

Old Rutlishians Response to representations re new bar license application

Prepared by Mike Stallard, Bar & Lettings Trustee

Hours

We have requested that the standard hours of the license finish at Midnight. It is though important to note that we are NOT proposing any change to the current hours where we finish at 11pm. It is not in our interests nor our staffs to be open regularly till late and we can assure local residents that at no stage in the future will regular late opening be an ambition of the Club.

What it does mean though is that on the few occasions a year where we do require a late license we will no longer need to apply for a TEN. These occasions are almost always related to a Club dinner (eg Football section dinner, Presidents dinner) and are occasions where there is no music played.

There may be a very occasional request from a long standing member for a late license for a special occasion (wedding anniversary for example) but even on these occasion any music in the hall would be switched off at 11pm.

Hotline

It was clear that the mobile phone solution to allow residents to call if there was an issue during an event was unreliable. We have therefore now installed land line phones in both the downstairs and upstairs bars (as well as the office). This number is 0208 542 3678. Apart from the bar staff we are run entirely by volunteers so the office is not open all the time but is usually manned most mornings and of course the phone will be picked up in the bars during opening times.

Residents Committee

In my position as volunteer Bar & Lettings Manager I have run the residents meetings for many years. My way of describing these to other trustees and members is “supportive but challenging” and we can see from the representations made exactly what I mean by that.

However, it is clear to me that we as a Club need to widen our dialogue with neighbours and I have therefore asked 2 other trustees, both of whom live very locally, to join this committee and be part of the meetings going forward. This will ensure a wider spread of “ownership” across the Trustees (we have 12 in all) for this vital issue, ensure that if I am unavailable the meetings still take place and generally I hope ensure that residents concerns are taken even more seriously than they are now.

Soundproofing

We have in the past used various acoustic baffles to help suppress noise leaking from the Hall.

We put permanent foam baffles in the 2 roof lanterns which has undoubtedly helped with noise escaping.

We have also used foam window plugs which have proved very efficient but as pointed out, these have fallen into disrepair and disuse.

We are though fortunate that one of our members runs a very large events company and he has worked with me and his Sound Engineer over the last few weeks to come up with a plan to replace the plugs and improve the sound proofing in the hall. His report is attached as a separate document – there is much detail but it is worth reading as I think it shows a new level of professionalism in the way we are approaching this whole issue. This will involve a significant spend upfront but is one which we believe will make a real impact on noise levels.

Live bands

Whilst we can control the noise from discos, comedy evenings etc it is very hard to control the noise from live bands and we are happy to agree to no live amplified bands in the upstairs Hall. We would though request that like the special condition allowing us Rutsfest outdoors once per year we are allowed to continue to hold our indoor Halloween live band night at the end of October – this has run for 7 years now and is a significant revenue earner for the Club.

At the moment the Merton Concert band (non amplified) practises every Wednesday evening and we do not believe that causes any issues.

Exit Noise

For all non member events, and many member events, we employ professional Security Guards with a specific brief not only to maintain order inside (we have almost never had any issues inside the Club I hasten to add) but to ensure that guests leave in a quiet and orderly manner. We will make sure that we meet up with the Company we use to re-emphasise this issue as and when events restart.

We are also going to build a new area outside the front of the Clubhouse where people will be asked to wait for taxis, lifts etc – this will not be completely enclosed but will have high trellised panels (neighbours can see the style on the new panels installed next to Backflips gym on the left of the Club) which we believe will cut down on noise from the exit.

Finally, we are going to be more prescriptive with our hirers – currently all hirers pay a deposit which we will hold back if for example there is any damage done to the hall (usually by badly applied decorations rather than vandalism!!). There will be a new condition added to the contract that if we receive any written complaints about exit noise from neighbours within 7 days of a party an extra deposit of £100 will be forfeited. We hope that will focus the minds of the hirers.

