

Public Document Pack

LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE

MONDAY 10TH OCTOBER 2011

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PACK (PACK 2)
AGENDA ITEM 6 WHARF CHAMBERS**

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Wharf Chambers Co-operative Club – Mission Statement

Overview

The club has been formed to partner with Wharf Chambers Ltd IPS-registered workers co-operative to establish and run a not-for-profit, ethical, affordable and sustainable city-centre venue in Leeds with multiple uses.

In conjunction with the workers co-operative we aim to provide a diverse space for art, film, music and discussion that brings together people from the creative communities across Leeds and the region. In the daytime the workers co-operative will run a cafe, socialising and meeting space.

To compliment and sustain this activity, as well as to offer a well rounded program of events, in the evening the members' club will open a bar and host a broad variety of cultural events including live and pre-recorded music, theatre, film, and performance for our members and their guests.

Through this activity we hope to provide a much-desired creative hub that will foster and develop cutting edge and non-market-led artistic activity in the city.

Background and History

The club was formed after having identified a lack of ethically run, affordable and inclusive cultural space in Leeds City Centre, informed by both personal experience and attendance at council instigated events such as the Framework for The Visual Arts in Leeds discussion event in March 2010.

As many of us had previously been visitors or members of The Common Place, we were familiar with building and its unrealised potential as a cutting-edge and socially-embedded space for Leeds' artistic and creative community. Whilst we recognised the potential of the previous use of the building in terms of its function as a welcoming, mixed-use space we also saw its shortcomings that were, in the main, organisational and aesthetic.

As a club we have sought to avoid similar pitfalls through refurbishment and by rejecting the volunteer run model, opting instead for a members club with a workers co-operative that manages the day-to-day running of the space. The workers co-op has been registered with IPS and received a development grant and business advice to ensure its stable and professional operation.

Over the last four months the workers co-op have been involved in extensive renovations of the building with help, support and advice from members of the club and individuals who were involved in The Common Place that are supportive of our plan to start afresh

with the building. This has involved restoring original features, improving facilities and generally making the space a brighter, cleaner, more comfortable environment.

We have held a handful of fundraising events including an after-show party for an exhibition opening, music events and an evening meal (all on temporary licenses) and attracted a broad audience from the creative communities in Leeds. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive from people who had visited the space (who have described it as ‘almost unrecognisable’) to new visitors who are happy there will be a ‘Berlin-style trendy café/bar to visit in that part of town.’

We also have written and vocal support from the local authority, especially from the Arts and Regeneration department (see the letter of support from senior officer James Hill) who recognise and understand the positive contribution that a not-for-profit cultural venue that upholds ideals of mutual responsibility, co-operation and collective innovation will bring to the city. When we are able to hold licensable events with more planning and greater flexibility we hope to build quickly on this encouraging beginning and build a range of activity that will realise the full potential and sustainability of the organisation.

James Hill
Arts & Regeneration
The Town Hall, The Headrow,
Leeds, LS1 3AD

Contact: James Hill
Tel: 0113 2478234
Fax: 0113 2478397

07 October 2011

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to express my support for the Premises Certificate application for Wharf Chambers Co-operative Club, as I believe that the club will make a vital and positive contribution to Leeds as a city.

As a private members club run on a not-for-profit basis it will provide a unique opportunity in the city centre to promote, highlight, celebrate and build the vibrant not for profit cultural scene in the city. Recent consultations within the city's arts sector have highlighted the need for a 'hub' space and Wharf Chambers would meet this objective admirably.

I have made several trips to the venue recently (including taking a walking tour of the city there during a recent national conference on 'Creative City Limits') and have been impressed by the professionalism of the managers, and the clean, friendly, approachable nature of the venue itself.

Yours sincerely,

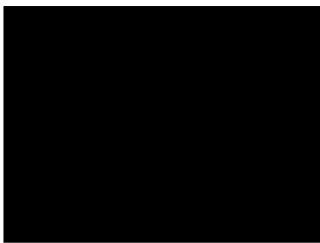
James Hill
Senior Arts Project Officer

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Andy Abbott
Club Secretary
Wharf Chambers Co-operative Club
Ground Floor
23 – 25 Wharf St
Leeds
LS2 7EQ

T: 07834696724
E: zadanzig@yahoo.co.uk

Friday 7th October



Dear [REDACTED]

Please accept my apologies in our delay in responding to your representation regarding the application for a Club Premises Certificate by Wharf Chambers Co-operative Club, for whom I act as club secretary. We have had some difficulty in formulating a response due to the serious nature of the allegations that relate primarily to previous uses and states of the building.

We understand and empathise with your worries regarding the upkeep of the premises and safety and comfort of your staff and hope that your concerns have been or will be addressed in the various measures we are taking to ensure that our organisation is run in a professional, safe and responsible manner.

