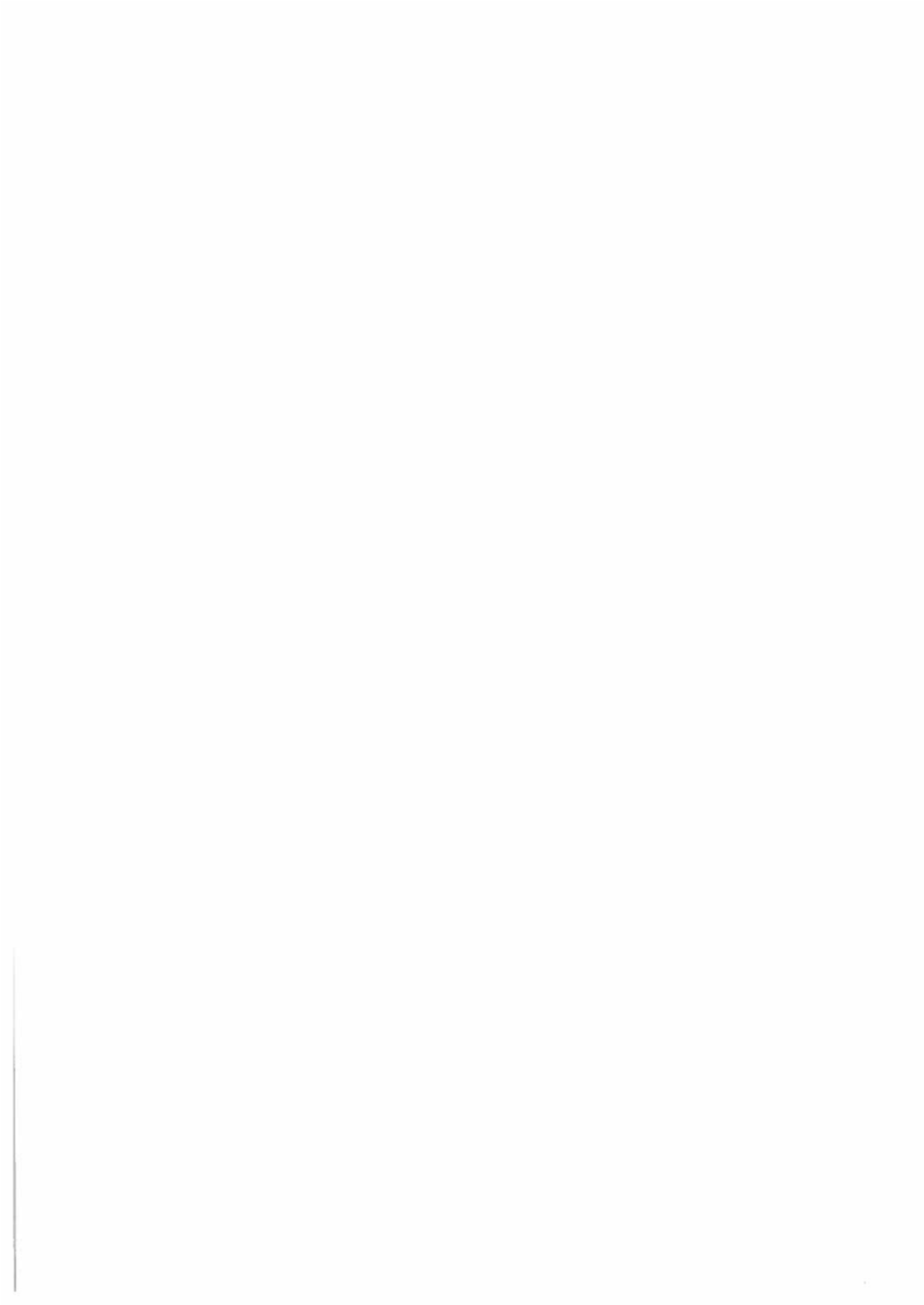


Appendix G

Representations from the Current Premise
Licence Holder & DPS – Peter McCready

Signed petition against the 'closure' of the Old
Mill Bar



Natalie Jones (CSP - Commercial and Food)

