

## Licence Review of The Paris House

### Witness Statement of **REDACTED**

#### Director of Rowbell Leisure Limited (The Licence Holder and Operator)

My name is **REDACTED**. I am the Director of Rowbell Leisure Limited which has owned and operated The Paris House since 2012. The Paris House is one of our three pubs in Brighton & Hove. Until just before Covid the Rowbell Group also owned and operated a nightclub on West Street (Boutique). In the leisure sector, our Group is a professional multi-site 'family business' and I take a very active and hands-on approach to all that we do.

In this Witness Statement I set out a wider context to what we do and how we do it; explaining our approach and showing how this fits in with the wider culture of our city. I also hope to convey the passion and pride I truly feel about Brighton & Hove generally - and in particular the contribution our business makes to our community and the people we employ.

My colleague **REDACTED** is our Head of Legal. He is responsible for the legal and regulatory matters across our Group (leisure operations is just one of them). In his Witness Statement, **REDACTED** addresses the legal grounds which are also pertinent to this Review Hearing, including commentary on the evidence (and lack of it) put forward by the Applicants.

Between them, our two Statements set out why we feel the way we do.

### Executive Summary

The Applicants' Submissions run to a mountainous 900+ pages. To help separate the wood from the trees, I thought it would be helpful and appropriate for me to set out briefly my thoughts in this very short and personal Executive Summary:

Brighton needs The Paris House (and all live music and community spaces like it).

For The Paris House to survive, Brighton also needs it to remain as it is; completely unchanged and without added Conditionality on its Licence.

#### **If It Ain't Broke, Don't Fix It**

What we have already IS WORKING. It's not broke (as we will demonstrate) – so please don't fix it.

From our License perspective, we are asking The Panel to maintain **the exact 'status quo'** – which is a completely fair and reasonable option (and totally within the remit of The Panel).

At The Hearing we will demonstrate why an unchanged License is '*completely fair and reasonable*'.

In a nutshell, there have been 20+ B&HCC Officer visits to The Applicants homes (from Licensing and Environmental Health) in which ALL have concluded there is no noise issue in their homes. We have worked collaboratively and co-operatively with the Council Officers, always.

This is demonstrable proof there is no noise problem. How much more proof does The Panel need?

Without a noise problem, why should our Licence be removed or altered in any way (with any new Conditions)? There are no grounds to do so.

It is therefore only fair and equitable that our Licence remains as it is.

### **No Evidence**

Furthermore, the Council is NOT supporting this Licence Review (because they haven't been able to gather any evidence in support of The Applicants' claims, in their 20+ home visits. Instead, B&HCC Officers have submitted only a 'narrative' Representation explaining factual history and showing the incredible amounts of time, energy and money they have spent in dealing with all the (unsubstantiated) complaints from the three Applicant households.

The Police are also NOT supporting this Licence Review (and did not submit any Representations), despite one 'head' of the Applicants' Review being on the grounds of 'Crime and Disorder'.

In contrast to these facts, The Applicants are relying on mere unproven hearsay and a highly selective Noise Impact Assessment, that in parts is materially and factually wrong and at best is inconclusive. The value of this report to The Panel lies not in what it says, but crucially in what it DOESN'T say. Where it is silent, it speaks volumes.

The data for this Impact Assessment was gathered on a single Saturday. In contrast, we voluntarily undertake and record electronic decibel readings all the time and have done so for years (so that we can defend ourselves, such as now). We have hundreds, if not thousands of readings stretching back over a statistically meaningful span, which include readings from right outside The Applicants' homes.

Our DB readings fully support the findings from 20+ visits from B&HCC Officers, and, we believe, by The Applicant's own Impact Assessment. Simply put - there is NO noise problem.

Compiling over 900+ pages of submission must have taken the Applicants a huge amount of time. But there is one thing missing from all of those very detailed pages, namely ANY concrete and substantial (or substantiated) evidence that we have been in any breach of any of our duties.

### **What Has Changed?**

A question that goes unanswered is that if The Paris House is operating now, exactly as it has for 12 years under the same ownership and management (which it has), what is the changed variable in the minds of The Applicants to take up this process now, having been rebuffed by B&HCC Officers (for no case to answer)?

The Applicants willingly chose to move into properties next to a decades-long established Live Music venue (The Jugglers that many years later became The Paris House), already knowing this fact. A (Live Music) venue was there first, by a country mile.

Nothing is operationally different at our end – so logically something must have changed at theirs.

Is it that we were silent (shut) during Covid – so a return to normal running (not just by us) is stand-out?

Is it the Applicants' reduced tolerance over time to what is perfectly acceptable for inner city living (to most citizens, including them previously)? Is it what was fine before (to them), is now suddenly not, in later life?

Is it because (in the case of one Applicant) what was a holiday home before, is now a permanent residence?

By way of example, I was genuinely staggered to read in an Applicants' Witness Statement of a complaint that we were about to host a Pub Quiz on one Wednesday each month – with the concern this would be a further noise disturbance and was being done selfishly to maximise profits. This is what we are up against.....(and is frankly, ridiculous).

In short, the overwhelming inbound support via emails, petitions and other Representations says it all. There are literally thousands of them: 130 Representations, 1,710 other supportive emails to

B&HCC, 2,250+ pro-Paris House entries on a Change.org petition and thousands of well-wishers on Facebook and Instagram.

In contrast, there are a tiny number against – just 7 in total.

We live in a democracy – and the massively overwhelming majority (including thousands of people who live nearby, many closer than The Applicants) are happy with what we do and how we do it. Only three Applicant households are not, even though they were happy for years and we are doing nothing different. In fact, we're doing less of it now – as our Live Music presentations are 30% down on pre-lockdown levels.

None of the above are grounds for changing our License one iota.

Furthermore, despite The Applicants citing 'Prevention of Crime and Disorder' as being one of their heads for this Review – they provide not one stitch of evidence on the subject of Crime and Disorder.

### **A Well Run and Much-Loved Community Venue**

The Paris House is (and always has been) properly run. It is safe, much loved and 100% complies with the Licensing Objectives. We are professional multi-site operators.

It is also a huge asset to the community that it serves – as will be demonstrated.

The Paris House stands for '*Brand Brighton*'.

It's 100% part of what makes Brighton *Brighton* and precisely why Brighton is distinctive, vibrant and quirky 365 days of the year (and why it continues to attract so many visitors, so vital to our local economy).

Brighton would otherwise be like all other faded, dated and washed-up old English seaside towns, whose best days are well gone.

As a small city, Brighton & Hove punches well above its weight and long may that continue.

Without 'live' venues like The Paris House (and all other quirky contributors) – our city runs the very real risk of joining the ever-burgeoning 'forgotten club' of English seaside towns that were once prosperous.

This quote on the point says it all: **"If you close down all the rides, no one will come to the fair"** (recent Brighton meeting of The Music Venue Trust).

The Panel, as Councillors, must decide what kind of Brighton & Hove our citizens (and the Electorate) wants, and just where places like The Paris House (and other grassroots small Live Music venues) sit within that framework.

Sure, living in the centre of a vibrant City comes at a cost. There are inevitably consequences (as well as huge benefits) in making that choice to do so. The '*social contract*' says it's never going to be as silent as deep countryside living, but **Brighton is NOT The Cotswolds (and '*Brand Brighton*' requires that it isn't so).**

But silence isn't for everyone – that's why 250,000+ people chose to live in an exciting city like ours (willingly accommodating the 'downsides' (noise, say) because the 'highs' hugely outweigh).

We strongly believe (supported by hard evidence and in addition **20+ B&HCC Officer visits**) nothing about The Paris House is broken, so nothing needs fixing. The status quo with our Licence is therefore the only fair and equitable outcome of this Hearing.

