

**SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION
LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE – 18TH SEPTEMBER 2018**

**AGENDA ITEM 6 - APPLICATION FOR THE GRANT OF A
PREMISES LICENCE FOR MEANWOOD PARK
CAFE THREE COTTAGES, GREEN ROAD, MEANWOOD,
LEEDS, LS6 4JP**

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Agenda Item 6

From: [REDACTED]
To: [Entertainment Licensing](#)
Cc: [CS LSCB website](#); [Flesher, Sean](#); [Walker, Steve](#); [MeanwoodValley.Rangers@leeds.gov.uk](#); [Louis, Douglas](#); [Louis, Douglas](#); [Bentley, Cllr Jonathan](#); [Shahzad, Cllr Mohammed](#); [Hamilton, Cllr Sharon](#); [Charlwood, Cllr Rebecca](#); [EPTeam](#)
Subject: Objection to licence application PREM/04213/001
Date: 21 August 2018 21:22:19

Dear Officers,

I am writing to lodge my opposition to the licence application PREM/04213/001.

I have outlined the reasons for my objection under the four licensing objectives below. However, the unique positioning of the Meanwood park café within the Meanwood conservation area, along the Meanwood Valley Trail and next door to the Meanwood C of E school and public children's playground, demands a broader consideration of the impacts of granting a licence to sell alcohol on AND off the premises from 11-11, 7 days a week. As such, I have copied in the LCC Chief Officer of Parks and Countryside, the Country Parks Officer, the Leeds Safeguarding Children board, the Director of Children's Services, the Meanwood Volunteer Park Rangers and Meanwood and Weetwood Councillors to this email to ensure they are aware of the proposed change in use of the Meanwood Park café to a late night drinking establishment.

If a decision is taken by LCC to grant a licence to sell alcohol, the panel should consider revising the permitted hours from those requested. I draw your attention to the planning application from 2012 (12/00466/FU) that granted the change of use of the building to a café, and which still applies today. The conditions of planning state: *"The hours of delivery to and from the premises shall be restricted to 08.00 hours to 18.00 hours Monday to Saturday with no deliveries on Sundays and Bank Holidays. The opening hours of the premises shall be restricted to 08.00 hours to 18.00 hours Monday to Friday, 08.00 to 20.00 hours Saturday and 10.00 hours to 18.00 hours on Sundays and Bank Holidays. In the interests of residential amenity"*. The licence application applies for substantially extended hours than approved by the original planning conditions. If PREM/04213/001 is granted as submitted, it would be a natural progression for the proprietor to apply for a variation on the planning conditions for extended opening hours, hence negating the original planning decision made in the interests of residential amenity.

I draw to your attention to the fact that cafes located in other major parks in Leeds (Golden Acre Café; Middleton Park; Lakeside Café in Roundhay, which does have a licence) operate **ONLY** day time opening hours and do not operate as an evening bar. This is presumably because it is acknowledged this is not in keeping with the function of public parks as spaces for all to enjoy time for sport and leisure and as a home for wildlife in the city. It would appear the fact that Meanwood Park café is in private ownership means the new proprietor is proposing to make significant changes to the operation of the café into a late night bar in the interests of personal financial gain. I believe this would lead to substantial negative impacts on wildlife, local residents, children and the park itself as

detailed below.

Lastly, I trust the evaluations of statements for and against this application are treated consistently and hence the former must address the four licensing objectives or be otherwise discounted.

1. Prevention of Crime and Disorder

The proposed bar sits at the heart of the Meanwood conservation area. Serving alcohol for consumption both on and off the premises would promote drinking in the park and create the potential for altercations between patrons of the bar under the influence of alcohol and youths who use the neighbouring car park and surrounding area in the evening. Contrary to what is claimed in the application, access to alcohol would encourage rather than discourage the potential for trouble to occur, especially after dark. Research consistently shows an increase in rates of low level crime near establishments serving alcohol. The presence of a late night bar would attract petty thieves into unlit areas of the park to take advantage of patrons leaving under the influence of alcohol with increases to crimes such as muggings, sexual assault etc. The impact of the increase in crime rates brought by a licensed premises, including vandalism and littering in the park and surrounding conservation area, should be carefully considered by the LCC Parks and Countryside, Country parks & Green Gateways, and Environmental Protection teams, as well as by the Licensing Board. Further, the planning application proposes to remove the trees lining the external boundary of the café and replace them with a perspex screen that would be very quickly vandalised, as evidenced by graffiti found on fences, walls, signs in the vicinity.

