

Sawbridgeworth Town Council

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MAYOR
Cllr Reece Smith

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TOWN CLERK
Christopher Hunt Dip CSMP

Re: Opposition to Premises Licence Application for 28 Knight Street, CM21 9AT (Application Number: 25/0115/PL)

Dear Sir/Madam,

We write on behalf of Sawbridgeworth Town Council to formally object to the premises licence application for 28 Knight Street.

This objection is based not only on the significant concerns outlined below but also on the failure of the applicant to provide sufficient detail and reassurance on key areas of community concern, despite multiple attempts by residents to engage constructively. The applicant has persistently failed to address serious issues such as noise management, dispersal plans, waste control, and public safety, both in the planning process and in this licensing application. This lack of transparency and accountability raises fundamental doubts about their ability to operate the premises responsibly.

Our objection aligns with the Licensing Objectives set out in the Licensing Act 2003 and is based on the following concerns:

1. Prevention of Crime and Disorder

We are concerned that granting this licence will increase crime and anti-social behaviour in a predominantly residential area. Alcohol sales, particularly during late hours, are likely to attract disruptive behaviour, noise disturbances, and disorder.

- **Inadequate Patron Dispersal Plans** – The application does not outline how the venue will manage large groups of patrons leaving late at night, which is a known cause of disturbances and crime.
- **Lack of Community Engagement** – Over the past 16 months, the applicant has failed to engage with residents to address concerns, raising doubts about their commitment to responsible management.
- **Proximity to Other Licensed Premises** – Existing local venues already pose challenges in managing noise and public disorder. Adding another late-night venue without clear crime prevention measures will compound these issues.

2. Public Safety

The location of 28 Knight Street presents serious public safety risks due to traffic congestion, pedestrian safety, and emergency access concerns:

- **Severe Traffic and Parking Congestion** -
 - The narrow roads on Knight Street are already heavily congested, with limited parking availability.
 - Increased traffic from patrons, taxis, and delivery vehicles will make the situation worse, increasing risks for drivers and pedestrians.
- **Pedestrian Danger at Zebra Crossing** – The premises is directly next to a zebra crossing, and additional traffic will increase the likelihood of pedestrian accidents, particularly involving schoolchildren and elderly residents.
- **Restricted Emergency Access** – Traffic blockages in this area could delay emergency response times, creating a potential public safety hazard.
- **Outdoor Seating Safety Issues** – There are no clear plans on how the venue will manage outdoor seating, which could spill into public walkways and obstruct safe pedestrian movement.

3. Prevention of Public Nuisance

The operation of the venue, particularly during evenings and weekends, will cause ongoing disturbances for residents:

- **Noise Pollution:**
 - The Noise Impact Assessment submitted by the applicant is flawed, failing to consider outdoor seating noise, which will be significant.
 - The outdoor area is larger than that of nearby venues (e.g., Queens Head) and opens onto Rowan Walk, meaning noise will carry directly into neighbouring homes.
- **Unreasonable Operating Hours:**
 - The proposed hours (8 AM – 11:30 PM on weekends) are excessive and inappropriate for a quiet residential area.
 - Other venues in the area operate within stricter limits, and this venue should adhere to the same.
- **Litter and Waste Issues:**
 - Increased footfall will lead to higher litter levels, including broken glass, food waste, and rubbish, creating hazardous and unsanitary conditions.
 - The potential for alcohol-related waste (e.g., discarded bottles) is a serious concern for residents and local businesses.
- **Frequent Events Will Cause Continuous Disruption:**
 - The application allows for events 7 days a week, which is excessive in a residential setting and will greatly impact residents' quality of life.

4. Protection of Children from Harm

The premises is directly opposite a primary school, raising major concerns about the safety and wellbeing of local children:

- **Risk of Exposure to Alcohol and Anti-Social Behaviour** – Children walking to school may be exposed to patrons under the influence of alcohol, as well as noise and litter from the venue.
- **Impact on Family Life** – Many homes in the immediate area house young families and elderly residents, who will be disproportionately affected by late-night noise and disturbances.
- **Unregulated Outdoor Seating** – Without clear restrictions, children in the area may be exposed to inappropriate behaviour from intoxicated patrons using the outdoor seating area.

5. Proposed Restrictions and Mitigation Measures

If East Herts as the Licensing Authority is inclined to grant the licence, the following **conditions** must be imposed:

1. Operating Hours

- Restrict hours to 9 AM–11 PM, with no late extensions.
- Alcohol should not be served before 12 PM to reduce daytime disruptions.

2. Outdoor Seating Restrictions

- Prohibit use of the outdoor area after 9 PM.
- Limit the number of patrons allowed in outdoor seating areas at any given time.
- No live or recorded music in outdoor areas—this should be clearly specified in the licence.
- Smoking restrictions should be implemented to minimise disturbances.
- Ensure only drinks from plastic cups is to be consumed in the outdoor area

3. Noise Management

- Install noise limiters for all live and recorded music, with limits set by Environmental Health.
- Live music should follow the precedent set by The Bell Pub, which restricts live performances after a certain time.
- Impose a requirement for regular noise measurements to be taken, particularly in the initial months of operation, to ensure compliance with noise limits. Many authorities apply such conditions to ensure that venues actively manage noise levels and prevent disturbances to neighbouring residents. Failure to meet these noise requirements should trigger a review of the premises licence.

4. Traffic and Parking Management

- Require designated parking arrangements to prevent illegal parking and traffic blockages.
- Install clear signage to discourage parking in restricted areas and residential streets.

5. Waste and Litter Management

- Mandate regular waste collection and street cleaning.
- Provide adequate bins for patrons, including recycling bins.
- Restrict bottle bin emptying times to prevent early morning or late-night noise disruptions or require an internal bottle crusher to reduce excessive noise from glass disposal.
- Limit servicing hours to avoid disruption during school pickup and drop off.

6. Community Liaison

- Require the applicant to establish regular community contact to meet with residents and discuss any ongoing issues.

7. Event Restrictions

- Limit events to two per week to prevent continuous disruptions.
- Require SIA-registered security staff at all events, particularly on Friday and Saturday nights.
- Implement ID-checking software to prevent underage alcohol sales.
- Implement a venue capacity limit to prevent overcrowding.
- Ensure licensing conditions align with those of neighbouring venues, such as the Queens Head.

8. CCTV & Security Measures

- Require the installation of CCTV inside and outside the premises, covering entry/exit points and outdoor seating areas.
- Ensure recordings are stored for a minimum period and are accessible to authorities upon request.

Conclusion

Sawbridgeworth Town Council believes that this application is unsuitable for the area and should be rejected. The applicant has failed to engage with the local community, and the operation of this venue poses significant risks to crime levels, public safety, and residential wellbeing.

If the Licensing Authority approves this application without imposing the above conditions, it will be failing in its duty under the Licensing Act 2003 to prevent public nuisance and protect public safety.

Yours faithfully,



Cllr Nathan Parsad-Wyatt
Sawbridgeworth Town Council
Planning Committee Chair