

Little Woodington  
East Wellow  
Romsey  
Hampshire, SO51 6DQ  
Licensing Manager, Legal & Democratic Service,  
Test Valley Borough Council  
Beech Hurst  
Weyhill Road  
Andover  
SP10 3AJ  
12 April 2023

Ref: LICENSING ACT 2003 - Public Notice

Keepers Lodge, Whinwhistle Coarse Fishery, Whinwhistle Road, East Wellow, Romsey SO51 6BE  
An application has been received from Woodington Fisheries (2020) Ltd for a new Premises Licence in respect of Keepers Lodge, Whinwhistle Coarse Fishery, Whinwhistle Road, East Wellow, Romsey SO51 6BE. The premises are an existing café/bistro located on a fishery and camping site. The application also includes the external beer garden area. The application seeks:

- 1) Provision of live and recorded music from 0800 to 2300 hours daily indoors and outdoors
- 2) Sale of alcohol for consumption both on and off the premises from 0800 to 2330 hours daily.

Dear Licensing Manager,

As a near neighbour of Whinwhistle Coarse Fishery and a long-term resident of the area, we wish to inform you of the severe disturbance and possible lawlessness that approval of this application would create to the immediate locality, several neighbouring residential properties, and St Margaret's church.

The Blackwater river valley in this area is a tranquil rural space well suited to quiet country pursuits such as fishing, and indeed limited camping. It is consistent with this that the site also provides a fishing tackle shop and a café to serve its customers. It is also true that these services do not disturb the amenity of neighbouring properties.

It is equally true that both the "Provision of live and recorded music from 0800 to 2300 hours daily indoors and outdoors", and the "Sale of alcohol for consumption both on and off the premises from 0800 to 2330 hours daily" are completely inconsistent with the current use and will be severely detrimental to the immediate site and the wider locality.

Whatever the intended use it will be very different, for example outdoor music events and festivals come to mind. It will encourage crime and disorder at a location that is incapable of managing and controlling a large influx of people who would see this as a great site for a "rave", with all the attendant risk of drunkenness, drugs, pollution of the river, desecration of the countryside etc. With the Police already overloaded this is something they could do without.

It will impact public safety as the entrance to the site is narrow and with restricted visibility on to Whinwhistle Road. There are already dangerous tailbacks here just waiting for the site to open in the morning.

It will create a public nuisance through overspill from on-site activity and from noise pollution to neighbouring properties and St Margaret's church. We are not the nearest neighbours but are well within the zone of sound disturbance from such activity.

We also note there has been no associated Planning Application for the change of use or additional facilities that would clearly be needed.

This application should be refused.

Yours faithfully,

Anthony Fiske and Chala Fiske

Dear Mr White,

In response to your email our official objection dated 12 April 2023 and the reasons for objecting remain, but we'll comment informally on the proposal and conditions you forwarded to us. Our main concern is the unintended consequences of any licensing of music and / or alcohol at this location. We simply do not believe that the applicants, however noble their intentions, will be able to control a large influx of people knowing of the licensing situation, arriving at the site seeking to abuse the hospitality and creating a public disturbance of the sort mentioned in our formal response. Given the remoteness of the location, if such a situation arose even a 999 call is unlikely to trigger a sufficiently timely police intervention.

Wellow, and in particular the rural area in the north of the Parish, is mercifully "off the beaten track" so unwelcome behaviour, particularly from outsiders, is not a problem today, but it will only take a single breach to destroy this for ever. The majority of the people who live here chose to do so specifically for its isolation and have been here (like us) for many years. Several of them have told me they share this concern and I hope they have also voiced it to you. Others simply do not know of this application (indeed we only learnt of it by chance). While Mr and Mrs Hawthorne are very welcome newcomers to the locality they may not fully appreciate its heritage and the fragility of this heritage.

To address the specifics:

1. When it comes to licensing law we are laymen: we understand the basics of an off-site license vs an on-site alcohol licence and an indoor vs outdoor music licence, but it appears from your response that you can authorise a bespoke solution. Is that true?
2. With respect to the music license, if the request is for no more than four outside events per year, then in order for that to be policed, and for neighbours to be forewarned, it would be more appropriate for each event to be applied for at the time, rather than authorising an unpoliceable arbitrary number with no specified dates. In terms of noise transmission, we point out that when Broadlands hosts an outside event we hear it, so the potential for disturbance from this much closer location is high.
3. With respect to the alcohol license there appear to be three groups of customers: (i) people registered and camping on-site, (ii) people registered and fishing on-site and (iii) outsiders who visit the café (no numbers have been provided so we have no idea how relevant this group is). There is also a question over whether this café is (as the applicant states) also a restaurant ("bistro" is the term used). We suspect a restaurant would require Planning Approval as well as other licensing / registration permissions to operate: does this site have any of these approvals? We can see why an approved restaurant would wish to serve beer or wine with a meal, but given the stated objectives for the site and the reasons for the application we see no reason for any higher level of alcohol content or off sale. With just a café, however, the status quo appears to work well already: Campers visit local shops for provisions anyway, and Fishermen are on a day visit and normally bring their own provisions.
4. Overall the risk of unintended consequences remains too high.

Yours sincerely,

Anthony and Chala Fiske