

Statement of Michael Pearce as joint owner of Church Farm House

I make this statement in support of the objections set out in my formal letter of objection dated 1st November 2021.

Our family – that of my wife and I - home is immediately adjacent to the Musette Café and it is the property which is most affected by the activities in and around it. The noise and disturbance from the café already impact on our lives and on the enjoyment of our home. I would like the Sub-Committee to understand the following facts regarding the situation of our house:

1. If you were to stand outside our back door and take thirteen paces you reach the large doors of the café, (15ft by 15ft) and two further stable doors which are frequently used by customers as the entrance to the café. In warm weather these are opened for ventilation, allowing the noise from within the café to be clearly audible in our garden, which we also wish to enjoy in warm weather and on summer evenings.
2. The back wall of the café is our boundary wall and it has two partially covered windows. The café building is situated in converted stables with no sound insulation so noise from within the building can be clearly heard in our garden.
3. If we are in our garden we can smell the cooking coming from the commercial kitchen.

Although the applicants claim that the operation of the café can be managed so as to comply with any regulations which are imposed to minimise its impact on surrounding properties, our experience is that this is not the case. Events have occurred in the past which have continued outside the hours permitted by planning consent and tables and chairs have been set up outside the café in breach of planning conditions.

By an email dated 15th November, the Leading Licensing Officer forwarded to us a letter from the applicant's agent saying that "the agent for the applicant of the Musette Café has requested the opportunity to mediate with you to establish if there is a way to resolve your concerns". The email attached a letter from the agent which was addressed to us but which contained no mention of the particular concerns that had been raised by us in our letter of objection. It nevertheless asked us to withdraw our objection. We responded by a letter dated 17th November in which we said that we would be willing to discuss the matter upon receipt of any proposals which the applicant might have to address our objections. There has been no response to this letter. We are therefore very concerned that the applicant has no intention at all of taking any steps to mitigate the further impact which the granting of a permanent alcohol licence will have on the enjoyment of our house and garden.

The existing use of the café already causes a nuisance to us because of the noise that is generated within and outside the building. We believe that if a permanent licence is granted then the café will become a regular drinking venue and night spot for customers, which is likely to generate a wholly different character of event to the one-off birthday parties or evening talks with guest speakers which are said to have been the subject of the temporary licences up to now. We do not believe that it would be fair to treat the escalation from a temporary licence to a permanent licence as being simply "more of the same". The proposal would be likely to significantly increase the nuisance to which we are currently subjected, which is already beyond what it is reasonable to expect good neighbours to tolerate. We therefore ask that the Sub-Committee does not subject us to further nuisance by granting the alcohol licence to the café.

26th November 2021