From: PETER MCCREADY <~~phc@dabco.com~~>
Sent: 26 June 2018 09:55
To: Licensing Mont (CSP - Generic)
Subject: Response to applicant's request for license review - Old Mill Bar Llanidloes
Attachments: Old Mill Bar license review response 26 June.pdf; Trip Advisor comments 26 June.pdf

Natalie,

Please find attached my response to the applicant's submission. I apologise for the length of the response but the applicant brought up many points in his letter. I believe that most of the points are untrue or vexatious so I have had to spend some time explaining the facts. I hope that you will submit the full document to the licensing committee but if any redactions are made, please advise me of the details.

I have also included another document consisting of copied text from reviews of the Old Mill Bar posted on Trip Advisor. I have included this as it shows a more balanced picture of what the Old Mill is actually like and directly contradicts some of the statements made by applicant. Please submit this to the review committee as well.

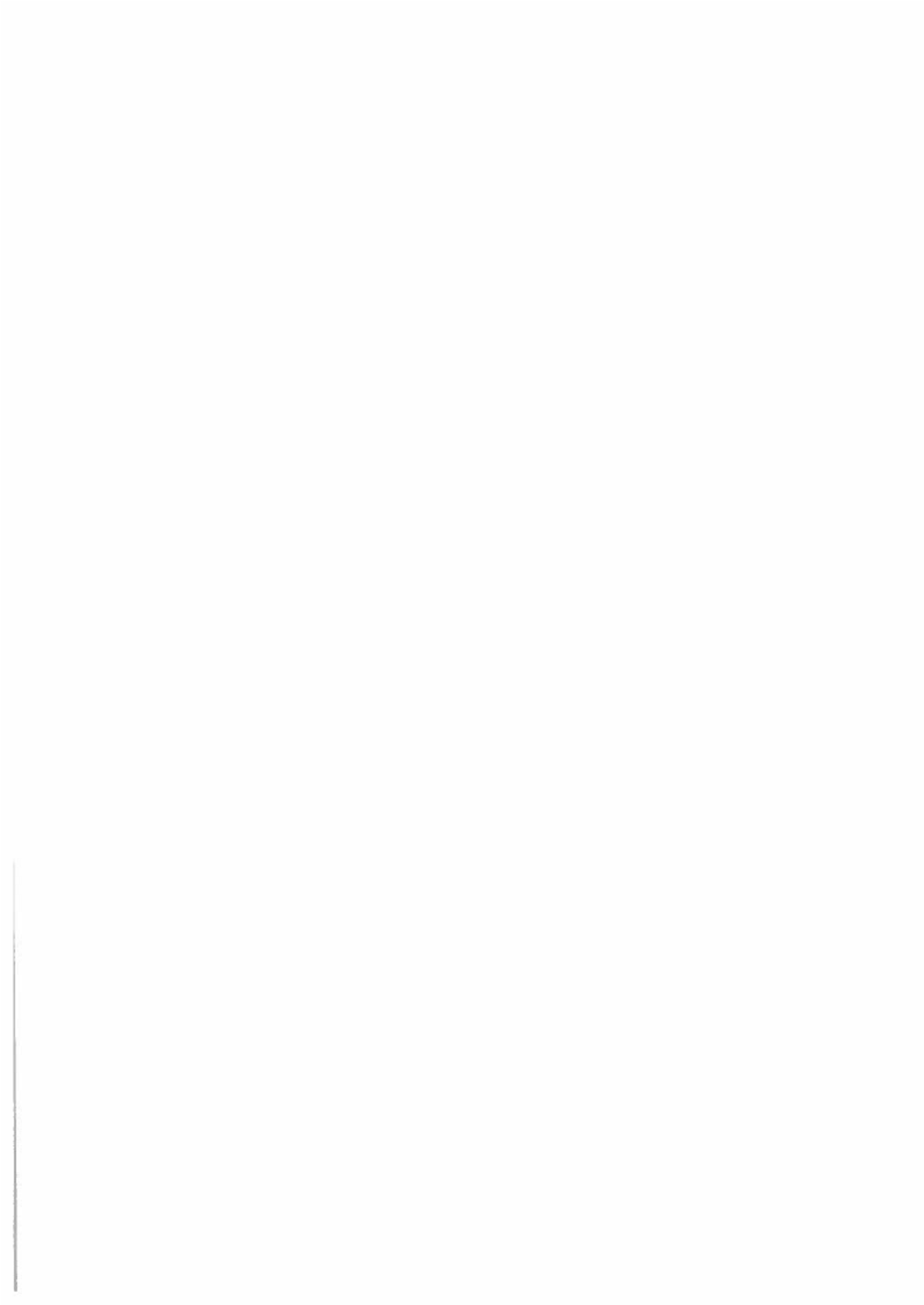
I will post you copies of the signatures on the petition that we have had signed and will bring the originals to the hearing.

