

AFC Birmingham

Dudley Licensing Sub Committee

Date 4th July 2023

Supporting Documents

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Dudley Licensing Committee

AFC Birmingham - Licensing Application

Witness Statement

1. I am John Baker the current owner, Chairman and Secretary of AFC Birmingham.
2. I am making this statement in relation to our licensing application which is for the football club that has been objected to by 4 local residents.
3. For clarity we have applied for a premises licence to allow the sale of alcohol (on premises), and regulated entertainment (except boxing and wrestling and late-night refreshment)
4. We have had to apply for 7 days a week from the hours of 1200 - 2300 for reasons I will explain.
5. As a football club we have matches both at the weekend and in the week. Unfortunately, the midweek games can and do vary so we are never sure until the fixtures are released what days they would be on, and then they can be moved.
6. For this reason, we have had to apply for a licence that allows that level of flexibility.
7. I will state at this point that we are not intending to open the club 7 days a week or run it as a bar. The actual bar area itself is very small. The intention then is for the patrons to buy there alcohol and either sit with just a drink or with the meal. Drinks would be allowed to be taken to the viewing areas for the pitch, but nowhere else.
8. We may as other clubs do, have small events during the *off* season. These are not confirmed, and we have nothing planned, but I am aware that should we wish to consider these things in the future the licence (if granted) indicates what we have to do and who we have to inform.
9. As I say I am the Chairman and Secretary for AFC Birmingham. We have a full committee team, that meet once a month to discuss the club, taking it forward and developing youth sport, which is a big mantra for the club.

- a. James Brennan - Vice Chairman
 - b. Gary Bell - welfare officer and youth officer
 - c. Anthony McKeever - treasurer
 - d. Shirley McKeever - minutes secretary
 - e. Helen McKeever - secretary
-
11. We are not paid committee members, and we do not draw any income from the club. We all either have full time jobs or are retired and we do what we do for the club as it is our passion, and delivering a good club, that provides an opportunity **for** children to learn the sport.
 12. The committee is supported by up to 20 volunteers as well. These tend to be parents or friends of the people playing.
 13. I own and found AFC Birmingham in 2012. I used to play football professionally and was concerned about both the lack of facilities and how children were being coached.
 14. I have children of my own and wanted them to be in the correct environment so decided to set up AFC Birmingham. It was only meant to be a 6 month project whilst other coaches got trained, but the passion for what this club has turned into and what it is doing for young children means I am still doing it 11 years later.
 15. AFC Birmingham started off with a youth team, and quickly became recognised as a well run club. The level of football being played meant we won various leagues and Cups for the divisions in the West Midlands we played in. We got recognised further afield and were invited to play and win national youth champions league.
 16. In 2015 we were invited to play in Barcelona at the Nou Camp, and actually winning the Nou Camp tournament, an accolade not matched by any other English team (to date).
 17. AFC Birmingham has produced several footballers that have gone into the professional ranks both home and abroad. This is an achievement we are extremely proud of.
 18. March 2020 we agreed to take over the football ground at Illey Lane Halesowen. This was the former home of Bartley Green FC.
 19. When we took over the site, it was in a very poor condition, and has required a tremendous amount of work to turn it around.
 20. With the fantastic support of the committee, players, and supporters we have managed to improve the facilities at the club. We are heavily involved with the Football Foundation who have provided grants for a lot of the work.