The proposed bar is remote from the centre of Meanwood at the end of a dead end road. Customers would likely drive to the site and potentially drive home after having had a drink, especially in the evenings. The presence of a late opening licensed premises at the end of this dead end road would increase, rather than decrease, traffic violations (e.g. exceeding the 20 mph speed limit on Green Road – which is not currently enforced and is regularly exceeded – as well as driving under the influence of alcohol), with associated risks to public safety (road traffic accidents) along the sole access road to the café (Green Road).

2. Public nuisance

Public nuisance 2A: Noise

Meanwood park is a tranquil and peaceful environment. As described in the Meanwood Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2008) “this area comprises of public open space, which is always freely open and used for quiet and informal recreation”. Noise carries further in the park than in a built-up area, which will make it very difficult to ensure recorded or live music ‘will not be audible anywhere else but the from

beer garden' as claimed in section F of the licence application. This noise pollution into surrounding residential areas will be exacerbated by the request to remove the Cypress trees that surround the café and replace them with a perspex screen, as requested in planning application 18/04596/COND.

The application states (section E) that "there will be an inevitability to (live) music being played spontaneously or by booking as this is the very nature of café bar culture". Furthermore, it states that (section F) "DJs may be hired for weddings, birthdays and other such activity... but this is a none residential area (sic)" – as will be explained below this last clause is entirely false. Lastly, the application states (section J) "the outlet seeks to be the epitome of café bar culture and as such dancing may spontaneously take place...and may not be restricted to indoors but throughout the outside area". Together these statements along with the late night licence hours requested 7 days a week make clear the venue intends to operate as a late night drinking establishment that will also host private events. This is similar to the many other public houses and bars found in the busy centre of Meanwood, but is entirely inappropriate for the setting in a quiet and peaceful conservation area within the park. The Meanwood Conservation Area Appraisal and Management Plan (2008) states that the recreation area in Meanwood park "is very important for biodiversity, with good populations of protected white clawed crayfish being present in the beck. Kingfishers and dippers having feeding and nesting territories in the area". **These proposed activities will cause significant noise disturbance to the sensitive wildlife living in the park. Furthermore, many families live very close to the café and turning it into a bar that plays music and other entertainment late into the night will be disruptive to children and parents who need to get up in the morning for school and to go to work.** It is important to note that the application requests a licence to sell alcohol for significantly extended hours than the opening hours permitted by the existing planning permission (case 12/00466/FU); the permitted hours were set to restrict the café to day time use "in the interests of residential amenity" and the current application requests changes that would significantly undermine this previous decision by LCC.

The statements in the proposal that 'the route to and from the café is predominantly through the woods', that there will be 'only a limited number of people (if any) heading down Green Road' and that this is a 'none residential area' **are entirely false**. The only road access to the café is via Green Road, which is residential. The other access routes to the café on foot are via: (1) the ginnels to Mill Pond Lane; and (2) the footpath to Hollin Lane, which are both residential areas. Note that the route to the café alluded to in the application "through the woods" leads to Hustler's Row (a residential area). It is frankly absurd to claim that the main access for patrons is through the woods and that there would not be any increase to footfall or vehicular traffic along other routes as a result of having a late night bar in the park. On the contrary, rather than simply serving visitors to the park, as the café does currently in the day-time, a late night bar would bring significant volumes of additional people into the conservation area at night with the sole purpose of consuming alcohol. This area is currently quiet in the evenings, as most visitors leave the park before nightfall. **The noise from people under the influence of alcohol both on the**

premises (in the beer garden) and as they leave the premises late at night along Green Road and other surrounding residential streets would cause a significant nuisance to people living along the routes that form the main access points to the cafe.

