

**THE JOKER, BLACKTHORN AVENUE, BRAMLEY**

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PROVIDED BY  
EI GROUP LTD**

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## **STATEMENT OF PAVON SHARMA**

1. I am a Regional Manager for Stonegate Pub Company. Stonegate owns Ei Group Limited.
2. Ei Group Limited owns around 3,500 public houses in England and Wales. The vast majority of these pubs are subject to lease/tenancy agreements in favour of tenants who operate them themselves.
3. The Joker is a pub for which I am responsible (I took over at the beginning of August 2022) and until September 2022 was the subject of a tenancy agreement in favour of Lam 7 Limited who appointed Kyle Hawley as manager and DPS in September 2019.
4. I am responsible for a region covering 38 pubs in Leeds, Wakefield, Sheffield and Rotherham. When I took over as Regional Manager, I was given information on The Joker. That information was that the tenant was a multiple operator (that means the tenant has a number of pubs with Ei Group Limited) and it was a well run pub.
5. At the beginning of August, I received information from the tenant that it wished to terminate the agreement and leave the pub.
6. This coincided with an email from Oliver Ashton (Licensing Officer with the Council) requesting a meeting as there were issues that needed addressing at The Joker.
7. Having received this information, I checked with my head office to see if any issues/complaints had been logged against the premises and there weren't any.

8. It is part of the job of a Regional Manager to have regular contact with the Authorities. I became aware that the Police had some concerns about The Joker when I was involved in a meeting with PC Jo Belton from South Yorkshire Police and Lisa Underwood-Parkin of the Licensing Authority when we were discussing another premises. That meeting was at the beginning of September. In that meeting, PC Belton advised me that there were concerns with regard to possible drug use in the car park. I advised PC Belton that I was due to meet with Oliver Ashton to discuss these concerns but that in any event, the tenant had indicated that it wished to leave the premises and in the circumstances, I would be closing the pub until such time as a new operator could be identified. PC Belton told me that the issues were all outside the premises and that a strong operator with a proven track record was what was needed to operate the premises.

9. The Joker closed on the 8<sup>th</sup> September and has not reopened since.

10. The review papers were served on 15<sup>th</sup> September. These review papers identified issues with the car park and the “open plan” nature of it. The car park did have two entrances which I now understand led to problems. Whilst the pub has been closed additional concrete bollards have been installed around the pub such that there is now a single entrance/exit to the car park and the ability to park at the front of the pub has been removed altogether.

11. In addition, as far as the car park is concerned, we have installed flood lighting and CCTV cameras.

12. Finally, steel bollards have been installed at the entrance to enable the car park to be secured with a chain at 11.00pm.

13. Whilst the pub has been closed changes to the licence have been made. This followed liaison between our company solicitors (Gosschalks) and the Police and Licensing Authority.

14. Neither the Police nor Licensing Authority have lodged representations to this review. The outcome of the liaison between our Solicitors and the authorities resulted in a minor variation to reduce the hours for alcohol sales and licensable activities and to totally overhaul the conditions on the premises licence.

15. I understand that the conditions on the premises licence were suggested by the Police and Licensing Authority and agreed by our solicitors.

16. As a belt and braces measure, Ei Group Ltd has also removed Kyle Hawley as designated premises supervisor. The licence now does not have a DPS specified.

17. On a number of occasions when I have been at the pub over the last three months, I have been approached by locals asking when it will re-open. This has happened around half a dozen times and my impression is that there are many in the community who are keen to see the pub re-open. I am also aware that an enquiry has been made at head office by email to see when the premises will re-open.

18. Steven Scholey who operates another Ei pub in Doncaster made enquiries of head office indicating that he would like to take on the pub. I was also contacted by another Regional Manager saying that Steve wanted the pub, was local and is a strong no-nonsense operator.

19. The current situation is that Steve has indicated that he would like to take the pub subject to their being no further conditions added on review.

20. Enquiries have been made by Ei Group Limited head office with the Police to check that the Police are content with Steve Scholey taking over a DPS. We have received confirmation that the Police have no objection to this happening.

PAVON SHARMA .....

