

WELLS-NEXT-THE-SEA TOWN COUNCIL

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Wells-next-the-sea Town Council
Wells Community Hospital
Mill Road
Wells-next-the-Sea
NR23 1RF

Licensing
NNDC

I am writing on behalf of Wells-next-the-Sea Town Council concerning the application for a premises licence for the Pop Inn Restaurant, The Quay, Wells-next-the-Sea (reference WK/230046202).

Wells Town Council discussed the application at a Town Council meeting held on Tuesday 15th August 2023, and has significant concerns and objections.

The Pop Inn is located in a prominent position at the west end of Wells Quay which is a Heritage Harbour within the Wells conservation area, Holkham National Nature Reserve and the wider North Norfolk AONB. Immediately adjacent is the saltmarsh which is subject to several major international heritage and wildlife designations (Ramsar, SSSI, SAC and SPA).

The main concerns of the Town Council are noise, late night drinking, litter, disorder, public safety and the environmental impacts on the Heritage Harbour and Protected Coast.

The application is for a large restaurant and takeaway with the sale of alcohol to drink both on and off the premises. The application also includes a public entertainment licence for live and recorded music which can be amplified and is to be broadcast inside the premises and outside on an open-air terrace from 11:00 hrs until 23:00 hrs seven days a week. An extension has also been requested for the music to continue inside the premises until 01:00 hrs on a Friday and Saturday. In addition, a late-night refreshment licence has been requested for 23:00 hrs to 01:00 hrs Friday and Saturday, allowing for the sale of food and alcohol to takeaway outside the premises.

The playing of amplified music outside the premises on an open-air terrace is totally unacceptable, due to the location of the premises, it forms one end of what is effectively an amphitheatre and the music would be heard all along the quayside and out across the marsh. Residents and visitors do not want their enjoyment of the heritage quay and natural environment disrupted by amplified music. In addition, there are many residential properties surrounding the Pop Inn and these people do not want the amenity of their homes spoilt by intrusive noise. The Town Council strongly objects to the grant of any licence that allows music to be broadcast on an open-air terrace. Any music inside the premises should not be heard outside.

The Town Council also has concerns about late night drinking on the streets because of any late-night refreshment licence and any permitted off sales of alcohol. Where alcohol is taken off the premises there are no controls over who will be consuming it and where it will be consumed. It is not unusual now for there to be public disorder and criminal damage connected with alcohol abuse by teenagers and young adults, recent problems have



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occurred on the quayside and on the children's playground which is immediately adjacent the Pop Inn.

There are also concerns about the additional litter that the premises will generate. The bins and street cleansing is already at capacity and it is not unusual now for litter to be strewn across the harbour and out onto the marsh.

Furthermore, the extended opening hours on Fridays and Saturdays to 01:00 hrs will not only result in custom from in-town activity but is likely also to attract customers to visit this proposed late-night venue on the premises from other locations, generating increased vehicle and other traffic with associated noise and disturbance in the early hours.

The Police in North Norfolk have very limited resources and any large licence premises which is proposing to have live music, discos and dance until 01:00 hrs is highly likely to suffer from drunkenness and disorder, both inside and outside the premises. It is questionable that Wells Quay is an appropriate location for such an establishment and whether the local police have the resources available to properly respond during the early hours of the morning to any incidents of disorder. The proposals put forward in the application to combat drunkenness and disorder are mainly reactive and there is little of substance that might be considered proactive and preventative. It must also be considered that there are many residential properties nearby which would be affected by such behaviour.

Public safety is also an important factor and must be considered as the premises are adjacent to the harbour and the fast-flowing tidal waters.

As previously stated, the site falls within protection areas for a number of European Protected Nature Conservation Sites and the following should be considered:

- Norfolk Green infrastructure and recreational impact avoidance and mitigation strategy (GIRAMS)
- SSSI Impact zones.
- Emerging Wells next the Sea Neighbourhood Plan, policies WNS17 and WNS 18 Historic England, Heritage Ports.

Considering the above, the Town Council asks for restrictions to be imposed on any noise and light emanating from the premises which would be to the detriment of both the protected wildlife and the enjoyment by people of the natural sounds of the coastal and marsh environment.

The Town Council has no objections to a restaurant with background music and alcohol served for consumption on the premises. The Town Council did not object to the recent planning application to convert the building to a restaurant and to build an extension of the restaurant over the existing amusement arcade. However, the planning application, which has been approved, did not include any open-air terrace.

The Town Council would ask that you consider all the concerns outlined above as objections to the grant of the licence and should you decide to grant a licence that it includes restrictions to mitigate these concerns.

Yours Sincerely

Greg Hewitt

Town Clerk



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