I have asked in my submission that the police advise if any crimes have been recorded in relation to the vague allegations made by the applicant.

I have made a note of the proposed date of the hearing. Please confirm that you have received this email.

Regards,

Peter



Old Mill Bar, Llanidloes

Reply to comments in the application for a license review

The premises license for the Old Mill Bar was transferred to me in February 2018. In January 2018 I agreed to purchase the good will of the business from Tnisha Johnson and agreed a new lease on the premises with the landlords – Ioan and Sharon Evans of Park Dairies Ltd. My wife, Sharon and I are the directors of a limited company that trades as The Old Mill Bar and we have invested a significant 5-figure capital sum to open the bar again – money that we never expect to get back – and we do not pay ourselves a wage for the time we spend working there. This demonstrates the level of commitment that we have to our employees and the community. My son, Alex, is the general manager of the bar and we are assisted by Vicky Chapman who cooks and serves at the bar on a part time basis. Vicky lives in the flat above the bar. After an intense period of cleaning and refurbishment during January, the bar finally opened for business under our ownership on 4th February.

I retired from my career as a disaster recovery consultant the Mineral, Mining and Petro-chemical industry in December 2017. At this time, I learned that the lease for the Old Mill was for sale and I started negotiations with the previous management. My wife and I agreed to fund the sale for the following reasons:

- To provide employment for our son who had just resigned from a position at a local café
- To provide continued employment for Vicky whose home depends on her continuing to work at the Old Mill Bar
- To provide a venue for entertainment and attract acts that would not normally play in the town
- To continue to provide a “community hub” for the various groups and charities in the Llanidloes area that use the meeting room at the premises for their meetings
- These groups include a support group for breastfeeding mothers, Llanidloes Photographic Society, Llanidloes film club, a Welsh speaking club, an art gallery, life drawing classes, pilates, yoga and other specialist interest groups

We are actively reaching out to other community groups to offer safe space for them to hold their meetings. We also provide catering and drinks for wedding receptions, christenings, funeral teas and business meetings.

This aspect of the Old Mill Bar as a community resource is very important to me. Since moving to Llanidloes almost six years ago I have taken an active role in charity and community groups in the town:

- In 2014 I was Vice President of the Rotary Club of Llanidloes
- In 2015 I was President of the Rotary Club of Llanidloes
- From 2016 to 2017 I served as an Assistant District Governor for Rotary’s district covering Mid and North Wales
- From 2013 to 2015 I served on the Executive Committee of Llanidloes Rugby Club with responsibility for sponsorship. I brought many thousands of pounds worth of much needed funding into the club

- I have been an active supporter of and donor to the Noah's Ark appeal for the children's hospital in Cardiff together with my good friend, Les Jones MBE, the local ambassador for the charity
- I have participated in numerous fund-raising events for local and national charities, including Llanidloes Hospital, the Tenovus choir, local Scouts and Guides, various cancer charities, Llanidloes Rugby Club, The Rotary Cross Wales Walk, Llanidloes bonfire and fireworks night, disaster relief and providing shelter for victims of disasters worldwide and many, many others

I am a former police officer, having served in South London as a detective in the Metropolitan Police from 1976 to 1982. My time with the force has given me a sound working knowledge of criminal legislation (including the Licensing Acts) and an understanding of the standards of proof required for the submission of evidence in criminal and civil proceedings.

