

LICENSING HEARING PANEL (LICENSING 2003 ACT) SUB COMMITTEE

9 March 2026

10.20am to 1.10pm

Present: Councillors Bick, McPherson and Wade

Also present: Councillors Davey and Swift

Officers

Environmental Health & Licensing Support Team Leader, presenting as the
Licensing Officer: Wangari Njiiri

Legal Advisor: Alan Parr

Democratic Services Officer: Matthew Hussey

Present for the Applicant

Mr Matthew Taylor, Applicant Director

Other Persons Present

Alexis Mathers

Ben Rollings

Sophie Evans

Hazel Hare

FOR THE INFORMATION OF THE COUNCIL

26/9/Lic Sub Appointment of a Chair

Councillor McPherson was appointed as Chair for the meeting.

26/10/Lic Sub Declarations of Interest

No declarations of interest were made.

26/11/Lic Sub Meeting Procedure

All parties noted the procedure.

**26/12/Lic Sub Consideration of an Application for a Premises Licence
to be Granted - The Artyst, 54 - 56 Chesterton Road, Cambridge, CB4 1EN**

The Licensing Officer presented their report.

In response to questions from the sub-committee, the Licensing Officer stated that:

- No representations had been received from the responsible authorities or enforcing agencies.
- The alleged physical/verbal assault had been reported to the Licensing Authority but had not been reported as a complaint.

Representation from the Applicant

The Applicant then gave their report highlighting the following areas:

- The application was to vary the supply of alcohol for consumption on the premises from 12:00 to 19:00 Monday to Saturday to 12:00 to 23:00, and 12:00 to 19:00 Sunday to 12:00 to 22:30.
- The premises had operated without problems including zero police call-outs within the six months since opening.
- The Application was supported by a petition containing 851 signatories, of which 138 were residents of Cambridge.
- The premises supported local events such as poetry reading, art events and chess tournaments. Events were subject to a bookings system for customers wishing to attend.
- The Premises acted responsibly within the Cumulative Impact Area (CIA), having an understanding of the impact of licensed premises on the CIA.
- They had shown that the premises did not have any negative impact on the CIA.
- The Premises was properly insulated including the basement, and windows and doors were kept shut during events.
- A description of premises operation was given, notably no outside seating, venue capacity, typically 45 customers, and customer type.
- A description of premises access which did not include access to the local alleyway, and confirmation of no nightclub and no dancefloor was given.
- The Premises operated a staggered-exit policy for customers at the end of trading. There had not been any issues with customer parking.
- In respect of the incident on 30 October 2025, the objectors entered the venue, one of whom seemed agitated, and accused the proprietor of being in breach of a Temporary Event Notice for a chess event which

was a quiet and friendly affair. He added that the men were intent on disrupting clients and asked to leave. After being verbally asked to leave, the men were escorted off of the premises without physical contact.

- He was surprised that the Police had been contacted after the incident. However, no further action had been taken.
- Following the incident, measures had been taken to avoid any recurrence for example 'No Drinking Outside' signage installed, strengthened staff training, operational CCTV, Complaints Log, Drugs Policy and proposed quarterly meetings with the local community and neighbours.
- They had a track record showing responsible management and staff training. They had a strict drugs policy, a conflict resolution policy and strictly enforce 'Challenge 25.'
- The Applicant explained the existing CCTV was previously awaiting broadband connection and was now fully operational.
- A Community Engagement event had been held, which none of the objectors attended
- The Applicant also addressed each negative representation made in the Report.
- Letters of support from local residents were read out by the Applicant.

In response to questions the Applicant said the following:

- The Premises had a positive impact on the CIA and brought cultural and social interaction to part of Cambridge that was in poor condition.
- When the owners signed the lease for the venue, it was empty and run down.
- He was not aware of any bad behaviour emanating from the venue since it had opened in September 2025.
- He believed that the smashed windows at the premises had been carried out by a gang from Birmingham who had targeted the city. The incident happened at 7am and was heard by neighbours
- The basement was previously used as a bank vault and was insulated. However, the capacity of the basement was unknown and would only be used if viable.
- Decibel readings had been taken and there had been no noise leakage onto the street. It was proposed that the basement would be used for events and band practice facilities which were lacking in Cambridge and would also require Planning Permission.

