening. The two males were about 8 to 10 meters from where I was stood looking through the stores front window.

Statement accepted or rejected by witness? Approved on 10-12-2022 07:34:58



Submitting Officer			
Shoulder No/Name: P6847	Station	: EA	LPA: EA
Incident References			
incluent Nelerences			
Premises Name/Location:	TODAYS EXPRESS, 17 D	DING	
Incident Date:	18/05/2022	Incident Time:	22:44
Command & Control URN:	INC202205182397	Crime Report(s):	43220217776
CCTV Seized?	YES	_	
Sources of Information:	P6847		

#### Nature of Incident - what happened?

& attend the store to cash in a £12 winning scratch card. A verbal disagreement ensues. The bottles loses patience at being denied the payout he is expecting and grabs three bottles of Gin and sprints out of the shop making no payment. Shop keeper Quais AZIZ gives chase but the makes good his escape.

As a stempts to walk out of the shop, AZIZ who is standing in the doorway slaps her across her face and then grabs her around the neck and literally throws her out of his store, causing her to fall to the pavement outside. No injury sustained.

Premises Response - what part did staff play? How did they react/assist (include good/poor performance)?

Mr AZIZ assaulted

Upon police arrival, Mr AZIZ was obstructive in showing the CCTV footage of the assault. Mr AZIZ then failed to download the footage, rather asking OIC to return the fokkowing day. When told by OIC that he would not be giving Mr AZIZ an opportunity to delete the footage, Mr AZIZ started pulling wires out of the back of the hard drive.

Police Response - what action was taken? Please identify the main officers who dealt with the incident.

OIC P6847 attended on the night of the incident.

OIC seized the hard drive to secure the footage.

Statement taken from victim Ms

Offered to take statement from Mr AZIZ but declined and no formal complaint from AZIZ.

Mr AZIZ arrested and interviewed. Offence denied.

Charged by custody Sergeant with assault by beating.

Persons Involved - to add more rows click into the final cell of this table						
Name         Date of Birth         Role         Action Taken         Ref (e.g. Custod)						
Quais AZIZ		Offender	Arrested	CREU22012491		
		Shoplifter	NFA			
Victin		Victim	MG11 taken			

When complete, please forward to the Licensing Officer for the area (and anyone else as per local instructions)

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#### LICENCED PREMISES INCIDENT REPORT

Submitting Officer						
Shoulder No:	P5787	Name:	Simon Wheeler			
Station:	Reading	LPA:	EA			

Incident References						
Premises Name:	Today's Express	Location:	Duke Street			
Incident Date:	28/06/2021	Incident Time:	1740 hours			
Command & Control URN:	N/A	Crime Report(s):	43210284976			
CCTV Seized:	CCTV from premises preserved & BWV of P5787 43200268860 captures police visit					
Sources of Information:	PC 5787 Wheeler – PC 5381 Laidler (OIC)					

#### Nature of Incident – what happened?

Report of an incident in the street was received via members of the public of a disturbance in the street involving a male carrying a metal bar.

Transpires this is a serious public order incident involving a member of the public and staff member working at the time. (Affray/ Section 4 Public order)

**Premises Response –** what part did staff play? How did they react/assist? (include good/poor performance)

The initial incident resolved in an area search with no trace, however during a later investigation by the NHPT the following was discovered:

- (1) CCTV was viewed and showed a known shoplifter and street drinker enter the shop known to be and have a long ongoing verbal discussion which becomes a disagreement within the shop.
- (2) As the discussion becomes heated MN the shop assistant moves swiftly from behind the counter and aggressively grabs ; then manhandles him out of the shop.
- (3) Both (who returns with a short metal bar of some sort) and MN (who produces a hammer from behind the counter) spend the next 10 – 15 minutes threatening each other with their individual offensive weapons. MN is seen at one point apparently swiping the hammer towards DB who is off of camera view outside of the entrance door.
- (4) The premises did NOT report this incident to Police.
- (5) The staff member MN did NOT make a record within the premises incident book.



Police Response - what action was taken? Please identify the main officers who dealt with the incident

Premises visited and CCTV viewed and preserved.

Incident book viewed and had no record of incident.

Ongoing investigation, however initial indications are that the staff member used excessive force and utilised an offensive weapon during the incident as did the member of the public.

