

Representation in Support of an Application for a Review of a Premises Licence in Respect of the Premises known as Bhardi Pool Club at 70a Longbridge Road, Barking, IG11 8SF



Dear Ms Taylor,

I write as Responsible Authority Officer on behalf of the Licensing Authority to make a representation in support of the police application for a review of the premises licence in respect of the premises known as the Bhardi Pool Club at 70a Longbridge Road, Barking, Essex. My representation is made under the licensing objectives of the prevention of crime and disorder and public safety.

I was concerned to receive the police reports that the premises had been found to be open and operating for shisha, beer and coffee, with in excess of 20 persons present, at around 17.35 on Wednesday 7 April 2021, at a time when the premises were prevented from doing so under the Government business operating restrictions imposed due to the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. The operation of the premises at that time was in contravention of Health Protection (Coronavirus, Restrictions) (Steps) (England) Regulations 2021. The decision to open was also reckless, endangering members of the local community, in potentially assisting the spread of the virus by enabling a large gathering in an indoor setting.

From the information provided, it appears that Mr Lad Bardhaj, the premises licence holder and Designated Premises Supervisor, knowingly allowed the gathering to take place in the knowledge that it was in contravention of current operating regulations. The fact that the premises was closed at the front, with shutters drawn, and that all 'customers' were gathered in the extension to the rear of the premises suggests that this was done in a way that was meant to deceive and give the impression that the premises was closed for business and compliant. The reports indicate that alcohol, shisha and coffee were all made available for purchase to those present. In doing so the provision of shisha in a fully enclosed area would have been in contravention of the provisions of the Health Act. Furthermore, the use of the rear extension of the premises for the licensable activity of the sale and supply of alcohol would have been unauthorised, irrespective of the current pandemic restrictions, as it is not currently included within the established licensed area shown on the premises licence issued to Mr Bardhaj.

From the information provided, Mr Bardhaj appears to have told officers that he had attended the premises to carry out some works in advance of future staged reopening of the premises and that friends had seen he was on the premises and had attended and been admitted and that this had escalated. If this were truly the situation then at best this indicates poor judgement and weak management. Mr Bardhaj would have known that he was putting his business and customers at risk by doing so.

Mr Bardhaj has, in fact, previously displayed poor judgement and weak management and been subject of formal action back in August 2019 when the police enacted a warrant, leading to arrests upon the premises and a separate licence review for offences, including arms offences. On that

occasion the Council's Licensing Committee made a decision to revoke the premises licence only for this to be re-instated in the Magistrate Court subject to conditions including strict 'club conditions' controlling future licensed operation. With the re-instatement of the licence Mr Bardhaj had been afforded a second opportunity to show that he could properly act in the joint role of premises licence holder and designated premise supervisor and could be trusted to run a safe, secure and well managed venue.

However, Mr Bardhaj's conduct in this latest incident would indicate that any trust would be misplaced. I can have no confidence that he is able to exert the strong management necessary to run the venue.

I therefore fully support the call for the revocation of the premises licence.

**Richard Parkins | Licensing Authority Responsible Authority Officer | Regulatory Services |**

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