

**Community Safety and Street Scene
Licensing Service**
Riverside House
Main Street
Rotherham
S60 1AE

Robert Fisher
Anston Club
1 Main Street
North Anston
S25 4BW

4.10.22

Ref LA2003/Review

Fao: Audrey Bailey / Diane Kraus

Dear Audrey,

Anston Club is about 120 years old, it has been the hub of community and charitable activities for generations of local people, We do not want to lose it, we want it to survive and prosper in this difficult time, when so many do not.

It was the beginning of 2018. A friend of mine who was on the committee at the time asked me if I would be interested in helping out as the club was in a bit of a predicament. It was tired and had a lot of debt and needed help.

I agreed to go to a meeting thinking I was going on the committee and came out of it as the president!, This was at the same meeting that Martin came onto the committee as well.

It was then we found out the true picture, there was no money in the bank, had about £70k of debt and the club was literally weeks away from closing.

But we got on with the challenge enthusiastically, putting our heart and soul into the club, renegotiated existing contracts as they came up, changed suppliers, shopped around for the best deals, cleaned from top to bottom and called in favours from friends and local businesses to help smarten the place...

...Generally managing to give the place a bit of love, slowly but surely things were picking up in the right direction...

THEN COVID CAME ALONG

The only good thing about covid was that when we were allowed to, we were able to go in and really clean and redecorate all the club from floor to roof! (we even had complaints about this, that we were partying and having raves - when the police visited and saw us all in overalls and painting, sanding etc - they apologised to us for the inconvenience)

I am not saying it has been easy doing all this, because it hasn't been. I have my own business to run and family, as do other members of the committee and to help the club, has taken a lot of time and effort. In fact it has been like a **full time sometimes unappreciated job...with absolutely no pay!**

Before I begin I would just like to say

Its not easy being on a committe.

There are 3 of us, myself, Martin Kavenagh and Betty Ward who have been on since 2018.

(+ 5 more at this present time)

Andrew Bower, David Fairbrother, Joanne Woodward, Tony Herbert and Julie Herbert

There have also been approx 10 to 15 committee people in that time who've come and gone, wanting to be on the committee and to be honest, give nothing or very little to the club. Once you've mentioned there's jobs and rotas for them to do, then they'll have a month or two, make their excuses and you don't see them again. Voting for something to get done can be also be a nightmare. A club is very lucky to get genuine conscientious people to look after it especially those with a business sense.

So why are we 3 still here?.. I don't know....perhaps loyalty to the club, perhaps we want to make a difference and see the club prosper not close, perhaps we're mad!, perhaps we love the club and **we don't want it to fall into the hands of developers** as is more than occasionally banded about!

Whatever the reason it's definitely not for the popularity or for personal gain, we get absolutely no financial reward, all we do is voluntary, whilst still doing our own work as well.

Please don't judge us on being incompetent people as we try very hard to maintain and keep our club open for basically other people's enjoyment and for future generations. We might have our failings but we intend to and will overcome them. Please be kind when making your review recommendations.

The worst occasion was on the 12th July 2021, with it being 'The Euro Cup Final' there was a turn on in the afternoon, leading up to the match at night, what was supposed to be a brilliant eagerly anticipated family day turned into a shambles, something none of us wanted or expected, we had many complaints obviously and for good reason, all we could do was hold our hands up and admit we were overwhelmed, as were also apparently The Leeds Arms, The Yellow Lion, The Station, The Butchers Arms and Trafalger Square!

This was the incident which started the Action Plan. Helen Cooper came in and set about sorting the club. to be honest we thought it was good, it opened our eyes to our failings and made us more aware of what was needed to run our club, we thought we had run it ok but we hadn't, we needed to know more in the Licensing, Health and safety way and this we took on board, and put procedures in place, Joined pubwatch and did everything Helen proposed. We had already put an order in for CCTV to be fitted before the action plan was proposed. Eventually after all the recommended procedures were done and seen to be put on place, Helen was happy with our progress and signed us off a month or so later than expected, because she coughed covid and couldn't come to our club at that time.

We thought then that that was it, lesson learned, the football episode was put to bed, not to be forgotten but dealt with and to be honest us as a committee felt more experienced for it.

Ever since the football night we have been loathe to put anything on at night, even though the club needs the revenue. we have had a couple of day christenings and have a couple more booked in but these are afternoon events and with the weather being so good they have been held outside in the beer garden. We had plans to build a seating area on our car park next to the smoking area for customers, but we decided to put it on hold as we can't afford any more complaints.

I would also like to point out that there has been complaints over the years of noise, chatter etc. we have done everything we (and committees before us) can to comply. There is a noise limiter in the club, we close doors when turns are on, signs put out, at the end of the day the club has been open 120 years, houses have been built in perhaps the last 10ish years around us.