Below (and in **REDACTED** Witness Statement) is all the factual detail that supports all of the above.

## Background - My Pride in Brighton & Hove

- I love living in Brighton (27+ years now, or 2/3 of my adult life). I'm very proud of our city, very proud to call it home and am very proud of the contribution our businesses make.
- I have invested in and built various businesses in this city and I own property here. I am certainly a committed resident.
- Whilst I have invested money, most importantly I've also invested my time and my energy into protecting and enhancing our city as the community we all love and why we all choose to live here. I am also a leading force in the St James' Business Alliance (to improve Kemptown).
- I am a very enthusiastic season ticket holder at The Albion and remember very well *'The Withdean Years'*.
- I especially love our city's core bohemian values such as community, diversity, inclusivity and free-spiritedness. In this, we are / were light years ahead of elsewhere in the UK and it's just one of the compelling reasons I was originally drawn to live here (and have stayed so long).
- Brighton & Hove has the vibrancy, diversity and independent spirited attitude of a big city, but with the friendliness and community of a town. It is the best of both worlds and long may it continue to be so.

## Brighton's Vision

- Of course I am not alone in thinking this way.
- This ageless but 'young-at-heart', open and sometimes 'giddy' spirit is the very DNA of ***'What Makes Brighton, Brighton'***.
- This special spirit rests with its people – supported by the infrastructure around it.
- B&HCC's newly published 'Vision' for the next five years (picture right), is in full support of the above interpretation of what it means to be Brighton (and Hove):
- The opening words from Cllr Bella Sankey in the B&HCC plan 2023-2027 are:

*"My love for the city runs through me like a stick of Brighton rock".*

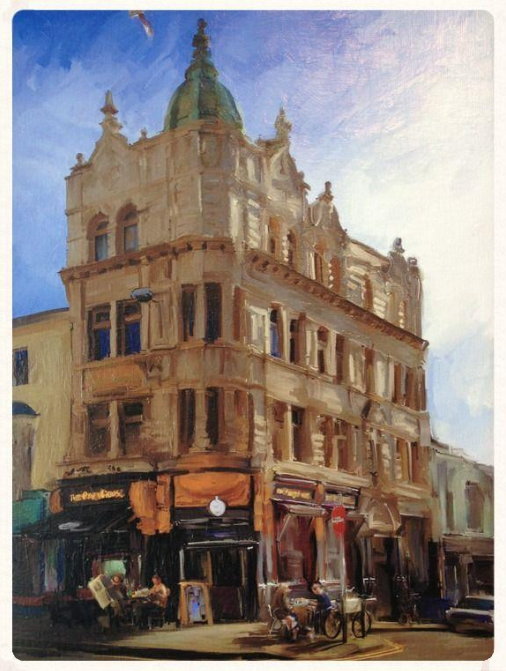
*"It's fabulous and flamboyant, bold and beautiful. As a community we dare to be different; we value diversity and challenge discrimination".*

- Of specific relevance to this Review Hearing, the B&HCC's Five Year plan specifically states:
  - *"Our vision is for Brighton to be a city to be proud of"*
  - *"A healthy, fair and inclusive city where everyone thrives"*
  - *"A fair and inclusive city - a city where people can feel safe, included and welcome"*
  - *"A healthy city where people thrive - Living and aging well"*
- These key points are what the newly elected Council is committing to deliver to the Electorate of our city.
- We all know of the difficulties in achieving these aims, but the Council has set a direction of travel that we can all get behind and support. We all have our role to play. It's what communities do.
- In this Witness Statement I shall set out how we are passionately aligned to the Council's Vision for our city and how The Paris House contributes to making this vision a reality.



## The Paris House – Recent History

- We took over The Paris House in 2012 and have operated it, without outside involvement, ever since.
- It was previously known as The Jugglers – with which we had no connection.
- The Jugglers had been a Live Music and DJ venue for many, many years prior to it becoming The Paris House, so there's been a music venue on this site for decades.
- The Jugglers was a very different venue to The Paris House. It had 'club-like' (blacked-out) windows and was aimed at a predominantly very young, often too young, student crowd.
- The Jugglers had a well-known and terrible reputation around town, so much so that in 2005 (seven years before our involvement) there was a Licensing Hearing that imposed extra Licensing Conditions on the Jugglers' Licence to reduce sound leakage and other anti-social behaviour.
- We inherited those License Conditions (in 2012). The 2005 hearing was in response to longstanding, frequent and ongoing (at that point) neighbourhood complaints and (rather importantly) came shortly after two (of three) Applicant households (in Brunswick Street East) moved into their new-build properties as immediate neighbours, less than 100 yards away from our venue. The other Applicant moved into Cambridge Road some 35 years ago.
- So, from the mere fact that a Hearing was called in 2005 (19 years ago) to deal principally with historic noise issues that had existed for some time before then (a Hearing being a last resort, coming only after a long period of other measures failing...), at least two (of the three) Applicant households must have known of the Jugglers' longstanding (bad) reputation and noise issues, prior to buying and moving in to their current homes, from where they claim only now to be disturbed (by The Paris House).
- These two Applicant households (immediate neighbours) must have known what they were buying in to when they bought, i.e. a property in the centre of a bustling and vibrant (noisy) city, near to a reputationally very noisy and probably out of control Jugglers (hence the need for the 2005 Hearing). For clarity, The Paris House is neither of these.
- When we took over The Paris House we did not seek and did not want that previous custom or (bad) reputation. Active steps (including pricing) were put in place to discourage (particularly 'studenty') former customers from coming to (the now) Paris House. By way of simple example, for many years we deliberately did not sell beer by the pint, rather only by the half-pint, which successfully discouraged younger vertical (student) 'pint' drinkers.
- We note the refreshing honesty shown in an on-line posting in which the former Manager of The Jugglers at the time, praises us for the way in which the venue is now run and contrasts our tenure very favourably with the way in which it was run under her.



## The Physical Presence of The Paris House

- I think it is now useful to describe the local vicinity and physical layout of the pub, because it will provide a physical context to what follows.
- *(I should also add The Paris House on Western Road is very often confused with the very nearby Paris Wine Bar on Church Road. This is obviously an easy mistake to make. The two venues are, in fact, completely unrelated and we have no involvement with the latter).*

## The immediate Vicinity Around The Paris House

- To help familiarise everyone in understanding the local vicinity we have prepared a few maps of the immediate area showing neighbouring streets etc. These are set out in **REDACTED** Witness Statement.
- The Paris House is in a Conservation Area, being constructed in the late 1890s. It is an elegant building on the corner of the main (and very busy and noisy) east-west thoroughfare between Brighton & Hove, namely Western Road and Brunswick Street East (where two (of the three) Applicant households live as immediate neighbours).
- This area of Western Road has many other bars and restaurants and is near to The Old Market (a large Live Performance and DJ venue), the Bees Mouth and Bottom's Rest.
- It is also has many late night convenience stores and takeaways.
- Diagonally opposite The Paris House is St Patrick's Church, which has provided outreach services to the homeless and the '*substance-dependent*' of the city, on and off, for many years.
- Western Road has high vehicle traffic, many busses travel along it and is inherently noisy.
- There are branches of the Co-Op, Sainsbury's (2), Tesco and Waitrose within a 3-minute walk – all of which are replenished throughout the day and night by a large number of HGV movements. These retail 'logistics' all add to the general noise levels in Western Road.
- According to a recent Report (The Argus, Dec 2023), Western Road is the most polluted road in the city – a testament to the volume (and noise) of traffic running along it.
- To the side of The Paris House, Brunswick Street East has two other licensed venues - The Bottom's Rest and The Old Market – at its max, a 500-capacity venue which hosts many seated and standing events, including live and recorded music. The Bees Mouth another live Music venue, is a few doors along from The Paris House at 10 Western Road.
- The local and world-renowned DJ Fat Boy Slim (Norman Cook) has played a number of gigs there in the last 12 months, to raise funds to promote live music.
- At the far end of Brunswick Street East, is Waterloo Street, at the corner of which is The Southern Belle pub which also features regular live jazz music.
- Also along Brunswick Street East there are many commercial repair garages and other businesses, which all provide employment and services to the town. It is a mixed-use area.
- Brunswick Street East is a popular cut through between the main east-west route of Western Road and the seafront.

