

**APPLICATION FOR A PREMISES LICENCE UNDER SECTION 159 OF  
THE GAMBLING ACT 2005 IN RELATION TO:-**

**Admiral  
9-11 Park Street  
Walsall  
WS1 1LY**

**HEARING BEFORE THE LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE AT 10.30 AM  
ON WEDNESDAY 29 MARCH 2023.**

**In**

**Conference Room 2  
Council House  
Lichfield Street  
Walsall  
West Midlands**

**The matter was heard by:**

**Councillor Gandham – Chairperson  
Councillor Nawaz  
Councillor Bains**

**For the Applicant:**

**Richard Wormald KC – Counsel on behalf of the Applicant  
Elizabeth Speed – Counsel on behalf of the Applicant  
James Sturgess - Regional Operations Director  
Mark Thompson - Risk and Compliance Director**

**Responsible Authority:**

**N/A**

**Interested Parties:**

**Peter Kumar – Vice Chairman of Walsall Market Traders Association**

**Also Present:**

**Sayful Alom – Licensing Team Leader  
Paul Green – Solicitor to the Sub-Committee  
Jack Thompson - Democratic Services Officer.**

## **Determination**

The Sub Committee considered the report of the Director of Public Health, which included amongst other documents and references, the application for a premises licence submitted by the Applicant and four written objections submitted by interested parties.

In addition, the Sub Committee considered the bundle of documents submitted by the Applicant in support of its application. The Sub Committee heard from Mr Richard Wormald KC who made the substantive oral representations on behalf of the Applicant on the day. The Sub Committee also heard from Mrs Elizabeth Speed (Counsel), Mr James Sturgess (Regional Operations Director) and Mr Mark Thompson (Risk and Compliance Director) who also attended and made representations on behalf of the Applicant. Mr Peter Kumar (Vice Chairman of Walsall Market Traders Association) was the only objector to attend in person to submit oral representations against the application.

### **Applicant:**

Mr Wormald sought to rebut the objections raised by the objectors, by expounding upon the “Key Submissions” that he had submitted on behalf of the Applicant in advance of the hearing.

In summary, Mr Wormald stated that although the Sub Committee were considering a new application, the Applicant was currently trading in a similar capacity at Bradford Street, a short distance from the Park Street site and so, in reality, the Applicant was only seeking to relocate. The Applicant would be surrendering its existing licence if the application were granted.

Mr Wormald confirmed that the Applicant had traded as an AGC for over 20 years with an excellent reputation and that there had been no crime and disorder associated with the premises and the professional management would continue at the new location at Park Street. It was submitted that the Applicant, was an industry leader and had a great deal of experience operating gambling establishments. In response to a series of questions raised by the Sub Committee members, Mr Wormald, Mrs Speed, Mr Sturgess and Mr Thompson took the Committee through the series of strategies and mechanisms that the Applicant will have in place to promote the licensing objectives. This included robust measures that were in place to ensure appropriate staff training was undertaken which supported the licensing objectives.

Mr Wormald invited the Sub Committee to have due regard to the fact that the police, being the Responsible authority with direct oversight in relation to the licensing objective concerning the prevention of crime and disorder, had made no representation.

## **Objections:**

The written objections received made consistent reference to the fact that the premises at Park Street were previously used as a gambling establishment namely Luda Bingo. It was asserted that the premises were used as a focal point by street drinkers and drug users alike. The representations referenced historical crime and disorder that was associated in and around the premises at Park Street. There were fears, that if the application were to be granted to another gambling establishment open 24 hours a day, that there would be a return to increased crime and disorder as experienced when the premises were occupied by the former Luda Bingo.

Mr Kumar informed the Sub-Committee that he was the Vice-Chair of Walsall Market Association and spoke on behalf of his members. Mr Kumar explained that he had a long history with Walsall and had seen considerable changes in the type of people visiting the Town Centre. He expressed that the Market Association was not anti-gambling but Walsall had a lot of street drinking which resulted in fights and general aggressive behaviour in the Town Centre and the police were unable to effectively deal with the levels of crime and disorder occurring in the vicinity. Mr Kumar expressed that both he and fellow members of the Market Association, were being subjected to anti-social behaviour on a daily basis and it was his view, that the very nature of gambling establishments encouraged that type of behaviour. Mr Kumar was asked by the Committee whether he had ever made a complaint about the Applicant's Bradford Street premises? Mr Kumar responded that he had not. Mr Kumar conceded that he had no evidence that linked crime and disorder to the Bradford Street premises.

## **Determination:**

The Sub-Committee having considered all representations made both for and against the application, resolved to grant the application.

The Sub-Committee were cognisant of the pre-existing issues pertaining to crime and disorder in and around the location of the proposed premises and the historical context of the former bingo establishment. However the consideration for the Committee was whether the Applicant, at the proposed premises, would add to or exacerbate those issues. The Sub Committee was of the view that there was no evidence to support that proposition and noted the absence of representations opposing the application from the police.

## **Application Granted.**

The Applicant or any other person who made representation relating to the application may appeal against the decision of the Sub-Committee to the Magistrates Court under Section 181 of the Licensing Act 2003.

The appeal must be commenced by Notice of Appeal within 21 days beginning with the day on which the Applicant was notified by the Licensing Authority of the decision.