I am offering this information to the Licensing Committee to provide them with a balanced view of who I am and what I stand for. I hope it goes some way in countering the allegation that I run a "late night drinking destination" and that I allow drunkenness and loutish behaviour on my premises. The letter submitted by the applicant provides an inaccurate and false impression of my character. The letter has also proved to be insulting to many of my customers and I believe that some of them have responded by letter or email to the Licensing Officer in relation to comments made in the application.

Background to the current dispute with the applicant

There is a history of complaints by the applicant about nuisance from the Old Mill Bar over the last five years. In answer to a Freedom of Information request that I made earlier this month, I was informed by the Legal Services team at Powys County Council that three such complaints have been made in the last five years. I am sure that the Environmental Health department have been contacted many more times in the period prior to my taking over the bar but I understand that no specific remedial action was ever taken against the previous management. The previous management team did work with the Environmental Health team to implement measures to contain and control noise emanating from the bar.

I believe that the main reason for this sudden escalation of the vendetta against the bar to be an ongoing dispute between Park Dairies Ltd and the applicant in relation to use of a scrap of land that lies between the front of the Old Mill and the rear of the houses on the High Street. The applicant suggests that I am in cahoots with the landlords in this matter. Nothing could be further from the truth and I will deal with his allegations about actions on my part to show support later in this response. The applicant makes some reckless statements about my attitude and behaviour in this regard. They are reckless in the sense that he cannot possibly know them to be true. The impact on my family and our business is that we feel stressed and worried that we are caught in the crossfire in this dispute. The applicant sees this review as an opportunity to damage the landlords' revenue and business by having the Old Mil Bar closed.

Additional background information relates to the fact that when the previous management team applied for a premises license the applicant directed a campaign against the granting of the license, including posting letters through the doors of nearby houses. I fear that in granting the license and overturning the applicant's objections has led to the constant harassment of the business.

The applicant also objected to a recent planning application by Park Dairies Ltd to turn some of the upper floors of the building into flats. I am unsure as to the status of this planning application (I do

not live in my landlord's pocket) but I am sure that this latest dispute is the most likely cause of the current vendetta against our business.

Up until this request for a license review I believe that the applicants have been the sole complainants about the alleged nuisance caused by the bar. I was informed by the Licensing Officer during her brief visit to the bar to inform me of the review that there are now five other complainants. I have had no details of who these complainants are or where they live. I have been informed that the applicant has been canvassing support for this action by informing people that the Old Mill Bar want to take "their" garden from them. A member of my staff has witnessed the applicant's wife actively canvassing support in the High Street. Llanidloes is a small town and word soon spreads and this has been related to me by several sources. As I explained above, nothing could be further from the truth.

The applicant mentioned a meeting that I had with them in his home in February to discuss the previous complaints. My last words to him were to the effect that if there were any problems he should let me know and we can discuss them. I have not heard a single word in relation to these complaints from the applicant or his wife since that meeting. We have received phone calls from the applicant's wife complaining about people smoking outside the front door which were dealt with swiftly on each occasion.

There is a large section of the letter that deals with the dispute between our landlord and the applicant and his wife over continued use of the scrap of land between the properties. I do not feel that any of this is relevant to the Licensing Committee but I feel bound to address it here for two principal reason:

- I do not want this rambling series of musings, supposition and falsehood to be accepted by the hearing as having any substance of truth or fact; and
- To highlight the applicant's willingness to submit to the hearing information which he cannot possibly know to be true. I would submit (given the vindictive nature of this section and the obvious intent to cause harm to our businesses) that this has been submitted in a reckless manner

Much is made of the fire exit and windows on the corridor being "*flung wide open*" at 11 am on Saturday 5th May and that this "*new regime*" has been repeated on several occasions (even on a rainy evening! It can still be warm and muggy on a rainy evening). The applicant has most of his windows and doors at the rear of his premises in all weathers, and a member of staff has noted that he had his windows open on the same "*rainy evening*".

