

Black Bear Licensing Review, Tewkesbury

Regarding this application, I am speaking as the County Councillor on behalf of local residents.

I am hoping to represent a balanced view as I have been approached both by residents in favour of the review and against it.

The restoration of the Black Bear is quite exceptional and I think everyone will agree with this. It is both a tourist attraction and gives pleasure to lots of locals who have long awaited its reopening. It is a sensitive and exquisite refurbishment of what is said to be Gloucestershire's oldest pub. From an economic perspective it is also very good to have the business back in use.

This review has nothing to do with wanting to close the business, but some residents who live nearby are struggling with the frequency of live music and the levels of noise which they have told me can be distressing.

There have I understand also been some issues with the smoking area, but these have been well managed. This is good news as it shows that compromise can be made positively. I have spoken to the landlord Luke who is keen to put in measures to minimise disturbance to locals and is willing to adjust and aims to continually improve things. Additionally, Luke has also successfully been engaging with and is highly supportive of various community activities including working with Age UK.

Equally, there have only been a handful of disorder issues and there are no complaints from the police. In fact all of the residents who have contacted me about the noise, have also said that they do want to support the business. Several local residents and fellow landlords and landladies have been complimentary regarding the pub and events such as Tewkesbury Live and perhaps this, along with Oktoberfest and events on Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve could be conditions granted on top of the number of other events which will be agreed at the review.

Many people enjoy live music and The Black Bear is a great venue, however, if music is too frequently too loud, it can be very disruptive to those who live nearby. Perhaps a compromise could be made about the length of musical sets and earlier finishing times.

In its favour, apart from the events mentioned above there are unlikely to be extra outdoor events between September and May. The venue will naturally be busier in the summer and I do have sympathy with the difficulty of planning ahead in terms of the weather, therefore, if the current license is changed and events which have been applied for have to be cancelled due to rain, would the landlord be able to apply for another event to mitigate this loss?

The Black Bear is situated in a High Street, albeit in a small market town, metres from the countryside rather than a capital city. A balance needs to be struck between a popular venue and the difficulty that some neighbours may be experiencing, therefore, I urge compassion and hope for an agreement between a great and thriving business and the residential area it is part of.

Cate Cody

Gloucestershire County Councillor – Tewkesbury Division 16/11/23