

WITNESS STATEMENT

(Criminal Justice Act 1967, s.9; Magistrates' Courts Act 1980, s.5B;
Criminal Procedure Rules, Rule 16.2)

NICHE Ref. No:

URN:

Statement of: PC 4198 CLIFFORD

Date of birth:

Occupation: Police Officer

This statement (consisting of: 5 page(s) each signed by me) is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

Signature: PC 4198 CLIFFORD

Date: 05/08/2021

Time and date statement taken: 05/08/2021

Check box if witness evidence is visually recorded (supply witness details on rear)

I am a Police Officer currently based within the West Yorkshire Police Licensing Department. I currently cover the whole of North East Leeds and Outer South Leeds in relation to licensed premises.

My role involves liaison with licensed premises to offer support, advise but also implementing various remedial, action planning and enforcement procedures on those premises who do not fulfil their required responsibilities in promoting the licensing objectives.

I am making this statement in relation to a premises named The Old Red Lion York Road Leeds LS142AD. Historically this venue has been known as a troubled one with a long list of incidents recorded on the police systems. The current DPS and PLH have been in charge of the premises for approximately 4-5 years. The DPS is Jacqueline LIGHTFOOT with the PLH being Jacqueline and her partner Ian GIBSON. I have dealt with both Jacqueline and Ian during my time in licensing, but more often than not I speak with Jacqueline.

In this statement I will highlight a number of incidents which have occurred at The Old Red Lion leading up to and including the recent incidents of serious crime which caused me to submit a summary review of the premises licence.

Ordinarily I would provide details going back roughly 12months, however due to the recent restrictions on licensed premises being open for long periods, I will go back a little further to give a true reflection.

The first incident which I documented in my review application, took place on Wednesday 27th February 2019. A call came in from Ian Gibson (joint PLH) at 16:42. This incident involved a drunken male who was refused service at the pub then got into a fight with a customer then a knife was found on the male. The purpose of discussing this incident is to highlight how far back people were attending this venue comfortable enough to carry a knife and serves to evidence the progression to the serious incidents which happened more recently.

31st May 2019 a male has a confrontation at the bar due to accidentally touching someone's drink. The victim was in the pub from 21:15. The victim walks out of the pub and is hit from behind at approximately 23:30. The victim is helped up by his partner and has a deep cut to his face. No sharp objects were seen by the victim; however, he states he was bleeding a lot. The victim attends the hospital and medical professionals advise him that it must have been a blade which caused the injury. This was also called in to police by hospital staff at 01:30 and they stated a knife was used.

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20th July 2019 approximately 14:50 the DPS calls to state that for the last 5 minutes a group of males have been scuffling with each other and trying to restrain someone. An assault has occurred, and the victim has moved to the car park.

20th July 2019 approximately 23:00. Phone call to police to state that there has been an argument ongoing for 10 minutes and there has been physical violence and that one person is injured to his eye. The incident dies down and people leave in different directions. The police are called by staff who state attendance is no longer required.

10th August 2019 a call is received at 23:39 from staff to state a male who is barred is in the car park acting aggressively and trying to fight people. When an officer arrives, he states that there are 20-30 patrons of the Old Red Lion goading and egging on a male who is acting aggressively. This male is then arrested by force for being drunk and disorderly in a public place.

31st August 2019 a call received at 21:44 stating a domestic assault occurred. The victim notes they were both drinking, but the suspect was drinking "a lot". One member of the public reporting the assault states, "HE WAS REALLY GOING FOR IT" and that both looked very drunk.

9th September 2019 approximately 17:10. Reporting person stating that someone is about to leave the pub heavily in drink and is about to drive away. This person came to the pub already in drink and possibly on drugs. The reporting person describes this person as "A NASTY BUGGER AND HANDY WITH HIS FISTS".