## The Venue



The inside of The Paris House.

It is a single level bar level with seating for 35 people.

The 'dance area' is at the forefront of this picture. At its maximum this will hold about 20 people.

When we present live music the band will stand in the area to the front of this picture, reducing the 'dance area' to space for 2 – 4 people as a maximum.

The Can-Can Girls at our Bastille Day Party perform in this 'dance area'

- The Paris House is a small venue.
- It has a seating capacity for 35 people. At its most crowded it will hold about 55-60 people (see photo below).
- This is a single level, small pub (with separate basement for storage, toilets etc). It is of elegant design.
- The Paris House, as its name suggests, reflects the mood and ambiance of a Parisian Wine Bar / Brasserie.
- It serves a wide selection of French wines and European beers.
- Over the years, many of our staff are / have been French.
- Due to the small space and absence of a kitchen, there is a limited (but very high quality) food offering. This is primarily based around a selection of charcuterie and cheese platters, Croque Monsieur / Madame etc. The bread is supplied daily by our local Real Patisserie (a French Hove-based business, thus supporting our local economy) and our meats and cheeses also come from other locally-based suppliers). This is a very high quality, simple but delicious (and authentic) offering, that's highly differentiated from those in most pubs. It's aimed at an appreciative and discerning local market.



Our food is a simple, but excellent, offering of French cheese and meat platters – all from local Hove based suppliers

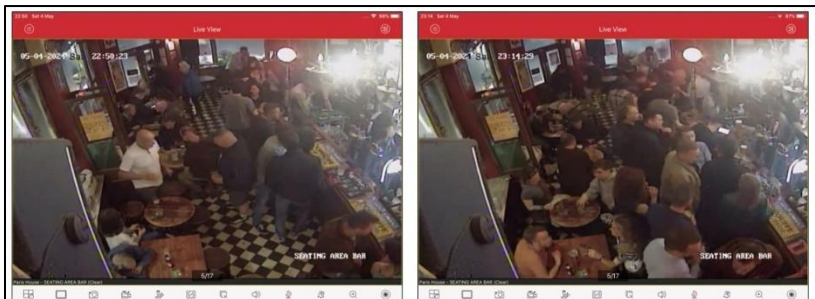
### Our 'Dance Area' is much smaller than most people's living room

- Towards the front of the bar area is where we position the bands during our live music performances. This is also where our DJs place their decks on Friday and Saturday nights.
- In the small area between the band area and the bar there is an area which is used for some of our customers to dance. The amount of space on this 'dance area' is dependent upon how many musicians are playing at any one time, and the type of instruments they are playing. (A harmonica taking up considerably less space than a Double Bass).
- On a Monday afternoon, this 'dance area' measures approximately 2m x 2m. This is much smaller than most people's living rooms.
- To put another way, in the context of this Hearing, if the 900+ pages of A4 Submissions from the Applicants were laid out



The Dance-Area at The Paris House at 11pm and 11.15pm on a Saturday night.

Images from our CCTV for Bank Holiday Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2024 showing extent of the Dance Area – with 5 people dancing at this time.



The room at The Paris House at 11pm and 11.15pm on a Saturday night.

Images from our CCTV for Bank Holiday Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> May 2024 showing extent of the room, with approx. 25 customers.

on the ground, this would cover a space **more than 14 times** larger than our Monday afternoon *dance-area*.

- During the live music sessions, there is rarely room for more than two or three dancers at any one time. (Dancers at these events tend to take more space – see the videos linked in Appendix 4 to **REDACTED** Witness Statement). Customers will politely ‘*wait in turn*’ to allow dancers the time and space to dance and finish, before taking their turn on the ‘floor’.
- At its most packed this ‘*dance area*’ will hold no more than 20 people (i.e. a DJ session). These photos are captured from our CCTV showing the dance-area and a wider perspective of the pub. They were taken this weekend, at 11pm and 11.15pm on Bank Holiday Saturday (ie at one of our busiest times). These photos identify 5 different people dancing. This will be very substantially fewer than the number of people who will be sitting around the main table at the Hearing for this Licence Review.
- My reason for going into this detail is to place this whole matter in context. On reading the comments that have been made in various Representations, it would be easy to think The Paris House hosts enormous, wild nights with thousands of young people. We don’t, of course, because we can’t. It’s simply not possible in that space.
- Whilst we do refer in our promotional material to our Saturday nights as ‘*Club Nights*’. We are being ironic. We also refer to our Monday Afternoon sessions as *The Monday Boys* even though many are well into (at least) their 70s (*see below*).
- To the best of our knowledge, none of the Applicants has ever been into our venue to see this for themselves..

## Our Hours of Operation

- By way of background, this table summarises a regular schedule of events at The Paris House.
- It is worth stressing that we rarely operate for all the hours for which we are Licensed.
- Such is the change in market behaviours, particularly post-Lockdown, that in line with so many other UK venues, there is a significantly reduced demand for ‘*late night*’ entertainment. This is evidenced by the number of nightclub operations that have (and are) closing down throughout the UK, (Brighton being no exception).
- In reality, we are very rarely open for all of our available licensed hours. This can be proven by our CCTV and timed till reads, which show when the till is closed at the end of each day.
- Even on weekends, although we are Licenced until 2am on Fridays and Saturdays, it is now very unusual for us to operate to the full extent of these hours – as the customer base simply goes home much earlier than this, so we close.
- Although the Applicants in their Submissions refer to our marketing materials (which show the maximum possible opening hours available to us), they cannot have been disturbed throughout all of them as they list, because we’re very rarely open for all of them.

Day	Event	Main Customer Base	Licensed Hours	Typical Operating Hours
<b>Sunday</b> 7-9pm	Live Music – ‘Crooner’ / Jazz / Swing	A very wide range (20 to 70+ yrs)	10am to 1am	3pm to 10.30pm
<b>Monday</b> 2-5pm	‘ <i>Monday Boys</i> ’ Live Jazz	Mostly 60+ / retired	10am to 1am	1pm – 11pm
<b>(Alternate) Tuesdays</b> 8pm – 10pm	Open Mic Night	Music Students	10am to 1am	3pm to 11pm
<b>Wednesday</b> 8pm – 10pm	<u>Monthly</u> Music Quiz	Everyone	10am to 1am	3pm to 11pm



<b>Thursday</b> 8pm – 10pm	World Music Night / Latin	Mostly 20s – 50+ yrs	10am to 1am	3pm to 11pm
<b>Friday</b> 9pm to close	DJ (a staff member)	Mostly under 30 yrs	10am to 2am	2pm to 12.30am
<b>Saturday</b> 4-7pm and 9pm to close	Live Jazz DJ (Andy The Dandy)	Wide range (20 -70 yrs) Mostly 20s – 50 yrs	10am to 2am	2pm to 1.30am