\*\*\* NB, CCTV does not capture external area of the premises; and this had been a previous request as a voluntary upgrade via contact with the premises in December 2020. The premises have failed to respond to previous contact and attempts to performance manage the premises and this incident is serious enough for the consideration of a licence review to promote the licensing objectives \*\*\*\*



#### LICENCED PREMISES INCIDENT REPORT

Name	Date of Birth	Role	Action Taken	<b>Ref No</b> (e.g. Custody, PND etc)	Level of Intoxication (specify number 0 to 6)
Mohammed Naseri		Shop Asst	Interview to be conducted	N/A	
		Member of public	Interview to be concluded	N/A	

## LEVELS OF INTOXICATION

Level	Description	Observations
0	SOBRIETY	Has had less than one drink in an hour
Page	EUPHORIA         Difficulty concentrating. Talkative. Lowered inhibitions.	
e අ පි	EXCITEMENT	Senses are dulled. Poor coordination. Drowsy
3	<b>CONFUSION</b> Exaggerated emotions. Difficulty walking. Blurred vision	
4	STUPOR Cannot stand or walk. Vomiting	
5	СОМА	Unconscious. Low body temperature
6	DEATH	Death as a result of respiratory arrest

- When complete, please forward to the Licensing Officer for the area (and anyone else as per local instructions)
- This form is used in licensing meetings/hearings and therefore is a disclosable document.
- Your opinion matters so please write in a professional manner.

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Submitting Officer				
Shoulder No/Name: P5787	Station	: Reading	LPA: Reading	
Incident References				
Premises Name/Location:	Daniel Convenience Store	(Todays express), 1	7 Duke Street, Reading, RG1 4SA	
Incident Date:	23 <sup>rd</sup> August 2018	Incident Time:	Approx 1520-1530	
Command & Control URN:	N/A	Crime Report(s):	TBC	
CCTV Seized?	Requested	_		
Sources of Information: Joint TVP, RBC Trading Standards Test Purchase operation				

#### Nature of Incident - what happened?

During a test purchasing operation a young 15 year old male member of staff served two children (YP01 and YP02) under the age of 18 with alcohol having not asked to see or checked any identification.

During the sale an adult male member of staff identified as the deputy manager was stood next to the child (his son), and on one occasion the adult member of staff asked the test purchaser "Would you like a bag" to carry the alcohol!

The 15 year old staff member served YP02 1 x bottle of Bulmers (abv 4.0%), and YP01 with 4 x cans of high strength Mocne Debowe (abv 7.0%).

Street drinkers also seen purchasing alcohol throughout the process.

#### Premises Response - what part did staff play? How did they react/assist (include good/poor performance)?

Staff did not provide any reason or excuse for the sale except that the member of staff was the son of the deputy manager and it was stated that in his eyes the child did not make the sale. His father stated that he was there to oversee any sales and therefore in his opinion he had authorised each sale himself meaning that he not the child committed the offence.

The deputy manager stated he thought both YP01 and YP02 were over 25 years old.

The deputy manager was initially obstructive and refused to provide the attending Police Officers with his Sons details. He also attempted to state that he sold the alcohol and not his son (lied), however he changed this version when he was challenged over the fact that the CAP officer had witnessed the incident, and was forced to show the CCTV

For information the CCTV timings were one hour behind so the incident is seen at 1420 on their system.

#### Police Response – what action was taken? Please identify the main officers who dealt with the incident.

Data protection CCTV request form served on 29<sup>th</sup> August 2018 to the Deputy manager (staff member on duty) who stated the footage would be ready for collection after 5<sup>th</sup> September 2018 as the DPS was away and only he knew how to use the system without breaking it or losing the footage.

PND for consideration to be served when it is determined who committed the offence ie Deputy manager or his Son, NB it is believed that the deputy manager does not have a PL and his Son had no authorisation from the DPS.

Decision to be made by TVP and RBC regarding further action.

Persons Involved - to add more rows click into the final cell of this table						
Name	Action Taken	Ref No. (e.g. Custody, PND etc)				
		Seller	ТВА	ТВА		
	Deputy Mngr	Authorised sale?	PND TBC?	ТВА		



When complete, please forward to the Licensing Officer for the area (and anyone else as per local instructions)

12/11/22 @ 00:05 to 00:10, Smirnoff Ice & WKD Blue Sales, 1.5Ltr Captain Morgan Spice Rum – Sales of alcohol past permitted hours



12/11/22 @ 00:24, cans of Gordons & Tonic -Sales of alcohol past permitted hours - DPS