21. What we, and I say we, as this has been a whole team effort have now created is a fantastic safe space for young kids and adults to come, and either play football or enjoy watching their children play football, in an environment where they can learn the game and be caredfor.
22. We regularly get feedback from visiting clubs and supporters about the conditions we have created at AFC Birmingham, and even from the public that walk through the site.
23. As an indication of the level of work that has gone into the site, which was affected by the coronavirus regulations as well -
 - a. Upgraded changing rooms,
 - b. Toilets
 - c. Showers
 - d. Slit drainage in the pitch to prevent flooding,
 - e. Upgraded flood lights from the old halide lighting to directional and improved LED lighting, that produces less glare to the skyline.
24. We have links with a Physic Therapist (Reactive 8), who come to the club once a week, and offer free therapy to the players.
25. We are always looking to improve the facilities and will continue to do so.
26. AFC Birmingham has come a long way since 2012, when it had one youth team.
27. We now run 6 teams, in the under 12, under 13, under 15 categories and adult Saturday and Sunday teams. As you can see, we strongly believe in developing youth sport and providing that safe haven that unfortunately is readily diminishing across the UK.
28. On top of our teams, we have developed partnerships with other organisations again to help support youth support both in the local and wider community.
29. To date these are
 - a. S. Collins coaching and football development. They train on a Wednesday evening at the ground, and it attracts up to 40 young women aged between 11-14.
 - b. Local schools that are allowed to use the pitch to play their school football
 - i. St Peters RC Primary
 - ii. Quinton Church Primary
 - iii. St Michael Primary
 - iv. Nonsuch Primary
30. As can be seen AFC Birmingham is very active in the local community, and we have youth and sport as our core focus.

31. Running this level does come at a financial burden, which is borne by the players and their families.
32. We would like to keep these down and become more self-sufficient in raising the funds needed in both developing the club and maintaining what we have already. This is why we have applied for the premises licence.
33. We do not want to have to keep asking for handouts from parents, supporters and other businesses.
34. We are not intending to open a new bar, or club. It is purely for the people that already attend the club, as either players, friends, or parents. It will give them the opportunity to take some refreshment, and also when the adult teams have played to have a quick drink with their meal.
35. Just a couple of hundred pounds in revenue from the bar, would make a massive difference to AFC Birmingham, and help us stay afloat whilst supporting local communities and offering the sporting opportunity to young children.
36. As you can see from the committee, we run AFC Birmingham for free, whilst maintaining full time jobs. We will happily be at the club to support training and matches, this is our passion. What we won't be doing is opening the bar up, when there is nothing on late at night, just in the hope that people would come along.
37. Its location is not on the main road and if we were open, you wouldn't be able to tell from the road, so it would simply not be viable to operate like that.
38. We are always striving to be good neighbours, simple things like changing the lights to have less light haze is an example. The adjoining farm with whom we have a very good relationship with, we let kids of people working on the farm, to play on the pitch, so they keep active and less likely to get into trouble.
39. I am aware that there have been several objections from residents that live further up Illey lane. I am aware that my agent who we employed so we could do things correctly and professionally, has spoken or emailed them.
40. I have also spoken to one of the objectors and invited him to come to the club to see what we were doing as I feel they have misunderstood our intentions. However, this invitation has been declined, and despite our attempts to explain what we are doing, they think we will be running as a bar, which is not the case.
41. I have no intentions Of upsetting anyone, we have built a great club, with strong local connections and will continue to do so going forward.

42. This statement is true and accurate to the best of my knowledge, and belief and I make it **knowing** that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.

43. This statement consists of 5 pages.

Signed- /



Dated 27th June 2023

Photos

- Main Bar area -



- Main Seating area with food -



Supporting Documents – AFC Birmingham
Licensing hearing

- Additional facilities -



- Back of main seating area, bar to the left -



- Pitch – spectator stands -



- Main entrance of drive -



- End of drive leading to farm and AFC (right handside) -



- Entrance to club -



- Aerial view -



Supporting Documents – AFC Birmingham
Licensing hearing

Support

- Support

----- Original message -----

From: "Cllr Hilary Bills" <[REDACTED]>
Date: 30/06/2023 12:30 (GMT+00:00)
To: Halesowen BID <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: Support for AFC Birmingham, Illey Lane Halesowen

Dear Vicky

I fully support this application. The green belt is for everyone to enjoy and I can't think of a better way than young people being encouraged to take up a sport and use a green space. Sport provides young people with lots of opportunities to keep fit, make friends and learn respect.

I wish AFC Birmingham well in their application.

Kind regards

Hilary

Cllr Bills
Halesowen North Ward

Correspondence – Lighting Company



To. Mr J Baker
AFC Birmingham YDC

Date: 27th June 2003

Dear John,

Further to our telephone conversation I am pleased to enclose our Guide to LED document explaining the benefits of LED Lighting especially for sports pitches and venues.