The applicant wrongly assumes that my landlord was at the meeting with Natalie Jones and Paul Bufton. This is not true, and he cannot know this to be true as he himself was not at the meeting. He also makes a great deal of the timing of letters sent by solicitors for both parties and the likelihood of his letter having been received by our landlord on Saturday May 5th (the infamous day of the door and window flinging incidents). This assumption is being used by the applicant to assert that it proves our preference "*to please a vindictive property owner rather than their residential neighbours or the Council's officers*". I consider this to be an insult to my judgment and character. In any event my notes inform me that I was told on Monday 7th May by Ioan Davies of the dispute over use of the garden. I had no prior knowledge of this, I have had nothing to do with Ioan's actions and I consider it to be a matter between our landlord and the applicant. I fail to understand how the applicant has connected these false representations of the facts to be able to conclude that I have deliberately embarked on this new course of door and window flinging in order to show support for the landlord.

The simple facts of the matter are that on very hot days we open the doors and windows in to cool the premises down (Saturday 5th May was a very hot day and the start of a mini heatwave over the May Bank Holiday weekend). There is no internal ventilation within the bar and it can get unbearably hot, particularly when the kitchen is serving food. We shut the doors and windows again when the bar has cooled down. This activity takes place only in the afternoons. I have made a note of an incident in mid-March when we hosted a dinner for eighteen ladies visiting the town. As I had been cooking for some hours it was decided to open the fire exit door. This resulted in the applicant's wife crossing the grass and forcefully slamming the door shut on three occasions. She subsequently rang the bar and my wife advised her that we would be keeping the door open, albeit just by a crack. There was no music on in the bar and the ladies were quiet and well-mannered. My wife went outside with an independent witness who verified that the noise from the bar was less than the noise from the surroundings and the High Street. Furthermore, a curtain had been drawn across the door by us to afford an element of privacy.

The applicant goes on to say that "*customers (are) apparently encouraged to walk across the courtyard and use the Emergency door as the entrance to or exit from the Bar*". This again is not true and how could the applicant possibly know this? I have a log of an occasion when eight visitors from Holland were in the bar having lunch on a hot Saturday afternoon. On leaving the premises some of them got confused as to how to leave the building and two used the Emergency exit and went out into the court yard. Their reward for this heinous offence was to have the applicant's wife shout at them, whereupon they ran back into the bar. They really enjoyed their meal and the town of Llanidloes but I wonder what lasting impression they left with after such treatment.

The applicant and his wife are guilty of some questionable behaviour themselves following the initiation of legal proceedings by our landlord in relation to their use of the garden. From April 20th (and on every day since) we noticed that a portable rotating clothes-line and two plastic chairs had been placed in the garden area a couple of meters from the Emergency exit and in the path of egress from the building and courtyard. These have stayed in this position since that date and washing is usually left on the clothes-line overnight. This area is classified under Fire Regulations as a "dispersal area" and should be free from articles or obstruction in event of the need to evacuate the building (as their presence could cause people leaving to fall over and block the exit and dispersal area). There follows an extract from Section 14 of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005:

Emergency routes and exits

14.— (1) Where necessary in order to safeguard the safety of relevant persons, the responsible person must ensure that routes to emergency exits from premises and the exits themselves are kept clear at all times.

(2) The following requirements must be complied with in respect of premises where necessary (whether due to the features of the premises, the activity carried on there, any hazard present or any other relevant circumstances) in order to safeguard the safety of relevant persons—

(a) emergency routes and exits must lead as directly as possible to a place of safety;

(b) in the event of danger, it must be possible for persons to evacuate the premises as quickly and as safely as possible;

Another nuisance caused by the applicants was to place their dustbin immediately next to the window by the bar area. The weather had been hot for some days and we noticed flies in and around this bin. We placed a note on the bin advising that as we were a regulated food establishment we could not tolerate the presence of the bin by the window. Thankfully it was later removed, but why was it put there in the first place? We have placed three plant pots under the window to prevent this happening again.