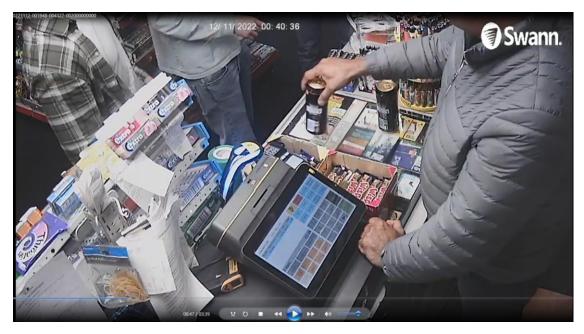




12/11/22 @00:26, Whisky Sales of alcohol past permitted hours – DPS

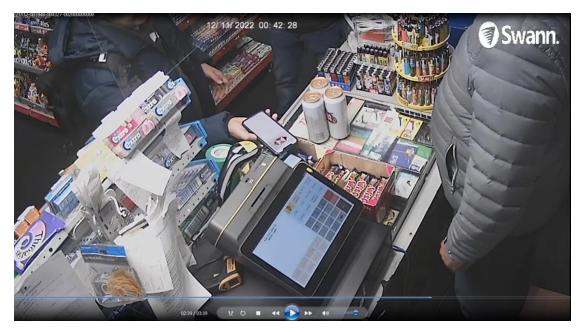
12/11/22 @ 00:32, Cans of super strength, Sales of alcohol past permitted hours - DPS





12/11/22 @ 00:40, Cans of super strength, Sales of alcohol past permitted hours -DPS

12/11/22 @ 00:42 Stella, Sales of alcohol past permitted hours - DPS

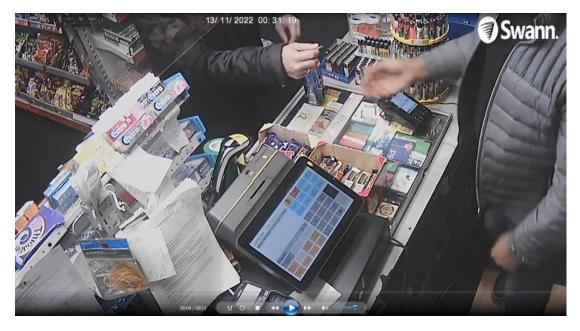




13/11/22 @ 00:07 Single sales of alcohol, sales of alcohol past permitted hours - DPS

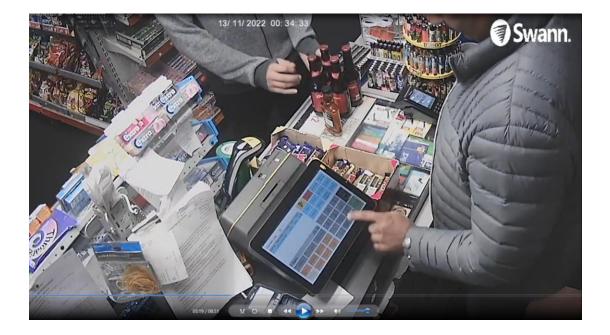
13/11/22 @ 00:22 Small bottle of Vodka, Sales of alcohol past permitted hours - DPS



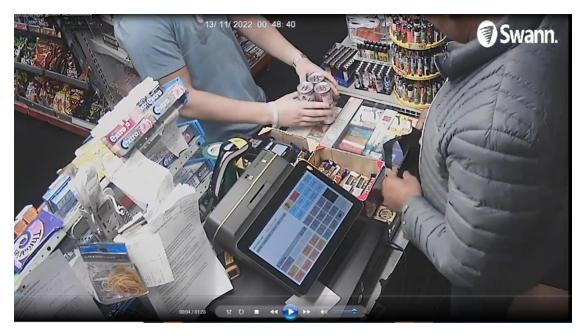


13/11/22 @ 00:31 Super strength cans, sales of alcohol past permitted hours – DPS

13/11/22 @ 00:34, Bottles of Bub & small bottle of spiced rum, sales of alcohol past permitted hours - DPS



13/11/22 @ 00:48, Cans of Gin & Tonic, Sales of Alcohol – DPS



26/11/22 @ 00:01, Customer purchase a can of super strength beer and was drinking said can on the premises - Mr. Nasari