## Our Approach

- We try to run all our pubs as ‘community pubs’ rather than (impersonal) ‘bars’. In other words, we want to create a space where people can come to meet their friends or connect and make new ones and in an environment which is safe, comfortable and enjoyable. They are sociable rather than anonymous places (where customers merely drink and move on). We like to think we have achieved our aim. Our loyal repeating customer base seems to think so – as shown by the hundreds of Representations made in our support (*see below*) and literally thousands of Online and Social Media Petitioners who are in favour (with only a tiny handful against).
- One of the (only?) positive things that came out of the Covid pandemic was that it made us all (owners, customers, staff, performers and members of our community) realise the HUGE importance of people coming together and not being left alone and feeling isolated. I think we all took the ability to socialise for granted pre-lockdown, and completely under- appreciated the brutal and destructive power of loneliness. The positive, enriching power of friendship and simple human contact were previously very undervalued. As owners and staff, we will never forget the looks on people’s faces as our pubs were finally allowed to re- open. The sheer joy on customers’ faces as human contact was re-established, was very humbling. We were (and are) very proud of the small part our pubs played in making this happen. The same goes for all other community pubs up and down the land.
- When we look at our pubs, we pride ourselves on the sense of community, connection and friendship. It is at the heart of what we do and why we do it. A few years ago a group of student film makers produced an award-winning short video (as part of their finals) about The Paris House – interviewing customers and acts. This is submitted as part of our supportive evidence. It’s not long – but it summarises in such a beautifully engaging way what The Paris House is all about. It is our customers defining what *community* and *inclusivity* means to them. Please do watch it:  
(See video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0pqEZugsdE0> )
- This screen grab from that video (at 7 mins and 35 seconds) says it all:



## Living and Breathing Diversity and Inclusivity

- All our venues live, breathe and truly celebrate diversity and inclusivity – 100% in line with B&HCC’s ‘Vision’ plan.
- This approach captures too the inclusivity of the older sections of our community, who often seem and feel invisible. Well, certainly not at The Paris House.....
- Our ‘*Inclusivity*’ goes way beyond having sessions ‘*dedicated*’ to the ‘*less-young crowd*’. That is not what inclusivity looks like to us. *Our* ‘*inclusivity*’ means all ages ***mixing with*** and ***enjoying*** each other’s company, not being ***isolated from*** each other.



At The Paris House ‘*inclusivity*’ isn’t about hosting *separate* events aimed at different *separate* groups, it’s about everyone being *included* – irrespective of ...well, anything .

- I urge you to:
  - *Watch* the videos linked in the Appendix 4 of **REDACTED** Witness Statement and enjoy the different ages ***mixing*** as a ***single*** community.
  - *Watch* the video of this 20-something Spanish guy with a gorgeous smile and a tattooed neck dancing with a ‘*not 20-something*’ English woman (a regular) as shown in this still image. Just share the joy of this moment from one of our Saturday afternoon sessions. They hadn’t met before. They danced together. After this dance he turned to dance with his male friend, with whom he had arrived.
  - *Enjoy* one of the most entertaining pair of dancers, who both identify in transition – always bringing a smile to anyone watching.
  - *Listen* to the wonderful saxophone played by our regular musician Marilyn du Sax, who identifies as male (*see photo below*).
  - *Dance* to one of our Saturday night DJs, transitioned DJ, DeeRae.
  - *Listen* to the jazz music of local long-established Lawrence Jones (*photo*) or sway to the Columbian beats of Pollito Boogaloo, (*photo*) at our World Music Night on Thursday evenings.



“As a 64-yr old woman it is one of the few bars I not only feel comfortable going to alone but I am guaranteed a dance when appropriate” (Representation A021)

“Don’t take this away from us. It gets us pensioners out, plus all age groups. We are able to meet up with younger generations and many friendships have been made” (Representation A026)

- It genuinely upsets us that we feel the need to highlight the fact that many of our staff, customers and performers do not identify themselves as part of ‘*the main stream*’, in looks, behaviours, gender and / or orientation. They are definitely diverse, proud to be so and also feel included in our ‘family’.
- We passionately believe that here, in 2024 Brighton & Hove, this point shouldn’t need making (but we have been advised strongly to do so by our experienced supporters, whom we thank for their guidance).
- Our customers, performers and staff also span the age ranges from literally 18 to 80+.
- Our youngest member of staff is 18, our oldest is well into her 70s (and she is also our longest serving employee, having been with us for over 14 years).



"Brighton's Jazz and World Music Scene are on a par with much bigger cities and much of that is to do with venues like The Paris House" (Representation A054)

- Many of our Monday 'Boys' are 70+, although they are joined by young performers, including music students, who are a third of their age and who enjoy playing **together** and **sharing** the experience.
- Our pub community is as far away as it is possible to be from the 'Male, Pale and Stale' label – and this is why it is so wonderful.
- Is there a pub that better captures what it means to BE 'Brighton' in 2024?

## Our Monday Afternoons at The Paris House

- I would now really like to expand a bit further about our Monday Afternoon sessions (2pm to 5pm). There are two main reasons for this:
  - They are **the best sessions we run, in every sense of the meaning**, and yet
  - They are **the most-complained about sessions** from one of the Applicants
- Of all events that we host, it is our Monday Afternoon session at The Paris House of which I am the most proud.
- The supportive testaments in the Representations are far more eloquent than I can ever be – please do read them carefully.
- These include:
  - *"You will often find community members in their 60s and 70s enjoying jazz and Columbian music."* Statement A008
  - *"When I take friends who live elsewhere, they always comment on how lucky I am to live near such an eclectic pub with such high quality music".* A020
  - *"It will be a huge loss to Brighton and Hove if The Paris House were to close and I have no doubt that people in the community would feel this loss keenly".* A053
  - *"[It] appeals to people of all ages - not just young people but also people well into their 70s and 80s such as myself."* A057
  - *"It crosses the age groups and divides so is quite untypical (I am 68 so appreciate this)".* A012
- The Monday Afternoon sessions are particularly popular with the 'less-young crowd' – an element of our community which is otherwise poorly served across the city's private sector.



Don - a Paris House regular and 'Washboard' player with The Monday Boys

- It plays afternoon jazz to a very regular crowd of about 30 people who will turn up every week to listen to the music and enjoy each other's company.
- This photo articulates the utter joy of this session more than anything I or anyone else can say.
- This is **REDACTED**, who was a regular with us. She celebrated her 90<sup>th</sup> birthday at The Paris House. She would come every week, travelling on two separate buses from Peacehaven, to enjoy this community. She would often stand and dance around her walking stick to the jazz beats. Alongside her is **REDACTED**, a Hove local, who would come to us well in his eighties. A colourful character, **REDACTED** would love to bring along his painting set and sketch away at the artists who would be playing that afternoon. We have some of **REDACTED** paintings on display in the pub.

Sadly, both **REDACTED** and **REDACTED** have passed recently but are dearly remembered with huge affection.

- When we started our live music in 2012, we focussed originally on 'Gypsy Jazz' on a Saturday afternoon only. This was fully supported by the 'less-young' crowd.
- We were delighted to begin the Monday Sessions with the ironically titled 'Monday Boys'. They had previously met nearby at *The Old Albion*, but their session was cancelled by the deliberate re-positioning of the pub by its owners, to no longer cater for this older demographic. We were delighted to 're-home' them at The Paris House. The Old Albion's loss was definitely our gain.
- The music on Mondays has been led for the last eight years by Mick Hamer. Mick is a local musician who has been playing professionally for 57 years – so I'll leave it to you to speculate on his age. Until a couple of years ago he was joined on every Monday by his dear friend **REDACTED**. They celebrated 50 years as musical partners with a Monday afternoon at The Paris House. **REDACTED** is sadly no longer with us.
- Mick has sent in a Representation (A052). Please do read this. They are his words, very clearly expressing his concerns for us all. He sets out how, in addition to the sense of community this session brings, how the Monday afternoons also nurture and develop new musical talent.
- Several years ago a young man called **REDACTED** was drawn into the pub on a Monday afternoon. Mick and 'the Boys' took him under their collective wings and supported the development of Jarrod's talent. We hosted **REDACTED** first ever performance in front of an external audience. **REDACTED** now plays both regularly and professionally at Ronnie Scott's, the country's pre-eminent Jazz club in Soho.