19th September 2019. Call came in from DPS at 23:31 to state that a group of males and females were fighting in the car park. DPS states that there are customers in the pub who are agitated and concerned it many kick off again. 4-5 people are said to have been involved in the fight.

2nd October 2019 approximately 21:50. A call received by police to state that there is a male inside the pub with a "COSH" and a "PEN KNIFE" and that threats were made by the suspect. Police were unable to locate the suspect.

4th October 2019 between 23:30 and 00:00. A male and female drinking at the premises become involved in an altercation. As a result of this, the female's friend or partner assaults the male to the floor where he proceeds to kick and stamp on the victim.

14th December 2019 between 20:40 and 22:48. A drunken regular becomes aggressive towards door staff. This escalates and the suspect begins kicking tables and chairs resulting in a broken table.

20th December 2019 a call received at 21:06 stating that 12 people are fighting outside the pub and reporting person is covered in blood from helping one victim. Police operator notes that they can hear raised voices in the background. On Police arrival 1 injured male remains and refuses to speak to officers. A further call was logged for this incident by the Ambulance Service.

21st December 2019 between 21:00 and 21:30. A regular of the pub states he is there alone and describes himself as drunk. He states on his way to the toilet he is knocked unconscious but has no recollection of what happened and with who. He states the only thing he remembers is leaving the pub covering in blood. The victim received cuts, swelling and bruising around his face, inside his mouth and cuts in his ear. The DPS also states to police that the victim was drunk, but no trouble.

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(Revised 12.11.2020)

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25th December 2019 at 17:30. A taxi driver waiting for a fare calls police as two customers have jumped on the bonnet of his car causing damage. Officers arrive and note that it looks like the suspects were "play wrestling" ending up on the bonnet of the car. One of the suspects is a regular of the pub.

28th January 2020 between 22:15 and 22:20. A taxi driver collects a fare elsewhere in Leeds and is directed to the Old Red Lion. The suspect doesn't have any money and states his mates will come out of the pub and pay. Suspects friend come out and suspect tells him not to pay, that he will go inside and get some money. The taxi driver locks the door and asks for ID. The male demands the taxi door be opened and at this point the taxi is surrounded by the suspects friends from the pub. The driver unlocks the door and the male makes off into the pub and the taxi is not paid for.

19th February 2020 at 18:04 a call was received by police where the reporting person stated someone had just been drinking in the pub then got into their car and drove off. It was noted that this person was so drunk that they struggled to open the car door and walk properly.

7th March 2020 at 22:22 a call received relating to a group of more than 5 fighting at the pub. This started due to someone pouring a pint over someone and now staff are struggling to contain it. A commotion is heard and noted by the call taker in the background. Officers arrive and all suspects have left.

31st July 2020 at 18:42 a report of 4 males fighting at the pub and "STARTING" with the landlord and land lady. One male is noted to have received injuries, but all have left prior to police arrival.

29th September 2020 between 18:00 and 21:40. The victim leaves their bank card in the pub, which is then stolen, and 4 contactless transactions made elsewhere.

11th October 2020 call logged at 22:20 to state a male was laid out on the floor and 5-6 people attacking him. Police arrive and establish from one male that he had been at the pub when an altercation began in the car park and punches were thrown. No further details were established.

23rd April 2021 19:47 a report of two males who have one other male pinned up against the wall outside and trying to start a fight. Caller stated it looks like it's all about to kick off. Police arrive and staff/customers advise that a disagreement had taken place but now everyone involved had left.

30th April 2021 at 21:57. A call received from a customer at the pub who has just left and found a heavily intoxicated female outside saying she is 17 years old. Police arrive and are informed that the female was collected by a family member and taken home.

9th May 2021 between 22:45 and 23:30 a report of a fight in the beer garden between a group of 8 people. It is reported that both men and women are fighting. One victim states she was an onlooker and was dragged to the floor by her hair. There is then a further crime where the victim states he had just left the pub and was round the corner where he was assaulted. The incident appears to be a continuation of the earlier log.