We do respect everyone's rights to reasonable quiet and we always ask our customers to be respectful to our neighbours and have signs put up, even though sometimes the nature of our business means there will be noise created ie, our beer garden, smoking area, car park, talking and laughing etc.

Realistically if you buy or rent a property next door to an established club you should though probably expect to experience a bit of noise now and again.

(I'm not saying this to be smart, it's probably just common sense)

Generally we consider that all our customers are respectful to the neighbours probably due to the average age being about 50!

There have been reports of drug taking and dealing in our car park. We do not open till 7pm in the week and 5pm on Saturdays, our car park is used by the hair salon next door. The club is a lock up, we do not see this and if we did we would report it. I wish whoever saw this happening would get times, descriptions or the car registrations and report it themselves instead of blaming the club. We have CCTV on the car park if some one lets us know a time we will look at it and get registrations.

We also had a complaint in March about noise and cars speeding past the club this was nothing to do with us There was a 3 car smash much further up the road. The police closed the road off and we allowed the police to come in and take CCTV evidence from us.

One of our committee persons wanted to do a car boot on our car park on a Sunday morning in the summer. He took out leaflets locally, proceeds (if any) were going to the donkey sanctuary. The first day there were only 4 cars on the car park and we gave away 1 cup of tea. The next day we had a phone call telling us there had been a complaint that we had been serving alcohol in the morning. So even though we had put a lot of effort into this we stopped the car boot.

We know we will get complaints and what these complaints cost us. We're in the mind that someone has a personal grudge against the club we dont know who or why but it seems we have.

I have put numbers against Keely Ladlows grounds for review so we know where we are, as they are a bit mingled up with the same points being repeated and contradictory a couple of times.

Heres My reply to them.

1/ 21st June Funeral 2

2/ 21st June Funeral 2 (The club did not see any broken glass or drug paraphernalia see 4b)

3/ Agree

4/ 31st May Funeral 1

There was no trouble at all (Police records of incident will corroborate this)

4b/ 21st June Funeral 2

One Lad was asked to leave. He went away and half hour later he was across the road someone called the police, the lad was rude and offensive to the police man and Police lady. The police eventually did take him away only after another police car had come. There was a bit of shouting but only to tell the lad to go home The boys father turned up at club later to apologise for his sons behaviour. The same 2 police came again later, but no one was left outside, they said it must be from same call earlier (Police records of incident will im sure agree with this)

5/ Agree

6/ Martins version.

7/ I accepted the minutes were not in club and we have meetings whenever one is needed, usually we try for every month or so when all committee can get together. Minutes are up to date, notes are always taken at meetings and then written up properly afterwards, otherwise a meeting would never end.

8/ Agree but this contradicts No 43 saying we could not produce financial statements

9/ Agree

10/ Agree - With them both being funerals, the club did let guests in as a private function

11/

12/ We accept this. The rules as pointed out are on the wall. We have never had a vice chairman.
The rule book will be altered accordingly.

13/ Not True - The CCTV has never been altered. See letter from SSS who fitted the system.

14/ CCTV **Did Not** show any Fighting on either the 31st May Funeral 1 or 21st June Funeral 2.
By Keely Ladlows Statement The CCTV footage shows there was no issue outside the club on either night

14b/ Yes I was seen on the CCTV pulling a drink,
but this was not from after 12pm on the 21st June as I pointed out to Keeley.

15/

16/ Same night as 20

17/ I have been shown the photos and know there
were a couple of people sat there on the photos
18/ but I dont know if they had just been served or
were drinking up.

19/

20/ Same night as 16

21/ Accept

22/ I Accept what I said, but almost all of the time it is only ever me and Martin or a member of staff who had a drink after closing to be honest this is the only time we ever get to sit and discuss what needs doing for the club.
I presume most of the times we are on camera is when we are getting our own drinks and this is my naevity, but being probably too honest we didnt think it was wrong for staff or committee to have a quiet drink when you run a pub or club especially when youve worked hard all night behind bar and everyones gone home.

Note: Since this has happened the bar has shut completely on time every night.

23/ I Dont agree. All the staff know what time it shuts because their shifts end and they have there lifts home arranged.
Either myself or Martin are left to cash up, check all doors, lights, toilets, cellar, shutters, glasses and lock up the building, every night.
Staff have read and signed the challenge 25 and know who to check (please check the refusals book)
Yes I originally produced the training leaflets and got the first set of staff to read and sign that they knew and understood them. Since then Joanne Woodward took over staffing.
Yes when questioned I couldnt straight away remember if it was a check 21 or 25 policy but the serving staff do know.