23<sup>RD</sup> NOVEMBER 2022

**STATEMENT OF STEVEN ALAN SCHOLEY**

1. I am making this statement to assist the Licensing Sub Committee with regard to the review application made by Sarah Beresford.
2. I am currently in negotiations with Ei Group Limited with a view to becoming the new tenant and designated premises supervisor for The Joker, Blackthorn Avenue, Bramley, S66 2LU.
3. I have been operating public houses for the last 10 years. I was born about 5 minutes away from The Joker and grew up on the estate. I know the pub very well indeed, indeed this used to be my local. I know lots of people locally and am aware of individuals who had been using the pub that I would not allow in if I was running the pub.
4. I am currently the tenant at a public house in Doncaster (The Mallard) but I have always wanted The Joker.
5. Subject to the outcome of the review proceedings, my plan is to take a tenancy of The Joker and then move into the premises with my wife and live in them. My pub in Doncaster will be operated by a manager.
6. I am aware of the history of these premises and that whilst the previous manager ran a good pub inside, he ignored what was happening outside. That is not something that I would allow.

7. I have a zero tolerance to drugs and my plan is to put the pub back at the heart of the community. These premises were previously a very popular pub but have been poorly managed and need a strong manager. I believe that I am that strong manager.

8. My plan is get the pub up and running before Christmas. I will implement a relatively basic food offer with pizzas, burgers, pie and peas etc.

9. These premises have always been a community pub and sport has been important. I am proposing to put Sky back into the pub and will try and re-establish links with the football team (Joker FC) whose trophy cabinets and honours board are still in the pub.

10. I want to operate a locals pub - a place where locals of all ages can come, have a drink, a bite to eat and enjoy each others company.

11. I am aware that entertainment in the past has caused some complaints of noise. My plan is to operate karaoke around once a month with occasional live music.

12. I believe that the locals will expect there to be recorded music played by DJ on a Friday night and I am confident that I can operate this without causing any impact on the neighbours. Indeed, in my time at The Mallard, I have had one noise complaint. That complaint arose when locals opened the windows when entertainment was being operated. I will not allow that to happen here.

13. There is already a condition on the premises licence that requires observations at hourly intervals to ensure that the operation of entertainment does not cause a nuisance to the locals. This is something that I already do at The Mallard and will continue to do at The Joker.

14. I am aware that the car park has been misused in the past. Ei Group Limited has already installed additional concrete barriers and there is now only one way in and one way out of the car park. In addition, the car park is now capable of being locked (with a chain between two steel bollards that have been recently installed) and I will lock this at 11.00pm. If customers' cars are in the car park after that, they will need to ask a member of staff to unlock the car park.

16. My belief is that if I set the standards people will stick to them. I will also work with any local residents who have any concerns moving forward.

17. I have seen the conditions on the premises licence and am aware that the hours have been reduced. I have not yet signed any deal with Ei Group Limited. If the Committee allows the licence to remain as it is, I propose to re-open before Christmas.

STEVEN ALAN SCHOLEY .....

23<sup>RD</sup> NOVEMBER 2022











JOKER



## HONOURS

FA Cup, 2015 League 8, S&H 2, League Cup 12, Assoc Cup 5, Charity Cup 3  
2016/17 League 8, S&H 2, League Cup 12, Assoc Cup 5, Charity Cup 3  
2017/18 League 8, S&H 2, League Cup 12, Assoc Cup 5, Charity Cup 3  
2018/19 League 8, S&H 2, League Cup 12, Assoc Cup 5, Charity Cup 3  
2019/20 League 8, S&H 2, League Cup 12, Assoc Cup 5, Charity Cup 3

## PLAYERS PLAYER OF THE YEAR

2015/16 Danny Swales  
2016/17 Daniel Patterson  
2017/18 Ross Duggan  
2018/19  
2019/20

## JOKER FOOTBALL CLUB

## COMMITTEE PL. YR. OF THE YEAR

2015/16 Josh Nodder  
2016/17 Jimmy Roebuck  
2017/18 Bradley Morton  
2018/19  
2019/20

## MANAGER

2015/16 Simon McDowell  
2016/17 Daniel Patterson  
2017/18 Ross Duggan  
2018/19  
2019/20

EVERY DAY OFFERS BOMBS FOR £5

DOUBLE UP FOR 2 BOTTLES FOR £1 £4