We would like to recommend that you download and read the 'further information' PDF from <http://democracy.leeds.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=430&MIId=5482> that contains our response to a similar representation from [REDACTED] and where we restate and offer further clarity on the manner in which we will guarantee the safe, clean, professional upkeep of the premises and offer evidence against the claim that our organisation will repeat or continue issues with hygiene and safety that may have arisen previously. Also, we might clarify that it is not our intention to hold licensable events during normal working hours regularly.

As stated in that correspondence, our aim is to make a positive contribution to the area, and Leeds as a whole, through the provision of a cultural venue for the creative community that we hope will be of great benefit to your business and enjoyed by your staff (if they wished to become members or attend non-licensable events).

To take a positive perspective on things, the dialogue instigated by our license application offers us opportunity to begin an open, trusting and co-operative relationship with our neighbours which we hope you will take advantage of by considering your representations against our application as now addressed.

If you have any further questions or concerns then please feel free to contact me either by email or phone before Monday.

Kind regards

Andy Abbott
Club Secretary
Wharf Chambers Co-opertative Club.

[REDACTED]
To: zadanzig@yahoo.co.uk

Sent: Tuesday, 4 October 2011, 14:58

Subject: Licence application for Wharf Chambers Co-operative Club

Dear Mr Abbott,

Thank you for taking the time to write to us in order to expel some of our concerns regarding your application for a Club Premises Certificate at 23-25 Wharf St.

Your letter states that you are writing in your capacity as the secretary for Wharf Chambers Co-operative Club. Would you kindly inform us of who the Chair and other committee members of the club are, plus the directors of Wharf Chambers Ltd in order that we may be fully aware of who we are in discussions with.

You have also informed us that you intend to form a workers co-operative to staff the venue and in order to pay for this you require a Club Premises Certificate to enable you to host occasional events, presumably selling alcohol, to help fund the less lucrative day use of the club & social/recreation space. Could you please inform us of how often you will need to hold such events in order to cover your overheads, the intended style and hours of such events plus the staffing levels you will employ for these night.

We would welcome a meeting with yourself if you feel that one would help.

Best Regards

[REDACTED]

From: andy abbott <zadanzig@yahoo.co.uk>

[REDACTED]
Cc: "entertainment.licensing@leeds.gov.uk" <entertainment.licensing@leeds.gov.uk>

Sent: Friday, 7 October 2011, 11:23

Subject: Re: Licence application for Wharf Chambers Co-operative Club

[REDACTED]
I've discussed your request for further information with the club members. Apologies for the delayed response, it's just that we were in need of some clarification from the Entertainments Licensing Office regarding your representation. We feel it contains many serious allegations but with little evidence supplied and so it has been difficult to respond to both this and the subsequent request for information about our organisation. Unfortunately, Jane Wood, the officer who has been dealing with our case, has been off sick so that's been a slow process.

However, in keeping with the transparent and trusting relationship we would like to create with you, we can clarify the nature of the management of the organisation further. Wharf Chambers Ltd is an IPS (Industrial Provident Society) registered workers co-operative meaning that there are no directors as such but rather officers. With regard to licensable activities, the sovereign body (that is, the committee that the co-operative is accountable to and directed by) is the general meeting of the club collective that consists of a chair, secretary, treasurer and at least one member of the bar committee.

Reading between the lines of your request, it would appear that your concern is that there is significant overlap in terms of individuals responsible for the management of WCCC with those who were responsible for The Common Place. You can be assured that no members of the club collective or bar committee were involved in the management of The Common Place, neither were the co-op officers. To reiterate and emphasise from our application and previous correspondence, it is a separate entity with a distinct set of aims and objectives, structure and system of governance that will guarantee its safe, clean and professional day-to-day operation as a cultural venue and hub for the creative community.

Although we hope that responding to your request for further details is unnecessary, to offer you peace of mind and by way of working towards a quick resolution on this matter, the officers of the workers co-operative are Lotte Shaw (chair), Robert Hallows (treasurer) and Andrew Raine (secretary). The club collective roles are occupied by myself (secretary), Shakeeb Abu-Hamdan (treasurer) and David Robertshaw (chair).

In terms of regularity of events, as you know, the members club aims to support and bring an additional income for the daytime use of the space as effectively and efficiently as possible. We have applied for a license that will allow us the greatest amount of flexibility to ensure this. It is unlikely that there will be a regular pattern to the member's events as they will occur as necessary and appropriate. That said, we might estimate that in the early stages of the organisation evening events will take place once during the week and twice on weekends.

We want to start on the right foot with our neighbours and whilst we appreciate that the previous use of the building was going to make that a difficult process our worry is that we are in danger of repeating the confused and unproductive relationship you appear to have had with the previous tenants. If there is an opportunity to draw a line beneath this and start afresh prior to the hearing on Monday I think it would be in all of our interests. It would set a better precedent for future co-operation in keeping with the relationship we are successfully building with the authorities and other businesses and organisations in the area. Looking forward to your response and clearing up what we can together.

best wishes

Andy
Club Secretary
Wharf Chambers Co-operative Club