It is well known in the lighting business that LED lights have many advantages against the old metal halide sodium type of lighting that is much more expensive to purchase and also cost to run.

LED Lights also have a huge advantage on climate change as they do not emit any UV rays, also gives a large reduction in greenhouse emission, and they contain no mercury or toxic substances.

The attached document explains the benefits in more details especially with reference to light spillage as LED Lights are specifically manufactured to control the light output using the various optical lenses from 10% angle up to 120% angle, this is highlighted on a computer simulated "Dialux" lighting program and shows only the area requiring a specific lumen and beam angle will be illuminated, eliminating any outward light spillage.

If you require any further details explanation or specifications for LED lighting please do not hesitate to contact me.

Best Regards
Nick Southorn

Director
S.P. LED Lighting Ltd

Supporting Documents – AFC Birmingham
Licensing hearing

WHY L.E.D. Lights are Excellent for Sports Pitches & Venues

There are some factors you need to consider before purchasing LED football pitch lighting or stadium lighting. These factors include Light output required and Beam angle, Lumen, and Power consumption. Considering all these factors will help you make the best decision.

Light pollution

Using LED stadium lights for football pitches and stadiums can reduce light pollution. These lights have an energy-efficient design that focuses light output where needed. This means less spillover into neighbouring neighbourhood. Unlike traditional stadium lights, which produce UV radiation, [high-efficiency LED lighting](#) do not harm nearby residents.

Even though the new LED Flood Lights can be controlled from 10% to 120% of light spread angled beam output, and with the latest computer generated “Dialux” simulation to show exactly where the light beam is directed gives the full lumen output on any desired area with very minimum spillage. For even extra control if required shields can also be installed on the top and/or sides of the fixture.

Lumens

Stadiums are increasingly looking at [LED technology](#) to replace traditional stadium light sources. The technology is efficient and helps reduce light pollution while simultaneously allowing precise mathematical calculations to be made for optimal illumination. Moreover, LED stadium lights begin working immediately and do not require a warm-up period. Traditional light sources require fifteen minutes or more before reaching their maximum brightness.

LED lights come in different wattage's, but they generate the same brightness. A 500W LED produces as much light as a thousand-watt HID light fixture. This reduction in power consumption helps stadiums reduce their running costs while maintaining the same brightness level. Moreover, LED stadium lights are a much better option than their traditional counterparts, with a lifespan of up to 100,000 hours, which is six times longer than conventional fixtures.

Beam angle

A good beam angle is essential for stadiums and sports fields. A beam angle that is too wide or too narrow can result in low light uniformity. A Dialux simulation can help you determine a beam angle to maximize the amount of light distributed across the playing area. Choosing high-quality LED products with a five-year warranty and good thermal management is also important.

Another important consideration is glare. If the illumination is too glaring, it can cause accidents, leading to dropped passes and inaccurate throws. Poor illumination can also affect the quality of play, as poor illumination can cause players to make poor decisions in a play. Additionally, uniform lighting reduces shadows and helps with broadcasting, photography, and replays. It can also make the playing area safer for players.

Power consumption

The power consumption of LED football pitch lighting or stadium lighting is determined by the total number of lights and their beam angle. These factors will have a major impact on the uniformity of the illuminance across the stadium field and the glare index. Therefore, choosing the right power for your lighting solution is important. There are three main power classes: high-mast lights, flood lights, and low-power lights. When selecting the power for your stadium field, ensure that you choose a power level that meets the minimum illuminance and glare index requirements.

LED stadium lighting can also be dimmed. The dimming feature allows users to change the intensity of their lights to suit the game's mood or event. Dimming is also advantageous, as different events require different lighting levels and may occur simultaneously in the same venue, such as when a concert or event takes place during the evening hours. This feature allows for on-the-fly adjustments in lighting intensity, which will improve the lighting effect while reducing energy consumption.

Lifespan

LED lights are a great way to cut costs while simultaneously improving lighting quality at a stadium or football pitch. Compared to metal halide lights, LED's have a longer lifespan and lower energy consumption. Replacing Metal Halide with LED's will result in up to 65% energy savings, which can be translated into significant cost savings for the stadium.

