

**From:****Sent:** 24 October 2018 11:56**To:** Licensing <Licensing.Licensing@merton.gov.uk>; Licensing <Licensing.Licensing@merton.gov.uk>**Cc:** Councillor David Williams <David.Williams@merton.gov.uk>; Councillor David Simpson <David.Simpson@merton.gov.uk>; Councillor Daniel Holden <Daniel.Holden@merton.gov.uk>;**Subject:** Premises Licence Variation for Pod Bar (CMYK), 105-109 Broadway, SW19 1QG

Dear Sir/Madam:

I write on behalf of Wimbledon E Hillside Residents' Assn (WEHRA) to share our views on the application to extend 'supply of alcohol' at this venue a further 30 minutes to 2:30 am, Monday to Saturday.

**Background**

Bar Sia/Pod Bar applied for a nighttime extension a few years ago, and the application was refused, such was the damage being done to Wimbledon town by the late night visitors/drinkers.

These problems persist, and the town late at night is often a battle zone, with drinkers/drugged visitors misbehaving and often requiring emergency call outs from the police and ambulances, clogging St George's ER. Then an army of street sweepers race through in the early morning hours, scurrying to clear away the disgusting waste left behind.

These challenges with licensed premises is why Wimbledon town has a CIZ. These facts are evidence the CIZ is required, and needs strict enforcement. Sirens wake up the local community trying to sleep at night; filthy footpaths, damaged trees, signposts uprooted and a hundred of bags of litter are left behind for the local community the following morning. No one person from Merton Council is removing the vomit and urine, and this remains a thorn in the side of local people who expect areas around their home - Wimbledon - a place that should be kept clean, tidy and welcoming.

Of course the damage mentioned above is not all attributable to the Pod Bar, but a later opening/selling of booze by any of the 'late late night' venues will add to these serious problems. The NHS/emergency services simply cannot be expected to manage - day in and day out - the steady stream of drunken 20/30 somethings, exhausted/drunk/on drugs/fighting from WTC.

**Latest Police Data (July 2018)**

We know that Wimbledon is the place young people from Merton and Croydon go to have 'a good night out'. Police crime data shows that. In July 2018 there were 27 crimes reported of anti-social behaviour in Trinity Ward (nearly one each day), and 56 drug-related crimes reported (two a day).

The 'core' is the junction of Broadway and Kings Rd, where Pod Bar is located. This is a Hub in the town where problems occur. (Note there are nice family homes on Kings Road, yards from this junction, and thousands of homeowners in the South Park Gardens area that suffer daily from these on-going problems.)

**Proposed New Bar**

We have heard that there is a possibility the owners may change the venue to become a LGBT bar.

While that is an interesting positioning, and quite a leap from the existing business the owner has offered, it doesn't really matter what the 'concept' it, it's all about the execution.

The Licensing Committee will know Wimbledon as a stable, affluent, well-educated and generous community where *all are welcome, no exceptions*. Wimbledon doesn't attract 'hate crimes' or 'gay crimes' or other such things; they haven't come to the attention of our Councillors or our community. There are many residents who are LGBT in Wimbledon. They don't need to single themselves out; this is a fluid society where we move freely. It seems peculiar that such an exclusive positioning would even be successful here, as it could encourage social segregation. In any case this proposal would be no justification for extending 'sale of alcohol' hours further into the nighttime.

**Suggestions to the Premises Owner**

The bar is set within the thriving Wimbledon Theatre site, yet the venue doesn't even open until 9/10 pm. See attached images. There is a great need for this venue to be refurbished and taken to a higher level of quality than at present.

In the past, area school teachers used to be known to gather there for a drink and chat after work, from 4 / 5 pm into the evening. (That business has since gone elsewhere because the venue became badly managed.) Today the bar is dark and dingy, the furniture is cheap and broken, the floor needs a proper clean etc. It is no wonder a new direction is being sought.

Perhaps the owner could look at some other ideas, opening the venue during the daytime and evening, instead of trying to eek out a niche into the later night. Go back to being a 'teachers' rest', for example. Or open a coffee shop/wine bar for pre theatre and post-theatre audiences. **Please open during the daytime**, when Wimbledon people are out and about, and able to enjoy the town's offerings. Wimbledon residents are upmarket, social and enjoy a sustainable community life. The present venue, in our view, does not sit well with the needs and wishes of the community.

### **Summary**

In our view the applicant is splitting hairs, if they believe a 30 minute alcohol extension can improve, indeed save this business. We urge the Committee to refuse permission, and urge the applicant to consider a better quality, more a Wimbledon-appropriate concept in future.

In any case, we would urge the Committee to add a condition to the existing licence:

***To sweep the front of the premises at 105-109 Broadway and the area just to the left (along wall beside theatre car park) and to the right in front of the studio theatre, to ensure their late night guests' cigarette butts, litter etc are removed, and that a disinfectant is used to remove any vomit or urine left behind in this same area, even if it is not from the Pod Bar's own customers.***

A good number of other licensed venues in the town have agreed to this condition as an act of Goodwill to the local community, including SMASH, and it would be very much appreciated if the Pod Bar owner would accept such a condition as well.

Thank you for consideration of the views of the local community.

Yours sincerely,

Leigh Terrafranca, on behalf of WEHRA