**Full of Characters**

*"Many older people come to join us and really enjoy themselves – it is a source of great enjoyment for the older generations and a vehicle for their mental well-being"*  
(Representation A 090)



**Le Pub.**  
**Full of Character. Full of Characters.**

21 Western Road,  
Brighton BN3 1AE



**KEEP MUSIC ALIVE**

*"It is a social centre for people of all ages and nationalities"*  
(Representation A 015)

- Jarrod has sent us an email to say:

*“I simply would not be where I am today without The Paris House and the community there that I have been welcomed into and become a part of.*

*Other musicians are now benefitting in a similar way to me now – I see it every week. Young players come along and play a couple of tunes with the band for free, just so that they can be a part of this community. It’s a place of learning, growing, developing and sharing a passion for jazz music with musicians, audience and staff.*

*The community and The Paris House itself means more than words can express. Revoking the licence would not only be unfair, but cruel. Let’s keep Brighton special by keeping The Paris House running like the well oiled community hub it truly is”*



Chaz Miller (rear) – an emerging talent who recently moved to Brighton, with Jarrod Eke (foreground) who began his professional career at the Paris House and now plays regularly at Ronnie Scott's in London

- This photo shows one of our popular new musicians, Chaz Miller. Chaz recently moved to Brighton from Cornwall and is blossoming into a special talent, again nurtured by ‘The Monday Boys’. On Monday afternoons Chaz also works behind the bar at The Paris House.
- In this photo we see Chaz playing on a Monday afternoon under the careful and attentive tutoring of Jarrod. This is all part of the musical ‘Circle of Life’ that we treasure, promote and thoroughly enjoy being part of.
- Other regular Monday Boys include Don (*see photo*) who now plays the old-fashioned washboard (his longstanding drum kit he used to play, particularly at The Hilton, now being too heavy for him to carry around) - and a 78-yr old harmonica player. They are always warmly welcomed and highly enjoyed.
- Although not specifically part of our recruitment criteria, all of the current staff at The Paris House play instruments and are keen to develop their careers in music. Several are already semi-professional and others have played regularly at other venues in Brighton (Green Door Store, Hope & Ruin, etc), as well as at venues in London. By working in an environment where they can observe and learn from experienced musicians on a weekly basis, their musical skills are further developed. Not surprisingly, we have exceptionally low levels of staff turnover at The Paris House – which again fosters the idea of community and connection. The same staff serving the same customers....
- In addition to the community spirit, our Monday regulars love to dance. This features in so many of their Representations – see the excerpts of original statements.

- This photo here is from a short video taken a few weeks ago.
- I urge you to watch the whole video (90 seconds – see link in Appendix 4 to **REDACTED** Witness Statement) which shows the utter joy of these two dancers.
- This is **REDACTED**, a long term regular, with **REDACTED** – who travels to us almost every week from Burgess Hill.
- This video was posted on-line and was one of the most popular videos we have ever shown on our Social Media. It had thousands of *likes* and *shares* – promoting this image far beyond the boundaries of our city and fully supporting ‘Brand Brighton’.
- The utter joy of ‘*being there*’ and ‘*sharing the moment*’ with others shines through. It is infectious.
- Such is the power of live music to enrich our lives.



*“I live close by and it only puts a smile on my face every time I pass and see happy people, enjoying themselves, in a spirit of humanity”*

(Representation A104)

## Monday Afternoons are the Most Complained About Session of the Week

As mentioned above, it is our Monday afternoon sessions that features so strongly and frequently in the complaints raised by the Applicants. **Incredibly, the Monday Afternoon session (2pm to 5pm) is the most complained about session of the week** from one Applicant, although all three frequently complain about it.

### REDACTED:

- **REDACTED** lists 46 times and dates in his Noise Diary.
- 17 of these (37%) relate to the Monday Afternoon sessions, which run from 2pm until 5pm.
- **REDACTED** lives in **REDACTED**, approximately 100 yards from the pub, going across the (very busy and noisy) Western Road and up the hill into **REDACTED**.
- He lives opposite the homeless shelter at St Patrick’s Church.
- There are approximately 338 other people on the Electoral Roll as living in **REDACTED** and approx. 50 people who live between his flat and The Paris House. **None of these 50 other neighbours have complained.**
- In his diaries **REDACTED** refers to his “*need to hide in his bedroom to escape the noise*” on a Monday afternoon. He claims to have done this on 12 occasions.
- His concern seems to stem from the fact that (we presume post-Covid) he has now chosen to work from home and he claims the disturbance from our Monday Afternoon session makes this “*impossible*” (in his words).
- He is also very dismissive of the type of music we play, describing it as “*music I do not like*” which he finds “*positively mournful*”, “*dreary*” and “*depressing*”.
- The Hearing is not about the genre of music we play.

**REDACTED:**

- Similarly, the Monday Afternoon session is frequently complained about in **REDACTED** Witness Statement – again saying the music is preventing her from working from home.
- She has identified many occasions in her Noise Diary when the noise of this afternoon gathering is “*too much for her to bear*”.

**Council Officers Have NOT Identified ANY Noise Nuisance, Despite 20+ Visits (including on Monday Afternoons)**

- In contrast to the claims about Monday Afternoons by **REDACTED** and **REDACTED**, there have been many visits to The Paris House on a Monday Afternoon by Council Officers.
- **On every occasion the Council Officers have concluded there is no evidence of any noise nuisance.**
- We even had a meeting with Council Officers in The Paris House during a Monday Afternoon jazz session, with Helen Curtis-deMendonca (Council Environmental Health) and Emily Fountain (Council Licensing), to discuss these noise complaints. We were able to conduct this meeting without resorting to raising our voices. That is why we deliberately suggested the meeting in the venue, mid-session – so they could witness for themselves any issues and raise these directly with us. There weren't any.
- My colleague **REDACTED**, in his Witness Statement, addresses in detail how we have worked in complete co-operation with Council Officers over many years.
- The Monday Afternoon sessions are a joy to behold and savour.
- I have referred to these in detail here and above, as they are the core to what we do and how we do it.
- To the best of my knowledge none of The Applicants has ever attended our Monday Afternoon sessions.
- Maybe things would be very different if they had done so.
- Having read these comments and seen the photos from what is **the most complained about session of the week**, it seems fair to remind everyone that the grounds for this Licence Review are (i) Crime & Disorder and (ii) Public Nuisance.
- **This crowd are not criminals, not disorderly and not causing a public nuisance.** And neither are we, as owners.



*“Altogether the Paris House is Brighton and Hove at its very best – welcoming, inclusive and creative. Long may it continue”* (Representation A075)

I will address issues about other sessions below. Before doing so I would like to add a few comments about our commitment to providing Live Music.

## Live Music, Brighton Culture and The Paris House

These next few words are to remind us of the role Live Music has played (and does play) in Brighton & Hove, to set in context how this is reflected in the present day Paris House.

- Every society that has ever existed has identified music and rhythmic movement (dance) as a source of great pleasure and sense of community. It is primal and hard-wired into the DNA of all humans. Our Brighton (and Hove) community is no different.
- Music and dance is a cornerstone of life, but not just for the young. Live Music brings joy to all ages – as we have demonstrated above.
- Live Music is an integral part of Brighton’s past and present. Let’s hope it remains a vital part of its future.

