

Decision Notice

Application for a review of a premises licence at Connect Bar and Restaurant, 71 Turnpike Lane, Wood Green, London N8 OEE

The Committee carefully considered the review application and representations made by all parties, as well as the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy and the Licensing Act 2003 section 182 guidance.

The Committee decided to revoke the licence for the following reasons.

The Committee heard from the Noise and Nuisance Team that the Connect Bar /restaurant is the only bar/ restaurant in the area that is permitted to operate until 2am in the morning. The Connect Bar has residential properties directly above and to the rear and occupies a mixed used commercial area. Access to the bar is from the front of the store and at street level only. The premises are served by shutters which, when down, obscure visibility into the premises. The premises is currently served by a single CCTV camera located at the front of the premises to cover the main entrance.

Between 22/9/22 and 31/10/23 there had been 54 complaints about public nuisance from patrons leaving the premises, loud music, and the continued use of the premises beyond their permitted operating times. When the Noise and Nuisance Team have sought to investigate they have been hampered by the lack of working CCTV covering the areas in question and hindered by the Premises Licence Holder's (PLH's) unwillingness to provide footage and/or inability to operate the system, in breach of her licence conditions.

People have been witnessed by the Noise and Nuisance Team and the Police drinking in the premises after closing time and the Nuisance and Noise Team has witnessed smoking inside the premises which is illegal.

The Police made submissions that they too have received numerous complaints, these relate to loud music, shouting, swearing drinking on the street and smashing bottles. Despite meeting with the PLH on 20th July where she agreed measures to improve the operation of her licence, including security moving people on, lights to be turned on at last orders, possibly stopping selling alcohol earlier and no staff meetings after the premises close, the venue has continued to operate outside its opening hours and most recently there was a fight outside the premises on 26th August and on 22nd September the PLH reported to the Police that there had been a large group of men outside the premises with knives and she was scared to leave the premises. She reported this incident more than 6 days after it occurred.

The CCTV inside the premises has not been working for several months, this has not been reported as required, the PLH is unable to operate it in breach her licence conditions and she is only now in the process of learning how to operate it. These are all very serious breaches of the premises licence conditions, especially when the premises are associated with such high levels of public nuisance and disorder.

The PLH has made representations relating to her age and indicated she is doing her best. Her view is that her taking appropriate action regarding the disturbances is to report them to the Police. She has submitted that she is unable to control what happens outside the premises but she does have security. She seems unaware of her responsibility to ensure orderly dispersal from the premises. It was unclear to the Committee whether SIA registered security were always present when they should be under the conditions of the licence. Whilst having previously stated that the premises have remained open beyond her operating hours because she was having a family meeting, staff meeting, or cleaning, she admits to sometimes having operated licensable activities beyond her hours. She also admits that loud music is a problem but blames a lack of soundproofing which she has no control over, although she is liaising with her landlord. The PLH was keen to assert that the breaches are occurring during operating hours as well as outside. The Committee noted that the Licensing objectives are not being promoted and the PLH has no plan for improvement. Patrons are congregating outside the premises up to 5 a.m. and 6 a.m. and the Committee believe that residents should not be subjected to the levels of public nuisance and disorder that are taking place.

Because of the frequency of complaints, seriousness of the incidents (including service of an abatement notice and the need for a dispersal order on 16th September), the breaches of the licence, loud music affecting residents and the lack of action or responsibility taken by the PLH to address the issues, despite having been given the opportunity to do so by the Police over 4 months ago, the Committee has decided to revoke the licence.

The incidents at the premises are becoming more serious and the premises appear to be a beacon for antisocial behaviour and lawlessness because they are being poorly managed. The breaches of the CCTV licence conditions have existed since at least March and have not been rectified. Because of the failure of the PLH to address the many issues and her assurances that this is the best she can do, the Committee have lost confidence in the PLH's ability to understand the seriousness her responsibilities as PLH, to comply with her licence conditions and to promote the licensing objectives of the prevention of public nuisance and prevention of crime and disorder. In light of this, no further conditions or period of suspension would promote the licensing objectives, and revocation of the licence is the proportionate and appropriate remedy.