12th June 2021 at 21:23 a report to the police that 8-10 lads are all fighting in the car park. Call taker notes screaming in the background on the phone. On police arrival victims or suspects are identified. Officer notes that there are a large group of young drinkers still present who are now no longer welcome inside the pub.

On Sunday 13th June 2021 at around 19:25 3 males have attended the Old Red Lion. It has been established that one male had arranged to meet the other at the pub to have an altercation. The third male appears to be acting as back up for one. The males have been circling the venue looking for each other.

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The males have walked out and around the front of the venue and across the road where an altercation has taken place between the two involving a knife where one of the males has sustained extremely serious injuries as a result of stab wounds. All the customers who were sat in the beer garden at the time stand and watch the fight. Three males appear to wander over for a closer look then return 30 seconds later. Although so many witnessed it, none of these customers came forward as a witness. While officers were at the pub conducting the initial investigation a call for further assistance was received due to a further fight in the car park. This crime is still under investigation.

20th June 2021 at 20:38 DPS reports that a male who is banned for previous violence is refusing to leave. Later on, the same log there is a report that the same male is now smashing up windows.

On 10th July 2021 at 20:57 police received a call to state that a customer had been threatened by males with a machete. The customer was sat in the beer garden when two males attended on a scooter and accused him of being linked to a gang. Both males were holding a machete. The males made off and the police were called. No further action was taken due to a lack of support from the victim.

On 11th July 2021 between 20:30 and 00:00 there have been two groups of males stood around the pool table at the Old Red Lion. As COVID restrictions were in place at the time, this would have been in breach of the regulations as the males were stranding together and had their drinks on the pool table. It has been described that they were not arguing but strange how they were talking to each other. CCTV shows one male stood acting aggressively in his body language to someone off camera. Both groups of males have then gone outside together. The males have been stood near some parked vehicles and at this point are described as having an argument. The argument continued and the witness looked away. He then heard screeching and noticed one of the cars the males had been stood next to drive into a male, the impact of which threw his body into the air.

During this same altercation another male who was arguing with a group around the cars and bikes. He has then been hit to the floor, kicked and punched to the head and believe to have had a bottle smashed over him. This male has received severe slash wounds to his body consistent with a knife attack. This is still under investigation and suspects are outstanding. CCTV shows that some vehicles without doubt belong to customers who were coming and going from their cars during this. A group of girls can be seen coming from one car and one of them is carrying a drink in what looks to be a glass with a straw.

As I mentioned earlier in this statement, The Old Red Lion has historically been a challenging premises and attracts challenging customers. The calls to the police and crimes recorded prior to the earliest one in this statement are all indicative of those I have listed. I have noted a number of incidents which have occurred due to someone who was previously banned returning and causing issues. The intimation being that even when someone is banned, they want to come back and settle scores. Another common theme appears to be the level of drunkenness mentioned relating to customers and fights where injuries are sustained. Even more concerning is the mention of weapons and the use of weapons and cars to assault others.

On Tuesday 3rd August 2021 I met with the DPS and PLH to discuss any reasonable steps they could take to address our concerns. I believe the meeting helped focus their minds on the issues they need to tackle, however no agreements were made. Jacqueline and Ian both agreed that they would go back and discuss what they could reasonably do to prevent further occurrences.

At any review of the interim steps under Section 53D of the Licensing Act 2003, West Yorkshire Police would ask that the current restrictions posed on the premises licence continue until the Sub-Committee's decision at review (Section 53C of the Licensing Act) takes effect - this would be 21 days from notification of the decision, or, if an appeal is lodged within that 21 days, after any appeal against the decision is decided at Magistrates Court.

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We are mindful that the decision at review does not take immediate effect and would therefore want to ensure appropriate and proportionate safeguards for the public are in place until that time. The suggested course of action would ensure that these measures must remain in place and therefore, public safety is maintained.

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(Revised 12.11.2020)