## Live Music is a Key Part of Brighton Culture

### Brighton Fringe

- Every year Brighton & Hove hosts the largest Cultural Festival in England and the second largest Festival in the UK.
- The Brighton Festival & Fringe are a fantastic showcase for emerging talent; for entertainers and musicians to break through and careers launched.
- Venues across town open their doors to present and enjoy this new talent.
- It is delightful. And, of course, it’s what makes Brighton, Brighton.

## Historical Impact of Live Music in Brighton & Hove

- Let us not lose sight of the fact that here, at the Brighton Dome, we celebrated the victory of ABBA winning the 1974 Eurovision Song Contest. They went on to become the biggest band in Europe over the last 50 years – following their breakthrough performance here in our city - all helping to establish and build ‘*Brand Brighton*’.
- ABBA’s win took place in the same venue where Pink Floyd first performed, live, one of the most iconic albums ever released – “Dark Side of the Moon”. Our city’s longstanding tradition in live music is phenomenal.

## Working in Partnership with the Music Venue Trust, Other Local Live Music Venues and B&HCC

- There was a recent meeting (20 March 2024) of the Music Venue Trust, a national body, which included many other local Live Music venues (who are also members), along with the most senior and relevant Officers from B&HCC and many elected Councillors. Attendance was very healthy at over 30 people, including my colleague **REDACTED** (we are members of the Trust).
- The senior Council Officers present came from: B&HCC Planning, Licencing, Environmental Health and Economic Development. The purpose was a ‘round table’ discussion to include the leading Live Music venues in Brighton & Hove.
- It was a wonderful ‘coming together’ of interested parties in both the private and public sectors, to fully understand the importance of live music and how this needs to be nurtured and developed in Brighton & Hove (and elsewhere) for the good of all.
- From ALL parties present (including senior B&HCC Officers and Councillors), there was such a strong commitment to developing live music as an integral part of ‘*Brand Brighton*’.



- It was about working together to nurture and protect live music for its cultural importance to any society, but particularly here in Brighton & Hove.
- The whole meeting was to discuss ‘How do we make this work?’ and definitely NOT ‘how can we close it down?’
- The easy option to deal with any complaints is simply to shut all Live Music venues (or place such demanding Conditions upon their Licenses to effectively do so).
- My personal favourite take-away phrase from the meeting (and I quote a key speaker), was:

***“If you close down all the rides, no one will come to the fair”.***

- And that’s not much help to ‘Brand Brighton’, is it?

## **Our Commitment to Live Music at The Paris House**

- We have been presenting Live Music at The Paris House for 12 years, right from the onset. Prior to this it was a well-known and long-standing Live Music and DJ venue (for decades and long before the Applicants REDACTED and REDACTED moved into their newly-built homes in 2004).
- Our live music began on **Saturday** afternoons (4pm to 7pm) with ‘Gypsy Jazz’ and has run ever since. Most of the musicians who play with us live in Brighton & Hove – but not all.
- There are many very accomplished musicians who, such is the renown The Paris House has grown to over the years, will come great distances to ‘sit in’ with our professional line-up and play for our customers – usually for no fee.
- We present further live music on **Sundays** (7pm till 9pm), not a late finish. Acts which have played for us throughout the years include ‘crooners’ (eg Dave Williams – see pic) who sings Frank Sinatra style American Songbook. This is a relaxed and chilled end to the weekend.
- We have an Open Mic session on **alternate Tuesday** evenings (until 10pm). These provide new and emerging Brighton talent with an opportunity to showcase their work and gain experience of playing before a small crowd. Many, but by no means all of these musicians are music students. This is what nurturing local live music talent at grassroots level looks like and are real actions not just words.
- Our **Thursday** night music is our World Music Night, often with a Latin flavour and is very popular. Most of our bands have played regularly and are thus fully aware and respectful of our noise constraints. If they weren’t, they wouldn’t be re-booked. On Thursdays our Live Music ends at 10pm.
- Despite what is said in several of the Statements opposing us, it is a fact that we are presenting **less** live music now, than we were before Covid. We used to have two Live Music sessions on a Monday (now only one, in the afternoon only). Similarly, we no longer present any live music on a Wednesday evening. This represents a **30% reduction** in the amount of Live Music we offer.



Dave Williams – A Hove based ‘crooner’ singer and stalwart of our Sunday evenings for many years.

## Valentine's Night 2023

- Such is our commitment to Live Music in all of its varieties, that for Valentine's Night last year (2023) we hosted a special evening of Classical Music – with some beautiful cello and violin accompaniment from talented, developing, local musicians who had moved to Brighton & Hove, '**because it is Brighton**'. They played with our regular (and local) piano player, Tim Lea Young.
- How many other venues would take the risk of presenting such music in a pub setting on such an important night?
- It was an absolutely delightful evening.
- This was repeated with other Classical Music sessions and we intend to continue to do so on an ad hoc basis, to eventually include opera.



"I teach music at BIMM just around the corner and cannot over emphasise how significant it is for the students to have a venue like the Paris House so close"  
(Representation A033)

## Living in a Community Means LIVING in a Community

I would now like to make some comments about living in a vibrant city.

- No one for a second is saying that owning a Live Music pub gives us or anyone else the right to wreak havoc with anyone else's life.
- If we operate in a community, we have to take into account the interests of others around us. But **it's also a balancing act**. That is precisely why, as a community, we have around us the services of Council Officers specifically dedicated to Licensing and Environmental Health – to protect and preserve that balance for **EVERYONE (including the venues)**.
- Our Licence is our '*Terms and Conditions*' by which we must operate and engage with society.
- We '**get it**', and we have no problem with '**it**'.
- This is why, across the four venues in Brighton & Hove that we have operated, for so long, we have struck a fair balance and have had so very few complaints raised against us (and by even fewer complainants).
- We respect our community.
- WE are also part of our community.
- The flip side of this proposition is that if citizens willingly choose to live and work from home in the centre of a city with such a global reputation for being so vibrant and lively, then there comes with that choice consequences, as well as huge benefits. It's part of the 'contract' of deciding to live that way - an acceptance there will be occasions when noise levels are inevitably going to be higher than in the depths of the countryside. **Brighton is NOT The Cotswolds (and 'Brand Brighton' requires that it isn't so)**.
- I am not alone in feeling this way. It is a strong theme which is very pronounced in so many of the Representations (see *Excerpts of Representations in Appendix 1*).
  - "*Don't live next to a school and complain about the noise from the playground*".
  - "*Don't live on the flightpath to an airport and complain about the planes*".

### Living in a vibrant city MEANS accepting that a vibrant city needs to BE vibrant.

- All of this is part of the '*social contract*' that everyone choosing to live in Brighton & Hove signs up to.
- This means that, on occasions, it might be possible to walk past the closed doors of The Paris House and, by standing immediately outside the door, hear a crowd applauding a band at the end of its performance. This not a fictional complaint. Such a comment is in the Applicant's Submission.

- ***if***, by standing outside our pub, you can hear the noise from inside (and over the background noise of all the many buses, HGVs and cars passing along Western Road), and ***if*** you find our noise disturbing – then why not just walk on for 10 yards and then you won't hear our pub at all? Is that too much to ask?

By way of three other examples:

## 1) New Year's Eve

- This photograph, submitted as part of this Review, taken from a covert position behind a parked car in Cambridge Road, was submitted by one of the Applicants (**REDACTED**). It shows a crowd of people standing outside The Paris House, going along Western Road. The Brunswick Street East side of the building (where he lives) is empty (with our tables, chairs and benches cleared away). **REDACTED** comments about this photo are:



*“Crowd in outside table area ie tables and chairs to be cleared away and area closed by 2300. Area obviously not ‘cleared and closed’ if occupied by people making a noise even though tables and chairs cleared”.*

This is part of an issue raised with B&HCC by **REDACTED** for at least five years, about the interpretation of the phrase ‘cleared and closed’. Dozens and dozens of pages of the Applicant’s submission is on this point. From our perspective it is addressed by **REDACTED** in his Witness Statement.