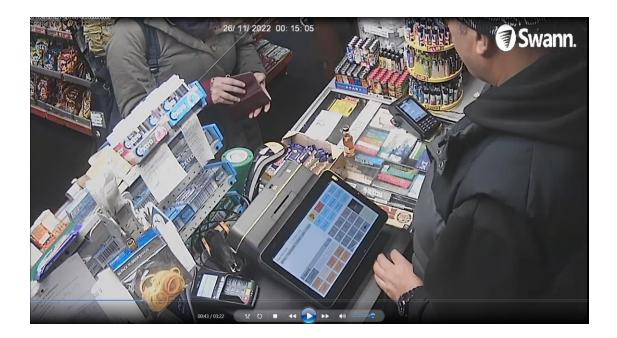
26/11/22 @ 00:05, Cans of beer and Bud, Sales of alcohol outside permitted hours – Mr. Nasari



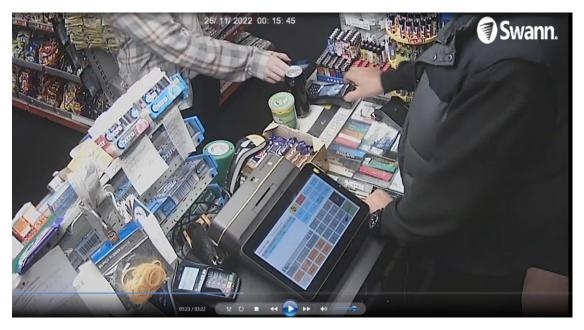
26/11/22 @ 00:07, Bottle of vodka, Sales of alcohol outside permitted hours – Mr. Nasari



26/11/22 @ 00:15, Bottle of whiskey, Sales of alcohol outside permitted hours - Mr. Nasari



26/11/22 @ 00:16, Cans of K cider & supper strength lager, Sales of alcohol outside permitted hours – Mr. Nasari

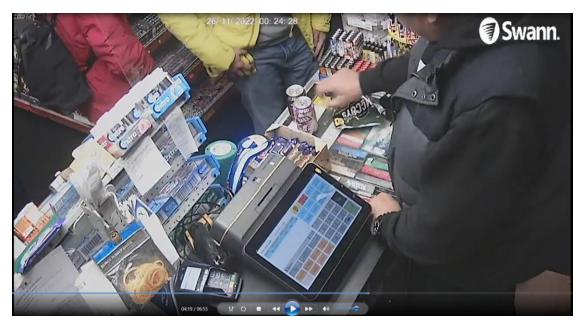




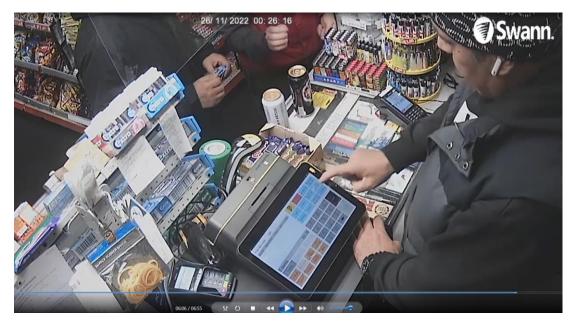
26/11/22 @ 00:21, Cans of lager, Sales of alcohol outside permitted hours - Mr. Nasari



26/11/22 @ 00:24, Cans of spirits and mixer, Sales of alcohol outside permitted hours - Mr. Nasari



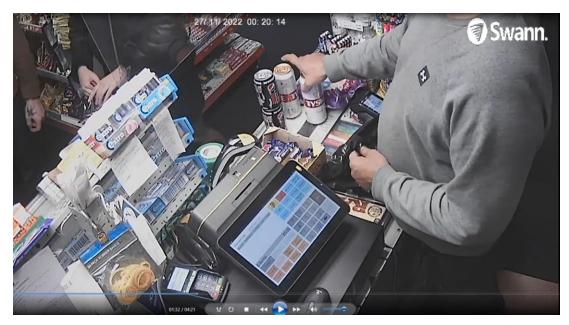
26/11/22 @ 00:26, 2 x Cans of Lager/beer, Sales of alcohol outside permitted hours - Mr. Nasari





27/11/22 @ 00:08, Small bottle of spiced rum, sales of alcohol past permitted hours - DPS

27/11/22 @ 00:20, 2 x Cans of Beer/Lager, sales of alcohol past permitted hours - DPS



