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The Entertainment Licensing Section
Leeds City Council
Civic Hall
Leeds
LS1 1UR

30th January 2014

Dear Sir or Madam

Re. Review of Premises Licence: Church Lane Off-licence, 78 Church Lane, Leeds LS15 8JE

I have lived [REDACTED] from this shop since July 1993. The street in which I live is a mixed community of families, older people, couples and single people and is a great place to live except for one thing: the off-licence. I am not objecting to the existence of the shop itself but to the way in which the business has been run and the resulting negative impact on the surrounding community. Unfortunately this has gone on throughout the time I have lived in [REDACTED]. Examples of problems are:

- Groups of young people regularly gathering outside the shop from about 6.45p.m waiting for the shop to open. This particularly happens on Friday and Saturday evenings during the spring and summer. It is a relief when it is winter or it is raining as the “gatherings” do not tend to happen then. These groups can be quite large, up to 10 in number. I would say that there are always young people under 18 in these groups (see point 3 below). Frequently last summer these groups were very loud, often swearing or shrieking at one another. On several occasions there was at least one staffie-type dog as well. On several occasions I saw people climbing on the wall between the shop’s yard and my neighbour’s. The groups often mill across the top of our street, meaning that you have to walk through them or wait for them to move so you can drive your car down the street. This can be intimidating.
- Damage to property/fear of damage to property – on several occasions I have seen young people waiting outside the shop wander down our street and look through car windows, including my own. On other occasions my neighbours and I have caught people from these “shop groups” urinating in the house yards opposite. We feel unable to leave cars parked at the top of the street near the shop for fear of damage. The shop has been a target for graffiti on several occasions – the current graffiti has been on the wall for several years, the owner having made no attempt to remove it.

- Litter – I frequently find beer bottles scattered across the grass and under hedges in areas around the shop, particularly along the path leading towards Sandbed Lane. Often these bottles are broken with jagged pieces scattered around, posing a potential risk to children going to St. James’ Primary Academy and pet dogs and cats.
- Children under 18 buying/consuming alcohol from the shop. I have seen young people who I would put as under 18 going into the shop and coming out with alcohol. I have seen others waiting outside the shop and then walking away with someone who has bought alcohol from the shop.
- Inconsiderate parking by customers – on numerous occasions throughout the years I have driven home to find my street blocked by someone who has parked across it to go into the shop. I had a very unpleasant experience last year when I asked one such person very politely to move his car so that people could get down the street. I then walked back to my house and heard him shout to his friend “She’s not even f*****g going out”. I found his behaviour and manner very aggressive. I saw the same car and man on several occasions afterwards and felt very wary of going out of my own house.

Reading this back, I am not sure that I have adequately conveyed the negative impact that this business has on our street. It has quite accurately been described to me as a “blight” by people visiting me. The problems detailed above have gone on all the time I have lived here and are a constant source of concern.

My neighbours and I have reported problems many times to the Police, our local councillors and Leeds City Council but up until now with seemingly little effect. Finally in P.C. Dobson we seem to have a person who understands the damaging, corrosive impact of the low-level but constant problems emanating from this business. I wholeheartedly support her in her efforts to have this business’ licence removed.

I would be grateful if you could send me details of the hearing for this review as I would like to attend in person.

Yours faithfully,

