

Neath Port Talbot CBC
Licensing Section
Civic Centre
Port Talbot
SA13 1PJ



16 Ynysderw Road
Pontardawe
Swansea
SA8 4EG
9 October 2022

Reference: Licensing Act 2003

Application for Review of Premises Licence

The Other Place (Live Lounge)

9 Ynysderw Road , Pontardawe

Dear Sir/Madam

I refer to the above application of 15 September 2022, submitted by R Matthews, Environmental Health, Neath Port Talbot CBC, and the associated Environmental Health statement providing supporting information.

I have lived at the above address for approximately 27 years. I am 74 years old and someone who has always recognised and abided by the rule of law. I should also state for your information that I am a patron of The Other Place, although I am not a regular music listener at the venue.

My home is approximately 60 yards, diagonally opposite from the boundary wall of The Other Place, in a northerly direction. Although there are regular music events held at The Other Place, I can categorically inform you that I have NOT been affected by excessive and audible noise from the premises AT ANY TIME. Although the windows in my home are double glazed, I can honestly declare that I have not been conscious of ANY excessive music noise, nor am I aware, or have been affected by ANY disturbances caused by people outside the premises at late hours. In part, this may be as a consequence of improvements introduced by Mr Andrew Davies (now Manager at the Other Place, but previously the owner, when he purchased the building some 18 years ago) and made the conscious decision to stop entry / exit to the premises via the door on the side of the building facing Francis Street, and move this to the opposite side of the building, facing a public road and away from any residential properties.

I have to say that as a NPTCBC ratepayer and a long standing Ynysderw Road resident, I am disappointed at the handling of this investigation by NPTCBC Environmental Health Team and some of the statements and conclusions they have arrived at. During the course of their investigation, I am not aware that they have at any time conducted a survey of all the residents in Ynysderw Road, to establish whether there is a consensus involving everyone (not just those who have complained) about noise / or disturbance. I think it is incumbent on NPTCBC Environmental Health to ensure that

there is no bias one way or another about this issue. We live in a democracy, and, as such, we all have a right to be heard and cognisance given to our views.

On that note, I was dumbfounded to read the contents of paragraph 9 in the Environmental Health statement and, moreover, to even understand its relevance to the matter under consideration. Members of the public have a right to express their views – they do so by whatever means at their disposal. What's the purpose in referring to it in the statement?

Having read the Environmental Health statement several times, I retain numerous concerns about some of the contents and what they are trying to convey to you as a Licensing Authority. One impression may be that the residential area around The Other Place is saturated with alcohol fuelled delinquents, staggering about at all hours whilst trying to hold high pitched (and unintelligible) conversations with one another – see paragraph 28. Paragraph 30 tries to paint a somewhat similar picture, and whilst I concede there may be instances of foot traffic “between venues” – I submit that this can occur almost exclusively during the Pontardawe festival on 3 days in August every year. In my opinion, it is not a regular, week day or even every week end occurrence. The inference I have drawn from this Environmental Health (EH) statement is that the issues that some (who and how many I have no idea) Ynysderw Road and Francis Street residents, is being laid solely at the door of patrons of The Other Place. It is a possibility that those causing a noise have in fact spent time (and money) in different licensed premises beforehand, specifically in either Neath or Swansea, where drinks are widely known to be considerably cheaper per unit than charged anywhere in licensed premises in Pontardawe.

The other impression I get from the EH statement is that there has seemingly been little good will from the managers and /or supervisors at The Other Place to provide entertainment without giving rise to complaints (paragraph 27). Yet there is evidence in the EH statement (paragraph 17) that the managers have made differing attempts to mitigate concerns from residents. EH state these measures “were insufficient”. In paragraph 18, EH explain their reasoning as to why these attempted measures “ were insufficient”. It is not clear to me from the EH statement as to whether EH offered or provided The Other Place with any form of guidance that the latter could have followed, implemented and thereby “become sufficient “. This is at variance with some of the (I believe draconian and punitive) conditions that EH have outlined in their statement that The Other Place now has to attain to allow entertainment, specifically condition 3.

I would like to finish my comments by expressing my concern with the message I believe I'm getting after reading paragraphs 31, 32 and 33 in the EH statement. Is the purpose of the statement to provide the Licensing Authority with pertinent and relevant information relating solely to The Other Place, or has NPTCBC EH decided unilaterally to conflate matters/issues and include all Licensing Premises in Pontardawe?

I hope that you find my comments of use to you in your deliberations.



Yours sincerely

JOHN HOWELLS