LED football stadium lights are energy-efficient, with an average life expectancy of 80,000 hours. They can replace 5000-watt metal halide fixtures with just a few hundred watts of power. LED lights are also less expensive to maintain and have superior optical quality. Their light beams are directional and can produce all visible colour without traditional colour filters. They last up to 50 times longer than traditional lighting, and their modular design allows for partial repairs in the event of a malfunction.

Installation

Choosing a good lighting solution for your football pitch or stadium is crucial in lighting. This is because there are certain pitch lighting requirements, including the poles' size and spacing. Also, there are different standards for various lighting effects.

Conclusion

LED football pitch or stadium lighting is an excellent option as it uses controlled directional light beam output and reduces power consumption which saves money for your stadium. In addition, LED lights produce less pollution than traditional stadium lights. They also do not produce UV radiation, which can harm spectators. LED lighting for stadiums is also highly energy-efficient, requiring 90% less energy to generate light compared to traditional stadium lighting.

Correspondence with objectors

Objectors

- Correspondence with objectors –

Objector 1 – (ZW)

Hello
As long as you stick to what you have said in relation to the [licence](#) I see no reason for me to continue with the objection.
As it is all included in these emails, it will be easy to check back that you are complying with the terms of your licence. I trust that you will.
Regards
Zi [REDACTED]
Sent from [Outlook for iOS](#)

From: Abs Rohomon [REDACTED]
Sent: Wednesday, June 14, 2023 3:59:04 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Kay Dewinski <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: AFC Birmingham

Hi Zina,

many thanks for coming back to me and I appreciate your comments, can I clarify though if your objection to the application still stands?

If it does then that is not a problem, but if it does not could you confirm so as Kay from the licensing authority will need to [know](#)

thanks

Abs

Abs Rohomon BEM
Consultant

[REDACTED]

From: zi [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 June 2023 15:50
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Kay Dewinski <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: AFC Birmingham

Hello
Thank you for your email and for taking the time to address my concerns.
I appreciate your clarification of what your intentions are.
I don't feel we need to meet to discuss this.
[Obviously](#) it is in writing now what your intentions are and I trust they will be adhered to.

Abs

Abs Rohomon BEM
Consultant

From: Abs Rohomon [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, June 13, 2023 2:50:20 PM
To: [REDACTED]
Cc: Kay Dewinski <[REDACTED]>
Subject: AFC Birmingham

Good afternoon,

apologises for the intrusion, but I represent AFC Birmingham (John Baker), who has recently applied for a new premises licence for the football club. We have been provided with your

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details by the local authority and I have cc'd in Kay Dewinski from Dudley Licensing authority.

We have been sent your objections to the licence application. To help as I know the blue notice does not include much detail I can tell you the following -

the main purpose of the application is to allow the sale of alcohol when they have matches at the venue, this would be pre-game, during and afterwards (when the teams have a meal). The reason it is until 11.30 is to allow for night games, and as it is impossible to know when these are to be we have had to apply for the week.

My client has no intention of opening the bar up all week, and definitely not until 11.30pm. The actual bar itself is tiny - it can hold 3 people, they then take it into another bigger area to eat and drink.

On average these games attract 100 people and most of those are friends and family of the players, they have been operating as a football club all last year, and had a number of matches through the year.

In terms of any events that they may do and it is not a given that they would even happen as they require a great deal of work.

If they did then the premises would have to submit the required paperwork to what are called the responsible authorities (Police, licensing auth, environmental health, trading standards, fire, planning) for them to scrutinise to ensure that the licensing objectives would be being met.

I am not sure if this will assist you, but I hope it does in easing any concerns you may have.

If you have any concerns that we can discuss through, either by coming to see the site, speaking to John then we would welcome that.

I would welcome the opportunity to talk to you about your concerns, if you are happy for this please could you kindly indicate so, by either phone or email

if you could kindly acknowledge that you have received this email it would be appreciated.

Look forward to hearing from you

Objector 2 – (AW)

From: a [REDACTED]
Sent: 15 June 2023 15:29
To: Abs Rohomon [REDACTED]
Cc: Kay Dewinski <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Re: AFC Birmingham

I am just responding to you about your comments regarding the Alcohol licence application.