By right-clicking on the original photo, it reveals this image was captured at 23.16pm on 31 December 2022 – i.e. less than 45 minutes before midnight on New Year’s Eve. (N.B. NO complaint is made here about any noise or any disturbance - only that there were people outside a busy pub (at 23.16pm on New Year’s Eve) – even though this is completely compliant with our Licence.

This photo was taken after our Live Music act had finished and as we were re-setting in readiness for ‘the Bells’ at midnight.

We question whether submitting this photo and raising this as a complaint is really the best use of scarce Council resources at this moment in time. We think not.

- **REDACTED** has raised complaints about New Year’s Eve at The Paris House every NYE we have been open for, since 2018. Many of his complaints have proven to be untrue e.g. that we caused noise at 5.45am on New Year’s Day 2018/19 even though we had been closed for two hours by then. This is not to say that noise wasn’t made by general (non-customer) revellers returning home along Western Road, the main east-west road in town. I am just stating here, as a fact, this noise had nothing whatsoever to do with us, as we’d already been closed for hours.
- This type of ‘*unsubstantiated*’ complaint is not untypical. Similarly, **REDACTED** alleges the above NYE scenario proves we were in breach of our Licence – even though, of course, we weren’t and we are allowed to serve all day on New Years Day. (We are allowed to, but we don’t).

## 2) Bastille Day Party

- Our pub is called The Paris House and we love all things French. We have (and have had over the years) many French staff working for us. There are many French residents in Brighton. France is our closest neighbour. We think this friendship is something which is worthy of joyous celebration.
- Every year we host a special **Bastille Day Party** on the nearest Sunday afternoon to Bastille Day (14<sup>th</sup> July).
- We also host a **Beaujolais Nouveau Party** on the third Thursday of each November.
- We think our friendship with France and the French is something to celebrate – at The **Paris** House.
- Our Bastille Day party (July) typically includes an accordionist and French chanteuses singing Edith Piaf style songs.
- We also have French themed background / recorded music (DJ) from early afternoon.
- The event runs from 3pm and closes no later than 10pm.
- The highlight of the day is a Can-Can performance by professional dancers.
- They do two dances, which each last for two minutes and 12 seconds. (It is a very exhausting dance and they need recovery time).
- Our crowd **does** get excited when the Can-Can girls are in full flow and this reaches a crescendo (after 132 seconds) because it **is** a very exciting event.
- The music **is** powerful.
- There **is** a lot of cheering because the people coming along are very happy and well-entertained. But that's authentic – you're supposed to whoop and clap a Can- Can...
- The Applicants have complained about our annual Bastille Day Party. In 2022 **REDACTED** wrote to the then elected Leader of the Council (Cllr Phelim MacCafferty) describing it as *“One [incident of disruption] was an event to celebrate Bastille Day in early [sic] July which is relevant to our neighbour [name redacted] who expressed concerns. The pub management have an event to doubt to make up for financial losses incurred during lockdown”*.
- We have been hosting our Bastille Day Parties since 2013, many, many years before Covid.
- In 2023 **REDACTED** wrote in her Noise Diary that she could hear the words to ‘New York! New York!’ being sung. Why would we play that record at a Bastille Day Party?
- If the noise from the Bastille Day Party is going to put the future of The Paris House in jeopardy as a result of these Applicant complaints, then please just impose a Condition that ‘No Bastille Day Parties will ever take place’ – but please do not close us down just because of this 2 x 2 mins and 12 seconds of high-energy Can-Can dancing on ONE day a year.
- By contrast, every year The Lady Boys of Bangkok perform 15 sessions a week, to hundreds of people each performance, for five weeks, (ie 75 performances a year) in a non- soundproofed marquee in Central Brighton. This is perhaps the most popular event in the internationally renowned Brighton Festival. The sound spill from it is well known, yet it's



*“If you live alone it is a real life enhancer to pop along in the early evenings of Sat afternoon and catch up with new friends and acquaintances. It truly does bring diverse, different cultures and backgrounds together for a much-needed sense of unity and a love of music and dancing”*  
(Representation A093)



Our Bastille Day parties and Can-Can Dancers are a traditional highlight of the year.

allowed, as it should, because it's all part of maintaining 'Brand Brighton'. Similarly for *The Great Escape* and *On The Beach* Festivals.

- It would seem perverse if Brighton is allowed to celebrate these 75 'ethnically original' Lady Boy performances every year, but not to celebrate our 'ethnically cultural' link with France, on one single occasion (for 2 x 2 min 12 seconds) at The Paris House, to less than 50 people for Bastille Day.

### 3) Pub Quiz

- I was genuinely staggered to read in an Applicants' Witness Statement of a complaint that we were about to host a Pub Quiz on one Wednesday each month – with the concern this would be a further noise disturbance and was being done selfishly to maximise profits.
- If you want to (and choose to) live in a vibrant city then it is not unreasonable to accept that this might include a nearby pub hosting a Pub Quiz once a month. It goes without saying that most pubs in Brighton host a quiz, often weekly. I think the Applicant's complaint about one monthly quiz is frankly ridiculous - but sums up what we're up against.

That said, every complaint to B&HCC, however ridiculous, involves scarce Council resources to process. These examples are not an exhaustive list. My colleague REDACTED's Witness Statement includes other disproportionate wasted use of Council time, energy and money. He also sets out five examples to demonstrate just how much time is spent by B&HCC and ourselves, in processing every complaint that is received.

### Our Support

- We have been hugely moved and genuinely taken aback by the levels of support expressed towards us by the residents of our city.
- Such was the outpouring, that Online and Social Media petitions were set up in our support by our customers and musicians, etc – without us even knowing that it had happened.
- As soon as the Council Notice was put up in our window, we were inundated with copies of emails sent to the Council in support of us.
- There are **130 published and 'Validated' Representations** sent to the Council in support of us.
- A **further 1,710+ email submissions** were made in our favour, which we understand through Sarah Cornell (Senior Licensing Officer) that B&HCC are treating as a separate Online Petition - as they did not have the resources within the Council to properly process all of these within the statutory deadlines, as Validated Representations. It is our belief they would have become so, had Council resources and time allowed, and so we would have had over 1,800 validated Representations in our favour.
- An additional Online Petition to that above was set up on Change.org by Josie Green a regular customer of ours. At the time of writing this Witness Statement there are **over 2,250 signatories** in support of this Change.org Petition.
- We have had, quite literally, **thousands** of people responding positively with messages of support, 'likes' and 'shares' on Social Media, to posts (not made by us). We genuinely have no idea how many of these there are in total, but it is huge. We can only refer to the (literally) thousands that we have seen.
- By contrast, there are only three households who have brought this License Review, with only 7 validated Representations in their support.
- Everything must be seen in this context (and that of protecting 'Brand Brighton' for the sake of our wonderful City and MOST of its inhabitants). It must also be seen as democratic – where the majority's will prevails.