Furthermore, noise from the accompanying increases in late night and early morning traffic (customer vehicles, taxis, delivery vehicles, refuse collections) along Green Road will cause noise disruption to local residents. This is especially important as there are many families with young children in the area. I further note that there is already severe pressure on the transport infrastructure in the area (being the sole access to Meanwood park, Meanwood Primary School, and Hustlers Row) and Green Road is poorly maintained (pot holes, frequent flooding) and operates as a single lane road due to parking on one side. These factors combined with the narrow, blind bend in Green Road just before the entrance to the café, means that the increased traffic associated with the premises presents a public safety hazard.

Public nuisance 2B: Parking

The proposed bar will not provide any parking spaces for customers. This puts significant pressure on the public car park that serves visitors to the park (38 spaces + 2 disabled); the car park is frequently full at peak times (school pick up/drop off, weekends, public holidays) and the extended opening hours of the café would exacerbate this. As a consequence visitors to the park frequently leave their cars along Green Road and other residential streets (Hollin Lane, Weetwood Avenue) – this has resulted in driveways along Green Road being blocked multiple times in the past year. As most visitors leave the park by nightfall, in the evenings customers of the proposed bar would be additional people travelling to the park by car or taxi along Green Road explicitly to drink at the premises; this means a public (free) facility there to serve the park will be used for private gains in the form of customers to the bar. In section F of the application, the proprietor describes plans to host weddings, birthdays and other such events in the bar which would bring large volumes of people (100+) travelling by car at peak times (weekends, public holidays) to the café and using the public parking facilities to do so thereby preventing other visitors from making use of them. **The increased traffic along Green Road caused by the proposed extended opening hours and plans to host large events (e.g. weddings) would lead to increased demand for parking, causing public nuisance for visitors to the park who may find the car park full and local residents who already get their driveways blocked by visitors parking inconsiderately in surrounding streets.**

3. Protection of children from harm

The entrance to the café is immediately opposite the Meanwood C of E Primary School, including its outdoor playground, as well as the main children's public play area in the park, which is very heavily used by local families and visitors to the park. Serving alcohol for extended hours will increase, rather than decrease, the exposure of children at the school and in the park to inappropriate language and drunken behaviour, including potential intimidation to children from drunk people. As part of the separate planning application, there is a plan to remove the Cyprus trees that screen the café from the park

which will exacerbate the exposure of children to drinking in the bar throughout the day and evening. Leeds is a diverse multi-cultural city and many families may not wish to expose their children to the "epitome of cafe bar culture" within a public park. **This effectively removes the choice parents have to bring their children to a quiet play area in the park without the risk of negative impacts from having a licensed premises on the doorstep.**

Children's groups including Cubs/Brownies/Scouts/Woodcraft as well as the Meanwood Primary school use the park around the café for activities, including in the evenings. In relation to this, I draw your attention to objectives 3 and 7 of the LCC policy for Leeds to become a Child Friendly city by having "places and spaces to play and things to do, in all areas and open to all" and to ensure "children and young people have the support and information they need to make healthy lifestyle choices". **For the reasons outlined above the presence of a licensed premises will only have a negative, not positive impact on children's safety and wellbeing and has the potential to result in moral harm to children.**

Many families with young children reside in the residential areas surrounding the cafe. A late opening licenced premises in this site would have a significant impact on those families as the children with bedrooms overlooking Green Road **would be disturbed by noise from people dispersing back towards central Meanwood late at night under the influence of alcohol.** We have a 4 month old son with a bedroom that looks out over the end of Green Road adjacent to the café who would be directly impacted by the increased noise from the presence of a late night bar.

Finally, I would like to appeal that given the sensitive location of the café as described above, a decision on this application must look further than the current proprietor and his track record of running similar premises in the area. The Myrtle Tavern is an historic public house that pre-dates or evolved alongside the properties in the vicinity of Parkside Road. What the current application proposes is highly distinct in terms of creating a new late night drinking establishment that is the epitome of modern bar culture. This decision has the potential to cause significant, long-term damage to the Meanwood conservation area and Meanwood park. Once granted, alcohol licenses are very rarely revoked under only the most extreme circumstances, and the premises may very well change hands in the future allowing future owners to operate the premises under the same conditions being applied for here. LCC must take care to protect this unique area of the city for future generations and it is my strong belief that having a late night drinking establishment within the park, effectively operating as a trendy bar, will have detrimental effects on the area for the reasons outlined under the four licensing objectives above.

Yours sincerely,

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