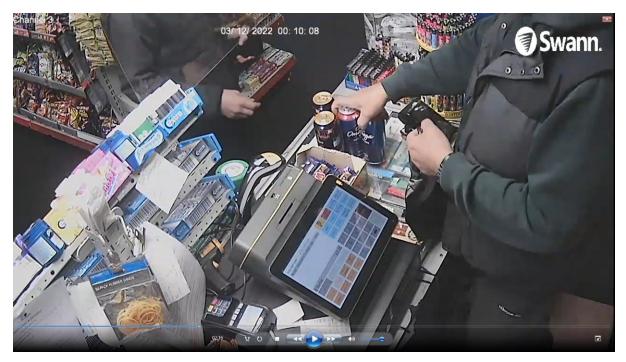


02/12/22 @ 00:06, Can of Beer/lager, sales of alcohol past permitted hours - DPS

02/12/22 @ 00:07, 1.5 Litre of Bacardi Spice Rum, sales of alcohol past permitted hours - DPS



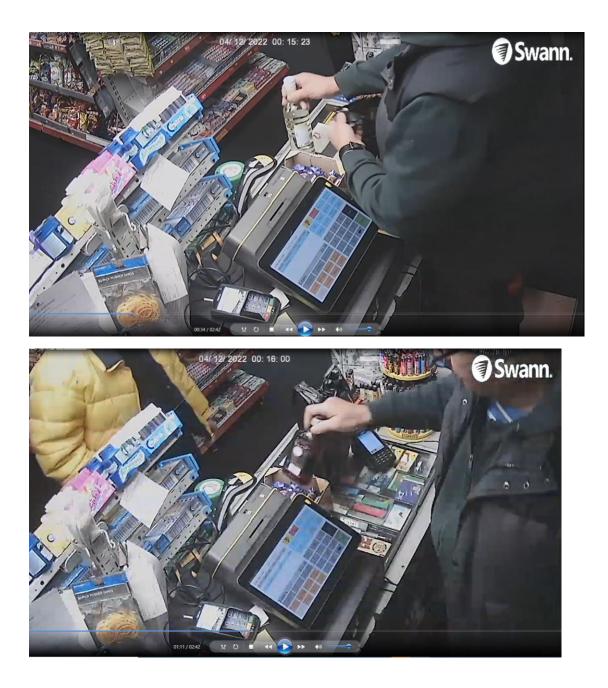
03/12/22 @ 00:10, 2 x cans Super strength cider & 2 cans Lager/Beer, sales of alcohol past permitted hours – Mr. Nasari



03/12/22 @ 00:14, Small bottle of Jack Daniels whisky, sales of alcohol past permitted hours – Mr. Nasari

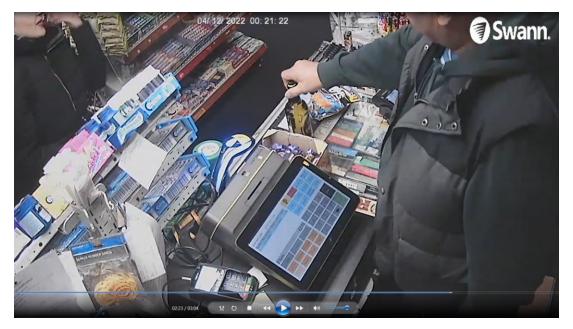


04/12/22 @ 00:15, 1.5 Liter white wine, small bottle brandy, can of JD & Cola, sales of alcohol past permitted hours – Mr. Nasari

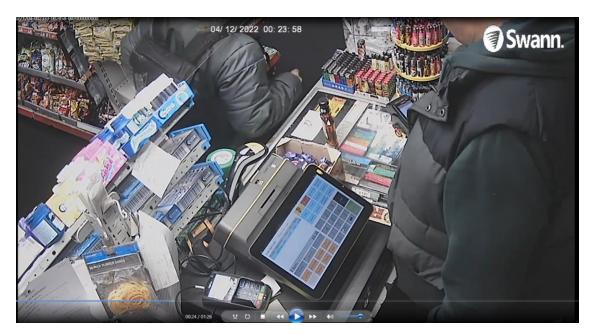




04/12/22 @ 00:21, large bottle of fruit cider, sales of alcohol past permitted hours – Mr. Nasari



04/12/22 @ 00:23, Small bottle of spice rum, sales of alcohol past permitted hours - Mr. Nasari



09/12/22 @ 00:09, 1.5 Liter red wine, sales of alcohol past permitted hours - DPS





09/12/22 @ 00:18, 1.5 Liter red wine, sales of alcohol past permitted hours – DPS

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