## Summary of the Validated Representations

- We have carefully read every single Representation we have been sent. It took us over six hours to do so.
- For the convenience of the Panel we have extracted key quotes from the residents of our city, cut & pasted, word-for-word, and set these out under referenced theme headers in the attached *Excerpts* (See Appendix 1).
- These include:
  - **Part 1 - Comments from people living closer to The Paris House than the Applicants**
  - **Part 2 – Contribution of The Paris House to the Brighton & Hove Community, including:**
    - Cultural contribution
    - What makes Brighton, *Brighton*,
    - Impact on Tourism / Local Economy
    - Importance to the Community
    - Age Diversity / Inclusivity
    - Monday Afternoon Session
    - Support for Live Music
  - **Part 3 – Comments on how well the venue is run / attention to noise leakage**
  - **Part 4 – Character of the immediate area:**
    - NOT a residential area
    - Western Road is noisy with homelessness etc and
  - **Part 5 – Crime & Disorder**
- I urge the Panel Members, in fairness to ourselves and most importantly to everyone in our community (including the Electorate), who has taken the time to write or show support, to read these comments – even if it is only to skim through the attached Excerpts.
- **I promise you, you will very quickly gain a very strong insight into how much the people of our city have taken this venue to their hearts.**
- All excerpts are all cross referenced to the original Validated formal Representations for The Panel's ease.
- The Excerpts in this paper are far from exhaustive.
- We knew that, in The Paris House, we have created something very special that has been carefully and lovingly built over many years. We had no idea it was this special and this important to so many people.
- Please, for the sake of all residents that you represent in our city, do read their statements. They are far more eloquent than I can ever hope to be.

## This License Review is Not a Popularity Contest

- As addressed above:
  - We are fully aware that living in a vibrant city does not come without limits and conditions. We know that.
  - We fully accept there is a need to strike a fair balance between all concerned. We get that.
  - Just because there are thousands of people supporting us, it does not allow us to do as we like. We get that too.
- This Hearing is not a '*popularity contest*'. The volume of support for us in the thousands, in contrast to the tiny (relative) number of objections against, is NOT IRRELEVANT either. The balance between 'for' and 'against' strikes at the very heart of democratic proportionality and fairness, and that definitely is something this Hearing IS about.
- Popularity, therefore, is a factor, but not the only factor.
- It is also a highly relevant factor to living in a democratic culture, where the public have the ultimate say by making their views known via the ballot box at each Local Election.

- Seen in the context of living in the centre of a vibrant city, should citizens freely and willingly choose to live there (including working from home), then there comes with that choice consequences, as well as huge benefits. It's part of the 'contract' of deciding to live that way - an acceptance there will be times when noise levels are inevitably going to be higher than in the depths of the countryside. **Brighton is NOT The Cotswolds (and 'Brand Brighton' requires that it isn't so).**
- This Hearing is about striking the right balance of course, whilst recognising the need for give and take on all sides. That is what 'Community Living' and 'Society' is all about. It's the *Cost Vs Benefit* of freely choosing to live in the centre of a city (especially one with the vitality and energy that we all enjoy so much). There has been a live music venue at 21 Western Road for decades.
- I am very conscious that, in making these types of comments, this exposes my Statement to being quoted out of context, which will benefit no-one and be a dis-service to this crucial debate. So please let me be very clear, in order to avoid any confusion:

I am NOT saying:

- We can make as much noise as we like – *and we definitely don't.*
- We can just ignore our neighbours – *which we definitely don't, either.*
- (Many of our neighbours (some living closer than the Applicants) are also our customers).

I AM saying:

- We fully accept and support there are rules and regulations to ensure a fair balance is struck between all our Community's needs.
- Our Licence represents our Terms and Conditions of engagement with our Community (and society generally). We embrace both, by the letter and in spirit.
- There will always be noise in a vibrant city. There will be even more noise on one of the busiest streets (Western Road) within that vibrant city.
- Sometimes the sound of retired people enjoying themselves on a Monday afternoon between 2pm and 5pm might be heard outside the pub (the most complained about session), but that doesn't mean something is wrong, or that something needs to be done to 'fix it'. It just ain't broken. It doesn't need further restrictions or to be stopped from happening, just to appease the wishes of a tiny minority, against the weight of the masses. That isn't how democracy works in any society.

## **Where is the Evidence that we are Breaching our Licence Conditions and Failing to Support and Uphold the Licensing Objectives?**

- We accept, of course, there needs to be a fair balance between the needs of all the citizens who enjoy our city.
- **However we do NOT accept** that we are operating in a way which is in breach of our duties, not just per our Licence (and general law), but in the 'social contract' between citizens:
  - It is not our experience.
  - It is not supported by any of the relevant Authorities. There have been over 20+ visits by B&HCC Officers from Licensing and Environmental Health to both The Paris House and the living rooms and bedrooms of the Applicants – yet these same Council Officers have yet to determine that, **on ANY single occasion**, there has been any Noise Nuisance.
  - It is not supported by the Applicant's Expert's Report. Despite over 900 pages of submission from the Applicants going back over seven years, there is no evidence from them this is the case, only hearsay and/or unsubstantiated claims.

My colleague **REDACTED** addresses this aspect in more detail in his Witness Statement, but here in brief, my headlines are that:

### **Crime & Disorder**

Despite the Applicants bringing this Review on grounds of **Crime & Disorder**:

- The Police are not supporting this Licence Review – indeed they did not submit any Representations at all. This is of no surprise to us as we have had almost nil involvement with the Police at The Paris House over the last 12 years.
- Despite 900+ pages of evidence submitted by the Applicants – which we (ourselves, our external lawyers, the Council Officers and the Panel) are all expected to go through very carefully, we are struggling to find any reference to any incident over the last 12 years in which Crime & Disorder has been an issue.

### **Public Nuisance**

- The Council is not supporting this Licence Review. B&HCC Officers have submitted only a ‘*narrative*’ Representation where they explain the factual history and showing they have spent incredible amounts of time, energy and money in dealing with complaints from these three Applicant households.
- The fact that one of the Applicant’s submissions runs to more than 900 pages is testament to how much hard-pressed Council Officer time (at B&HCC’s expense) has been expended upon this matter.
- There have been over 20+ visits by B&HCC Officers from both Licensing and Environmental Health to both The Paris House and the living rooms and bedrooms of the Applicants – yet these same Council Officers have yet to determine that **on ANY single occasion** there has been any Noise Nuisance.
- 20+ visits by professionals CAN’T be wrong.
- There is no external independent evidence submitted as part of this Review Application to show that there is a noise problem. This includes the Noise Impact Assessment ie Expert report of **REDACTED**, which was submitted at the last minute. This is addressed in detail in my colleague **REDACTED** Witness Statement.

### **Summary**

- Please do not regard our comments in these Witness Statements as being intentionally aggressive towards the Applicants. That is not where we are coming from.
- Our driving motive is to protect our business from **the existential threat** it faces by this Hearing and to demonstrate the contribution The Paris House makes to our wider Brighton Community, including our customers.
- We have not been aggressive, merely proportionate in the (existential) circumstances of the Hearing.
- Compiling over 900 pages of submission must have taken a huge amount of the Applicants’ time. But there is one thing missing from all of those very detailed pages, namely **ANY concrete and substantial evidence that we have been in any breach of any of our duties**.
- Yet, because the law allows the Applicants to bring this Residents’ Claim, we are all now having to go through this process – which is not supported by The Police or the Council.
- This is intensely frustrating and a very expensive use of both public and private (our) funds.
- Against this Review is the great support we have received by several thousand people who are residents of this city. They are well behaved, decent people who are not criminal, disorderly or cause a public nuisance.
- We are not some fly-by-night chancers who don’t care two hoots about our city, our Community or its residents (and our customers).



- We do care, passionately, about what we are doing.
- We love the enjoyment we bring to people of all ages, in all walks of life, of all races, all genders and / or orientations.
- There is a word for this.... **'Brighton'**.
- **Please help us to nurture and protect 'Brand Brighton' for the cultural prosperity of all, by not changing the way in which we operate. It isn't broke – so it doesn't need fixing.**



**REDACTED**

Director

Rowbell Leisure Limited

Date 6<sup>th</sup> May 2024