**Numbers 24 to 42 all relate to the football match from 11th June 2021 (apart from No 25)
These were all brought up before which is why the action plan was introduced**

24/Agree

25/ This was Nothing to do with our club, they were not members and had not been in our club.

26/ Chris Ward? from up the road, who was banned for throwing a steel ball through our kitchen window, hes on drugs and I have shown police some of the texts he was sending me during the action plan (as I quite got on with him - see print out supplied) he has recently been evicted from the flats we hear hes been locked up. The Police are aware of this person and what he does.

27/ this resembles no 31

28/ I Dont Agree - No AGM had taken place in any club in the country because of covid.
Minutes were shown to Helen otherwise she wouldnt have passed the Action Plan.

29/ I Agree - but I was already aware

30/ I Dont Agree - No staff or committee to my knowledge saw any drug taking in the club, I certainly didnt, There was distancing and table service in place

31/ This resembles no 27

32/ This took place at the top of the road well away from the club, not at the club. With cars coming from the A57 way

33/

34/

35/ Premises were open but the bars were closed with shutters down

36/

37/

38/ If you fill in form you become a day member, (£5 applies to full member this usually it takes a week to process)

39/ Not True - There was one on the notice board, but was took down when decorating club

40/ Usually the average age of our customers is about 50. This was a one off Night which overtook the club, we do not, 'we hope' have a drug problem as any licensed premises would hope

41/ agree

42/ A reason was given - that the police were already there. why call police when they are next to you?
we did discuss that if anything ever did happen again they would be called instantly.

43/ Not true - When I asked if financial statements were the 'annual report and accounts' and the answer was yes we told them they were pinned to our notice board. (see no 8)

44/ Staff are aware of opening hours see 23

44b/ I was not aware that i have had a warning for offences committed under Section 136 Licensing act 2003 on 21st July 2021

I am still not aware, I have received no paperwork on this and no one else in the meetings was aware of this also.

45/ A CCTV system was already in place and on our agenda before the football match and the action plan. 30 days was suggested but I spoke to Helen about a reduction in days as the cost was quite excessive from the original quotation to us. The CCTV man was present when I called her and overheard the conversation when she agreed to 2 weeks.

The CCTV was originally planned to be installed before the football match for the clubs benefit to cover ourselves.

46/ Not true - Netty is the Personal Club License holder, I was perhaps not the correct person to ask, if you had asked Joanne she would have known. you should already have had these details on file from the action plan.

47/ Not True - All staff are trained. The yearly retraining is not yet due this, again you should already have had these details from the Action plan

48/ The posters given by Helen Cooper are all over our walls the challenge 25 policy is in place.
Yes when questioned I couldnt straight away remember if it was a check 21 or 25 policy but then I did remember as it says on the CD you made. (This is the same question as 23)

49/ The admissions is on the bar to be filled in when members come in
On sundays (the only day we get many people in) there are 3 committee people on duty and watching the door and the book is being filled in correctly.

50/51/52/ As ive said, I wasnt aware that a warning was issued in 2021. I am quite shocked at this.

Since we have had this notification. All items have been addressed and are now up to date at the club.

We can always be better and on the whole all items on the action plan have been carried on.
We havent been having turns etc but we do need to, as the latest electricity bills have put the club at risk far more then anything else.

As for the last bit that Keeley has no confidence in Myself or Martins ability to improve the running of the club.

Its very easy to look in and say you can do a better job or that were doing a bad job.
Please remember we're Volunteers, We dont have all the time in the world to do everything ourselves
There have been other people on the committee but it looks like its just me and Martin who end up having to make the decisions and speak for the club and with this all weve gotten is the flack!.

Were not bad people or conmen or trying to rip anyone off we're trying to keep the club a nice place for nice people, gangs of kids will not be coming in again.

and weve already improved the club so much from when we took the challenge on

Weve also in the last few weeks got new people on board the committee, who we now feel we can delegate jobs to to take the workload and pressure off us

When we first went on the committee we werent experts at running a club, we had to try to pick up the pieces from where the previous few committees had failed. We had to clean the club, order stock, open up, lock up at night, check the building, cash up, bank, deal with accountant, cellarwork, basically learning the trade. We also had to work in the bar to save the club money, as we couldnt at the time and probably still cant afford a steward.

Whilst were still not experts by any stretch of the imagination, we try our best, when others may just easily have let it go.

What I am saying again is please dont judge us on being incompetant people as we try very hard to maintain and keep our club open for basically other peoples enjoyment and for future generations and the local community to enjoy. We might have our failings but we will overcome them.

We hope you dont look upon us or the club to badly whilst making your review.

**If it is any consolation I will resign my position if it helps the club,
we came on because at the time no one else cared.**

Yours Faithfully
R. Fisher