

APPENDIX 5

Dear Sir or Madam,

I write in support of this application.

Wickersley thrives because it has to date always managed to adapt to changing times. It must continue to do so, and changes to the uses of the commercial premises in the village centre are an important part of that process.

Everyone is familiar with the trend away from face-to-face goods retail and financial services, and towards online alternatives. There are however certain types of service that only work face-to-face, and Wickersley has embraced many of these, notably hair salons, beauticians, and even a tattoo parlour; but principally eating and drinking establishments, which have proliferated and diversified over recent years. This trend has ensured that premises that would otherwise have been void have in fact been productive, maintaining the street scene and the vibrancy of the village centre, and providing jobs for local people and a revenue stream for the landlords. There is a certain 'buzz' about the village centre nowadays, which has arisen as Wickersley has transformed from a place where people just undertook chore activities to one in which they also socialise, and the eating and drinking establishments have been vital to this progress. I am aware that there are some who hanker for the 'old days', but we cannot recreate the past, and I do not suppose that there is more than a small minority who would even want to.

Fika Coffee Lounge will add to the diversity of Wickersley's eating and drinking scene. Its near neighbours, the Elif Turkish restaurant and the Bollywood curry house, have been assets to the village for some years, and a coffee lounge licensed for alcohol and music will be another 'good neighbour' eating and drinking establishment with a distinctive theme that differs from those of the established businesses.

In specific regard to the licensing objectives, the applicants seek to run what is in effect Starbucks with the addition of music and cocktails, at a small scale.

- There is no apparent reason why such an establishment would attract crime or disorder: it would merely be a place where people would partake of beverages and light meals, and its proposed layout is focused on the notion of small groups eating, drinking and socialising while seated at tables. It is very far removed from the 'beer barn' concept, which is widely and rightly considered to be an antisocial type of establishment.
- It follows that if the premises are inconducive to criminal or disorderly conduct, then there is no expectation of nuisance or threats to public safety. In the particular case of noise nuisance associated with amplified music, there exist enforcement measures in the event of breaches of conditions, and coffee lounges are not in any case generally associated with loud music.
- It is not unusual for small groups of youths to meet socially in coffee lounges. Where this happens, it would be incumbent on the staff to provide a degree of supervision and to ensure that no alcohol was served to minors. The latter policy would in any case be required of the staff as a condition of an alcohol licence. It may indeed be argued that a group of youths socialising in a well-managed coffee lounge would be at less risk of harm than one doing so on the street, and in this respect the applicants may in fact be proposing to enhance the protection of children.
- Alcohol licences are revocable in the event that the licensing objectives are not met. The Licensing Board therefore has effective sanctions if harms ensue from the grant of an alcohol licence.

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- It is reasonable to suppose that Fika Coffee Lounge would make no negative impact in regard to the licensing objectives, or at least no measurable negative impact. This being the case, the cumulative impact zone policy that applies in Wickersley would not come into scope.

I thank you for your attention and ask that, after all due consideration, the requested licences be granted.

Best regards,


Gillott Lane,
Wickersley,
ROTHERHAM,