- There were two permanent Members of Staff at the Premises as well as eight volunteers and investors. If the variation was granted additional staff would be employed.
- Staff received high levels of all relevant training beyond minimum requirements, and all required paperwork was in order.
- The venue operated a staggered exit strategy with people leaving throughout the evening. He added that most events did not last long.
- Events were booking based and used a 'Meet Up App' for art and poetry events. Numbers of each event were limited.
- Parking in the area was limited and that he was not aware of parking issues caused by the venue as the majority of patrons used public transport or walked to the venue.
- Customers leaving the venue would use Chesterton Road and would have no need to use Trafalgar Road. There was also no public rear entrance to the premises.
- If any incidents occurred at the venue, the Police would be called if it escalated and staff could not mitigate the situation.

Representation from Councillor Davey

- The Applicant had provided a unique venue to Cambridge which celebrated local history.
- The type of events provided a benefit to the local community, in particular the local creative community.
- This type of facility was lacking in Cambridge and should be encouraged.
- The venue would be unlikely to attract antisocial behaviour.
- It added to the cultural vibrancy of the area.
- It was unlikely the venue would add any further problems to the CIA.

Representation from West Chesterton Ward Councillor, Councillor Swift

- The Artyst was a destination venue and would improve the evening economy and increase cultural offerings.
- The venue would help the area return to a community hub.
- It caters for events not currently provided for in the area, for example poetry readings and chess tournaments.
- It provides space for an Arts Community.
- The Artyst was a sociable place and benefited the area.
- The customer base is likely to use the venue for social cultural events rather than excessive drinking.

Representation in support from Sophie Evans, Local Resident

- She was not aware of any alcohol-related or noise problems.
- The premises was well run and offered a unique venue for the community.
- The venue brought cultural vibrancy and a positive impact to the area.

Representation in support from Hazel Hare, Local Resident

- Although initially hesitant as a local resident, she had visited the premises and found it to be friendly and welcoming and she was now a regular visitor.
- It was very well run.
- It offered a warm and cultural atmosphere.
- It was a genuine venue and was positive in its offering to the local community.
- She felt comfortable to visit the area on her own.
- She was not aware of any problems with parking.

Representation in objection from Alexis Mathers, Local Resident

- He believed the area had highest density of licensed premises in area with 19 outlets.
- He stated that the premises was not run as a cultural location and was run solely for the sale of alcohol.
- There had been no attempt to run the venue as a viable business.
- 50% of events had not been advertised.
- The TENS process had been abused as the Premises was closed during several TENS licenses.
- The venue operated when CCTV was in not in action.
- If granted, how would the premises match the CIA objectives.

Representation in objection from Ben Rollings, Local Resident

- Presented Powerpoint presentation of local area and CIA to Committee which Councillors had viewed prior to the meeting.
- There were several problematic venues already within the area.
- This was a great community
- The area was affected by antisocial behaviour including drug dealing in unlit alley, and a Police Safe House.

- The area suffered from illegal pavement parking with roads blocked causing cyclists to be knocked off.
- The venue would cause potential issues.
- The ownership of the unlit alley which gave access to the rear of the property was unknown.
- Approximately 30 properties had access to the alley.

The Committee disregarded representations not directly relevant to the Applicant Premises.

Note: Objectors submitted a very late revamped PowerPoint presentation on the day of the meeting. However, the panel decided to accept it.

Summing up.

The Officer reminded Members they were to determine the application on its individual merits having reference to the statutory licensing objectives and Cambridge City Council's Statement of Licensing Policy and the Cumulative Impact Assessment.

Members should take such steps that they consider were necessary for the promotion of the licensing objectives. The subcommittee may resolve:

- a. To grant the variation as applied for.
- b. To modify the conditions of the licence.
- c. To reject the whole or part of the application.

Members must give reasons for their decision.

In making the decision the committee considered the following:

- Statutory provisions (Licensing Act 2003)
- Statutory Guidance
- Cambridge City Council's Statement of Licensing Policy
- Reports
- Advice from Legal Officer
- Representations from those listed above.

The Decision

The Committee made the following findings of fact:

- Applicant had met all the safety and licensing requirements.
- The applicant had licensing experience within Cambridge, which has been managed well.
- The premises offered a cultural and community venue for local and other residents.
- The Applicant had a good knowledge and context of the CIA, including the effects of licensed premises within the CIA.

Resolved: To **VARY** the license with the amended licensing hours of Supply of alcohol (For consumption on the premises) Monday to Saturday - 12:00 to 22.30 and Sunday - 12:00 to 22:00 Sunday,

Our reasons for reaching the decision are as follows:

1. The applicant has met all the safety and licensing requirements.
2. The Committee are also satisfied that the varying of the license with hours up to prior closing times of the premises to allow for staggered and earlier egress will not have an adverse effect on the Cumulative Impact Area.
3. The Applicant has dealt satisfactorily with any issues arising within the last 6 months.

The meeting ended at Time Not Specified

CHAIR