I am quite unsure if you are aware of where the football ground is located.

The Ground is located down a narrow farm track and adjacent to a working Farm, there is no lighting in the area.

Over time, because of the Grounds location is out of sight, the consumption of alcohol will quickly become abused and in particular if the licence allows consumption of alcohol until 11.30 pm.

I know this does not directly relate to the granting of a alcohol licence but it does indicate the clubs attitude to following permissions. The Club is ignoring the planning permission granted for the use of the grounds Flood Lighting they are not following the restrictions applied for the usage of the lights.

This is a good indication of what is likely to happen if a licence is granted any restriction will be quickly ignored.

There is also a safety matter to be considered there is a lot of farm equipment adjacent to the ground and alcohol and farm machinery don't mix.

This is completely the wrong location for the granting of a alcohol licence

There is also a Public House 'The Black Horse' in Uley, so why can't this be made use of.

All
[REDACTED]

----- Original Message
From: "Abs Rohomon" <[REDACTED]>
To: "at [REDACTED]" <[REDACTED]>
Cc: "Kay Dewinski" <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Wednesday, 14 Jun, 2023 At 16:33
Subject: AFC Birmingham

Good Afternoon Sir,

apologises for the intrusion, but I represent AFC Birmingham (John Baker), who has recently applied for a new premises licence for the football club. We have been provided with your details by the local authority and I have cc'd in Kay Dewinski from Dudley Licensing authority.

I am contacting the objectors to the application on a one to one basis, but understand that some of you appear to live close together, so you may be aware of the content of this email.

We have been sent your objections to the licence application. To help as I know the blue notice does not include much detail I can tell you the following -

the main purpose of the application is to allow the sale of alcohol when they have matches at the venue, this would be pre-game, during and afterwards (when the teams have a meal). The reason it is until 11.30 is to allow for night games, and as it is impossible to know when these are to be we have had to apply for the week.

My client has no intention of opening the bar up all week, and definitely not until 11.30pm. The actual bar itself is tiny - it can hold 3 people, they then take it into another bigger area to eat and drink.

On average these games attract 100 people and most of those are friends and family of the players, they have been operating as a football club all last year, and had a number of matches through the year.

In terms of any events that they may do and it is not a given that they would even happen as they require a great deal of work.

If they did then the premises would have to submit the required paperwork to what are called the responsible authorities (Police, licensing auth, environmental health, trading standards, fire, planning) for them to scrutinise to ensure that the licensing objectives would be being met.

I am not sure if this will assist you, but I hope it does in easing any concerns you may have.

if you could kindly acknowledge that you have received this email it would be appreciated.

Look forward to hearing from [you](#)

Abs Rohomon BEM
Consultant

-
- Objector 3 – (S)

Phone call on Monday 26th June 23 – no email address

- Objector 4 – (Unknown)

No contact details email sent to council asking to pass on email sent to other objectors and offering to speak, but no contact.

Section 182 Guidance - sections of note

Licence conditions – general principles

1.16 Conditions on a premises licence or club premises certificate are important in setting the parameters within which premises can lawfully operate. The use of wording such as “must”, “shall” and “will” is encouraged. Licence conditions:

- must be appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives;
- must be precise and enforceable;
- must be unambiguous and clear in what they intend to achieve;
- should not duplicate other statutory requirements or other duties or responsibilities placed on the employer by other legislation;
- **must be tailored to the individual type, location and characteristics of the premises and events concerned;**
- should not be standardised and may be unlawful when it cannot be demonstrated that they are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives in an individual case;
- should not replicate offences set out in the 2003 Act or other legislation;
- should be proportionate, justifiable and be capable of being met;
- **cannot seek to manage the behaviour of customers once they are beyond the direct management of the licence holder and their staff, but may impact on the behaviour of customers in the immediate vicinity of the premises or as they enter or leave; and**
- should be written in a prescriptive format.

The role of responsible authorities

9.12 Each responsible authority will be an expert in their respective field, and in some cases it is likely that a particular responsible authority will be the licensing authority’s main source of advice in relation to a particular licensing objective.