It seems that the applicant prefers to communicate to me through the various agencies at Powys County Council rather than to talk face to face. I have explained to the Powys County Council officers that I am always willing to meet with the applicant and to discuss their concerns. I have been completely reasonable at all times and have never said a bad word to or "oppressed" the applicant and his wife in any way. At the last brief meeting with the Licensing Officer she explained that the applicant felt that "the relationship between the business and himself had broken down". We have never had a relationship because he chose not to engage with me at all.

Surely the way to move forward in these circumstances is to engage in discussion with the other impacted parties. The applicant has preferred not to do this but to move immediately to a position where he has requested that the bar's license be removed. I can only wonder about the mindset of a person who would see three families lose their livelihood (and one family their home) for the sake of a scrap of land that they don't even own.

Complaints of noise

The applicant refers to many previous complaints of noise made against the bar over the last five years. My first complaints from the applicant's wife related to people smoking outside the entrance to the bar. These have all been recorded by me and dealt with immediately. In all but a few cases the alleged smokers had already been moved on by the time that I or my staff had gone to the door to investigate. Contrary to the applicant's assertion that "No Smoking" signs had been torn down, there are presently three such signs on the fence facing the entrance. One of the signs is made of metal, measuring 200cm x 200cm, advises customers that smoking upsets the neighbours and directs them to the smoking area at the rear. There are also signs posted in the bar.

The applicant also refers to a "tortuous route of 40 to 40 metres" to the smoking area. This is another fanciful statement on his behalf. Most of our customers who smoke are in the younger age groups and I'm sure that they can walk this small distance. In any event we habitually advise our customers to go through the Function Room and exit via the side door. In inclement weather the smokers can shelter under the porch by that door and have no need to huddle in the tunnel leading to the High Street. Smoking in the presence of non-smokers is anti-social in my opinion but people do smoke and I cannot change that. However, I believe that I have done all I can to prevent this being a nuisance to our neighbours on the High Street.

I am disappointed that I received letters from Environmental Health and Licensing officers in April about a complaint of noise over the Easter weekend. I arranged a meeting with the officers at the Old Mill Bar myself and gained some good information and advice (more of which later). This complaint has been wrapped up with other unsubstantiated gripes by the applicant who now demands that the bar be closed.

This complaint relates to a performance by DJs collectively known as Dub Silo. It appears that this group have caused complaints of noise in the past. The performance had been arranged by the previous management before I took over the license and went ahead as planned on the Saturday of the Easter Bank Holiday weekend. We had a Temporary Event Notice in force until 01:00 so I was present at all times.

During the event I walked around the outside of the bar on numerous occasions to check on noise levels and customers' behaviour in general. From the start of the performance I felt that the noise level was acceptable and was not at all causing a nuisance in the courtyard by the rear of the High Street. As the evening progresses I noticed that the music was getting louder so I had occasion to speak to the DJs about the volume and the level of bass through the amps. They complied with my

request. I did not at this stage have access to a sound meter and I could only make subjective and comparative assessments of the levels during the evening. The crowd were well behaved and good natured, the bar stopped serving alcohol at 01:00 and all customers left the bar by 01:20 and dispersed. While clearing up outside I did have occasion to speak to three men at about 01:30 who had come across Mount Street car park from the direction of Great Oak Street. They had obviously taken drink (not in the Old Mill) during the evening and were noisy. I asked them to leave quietly but I could still hear them noisily exiting the plot via the tunnel to the High Street.

I personally requested the meeting with the EHO and one of the Licensing Officers to discuss the complaint and the situation in general. We met in the bar (the landlord was not present at the meeting) and had a productive discussion about the previous complaints, the structure of the building and its location and recommendations to control noise leakage. I explained that I was happy for them to come to monitor the sound levels outside the bar at any time as I feel I need a professional and unbiased view of the actual level of noise leaking from the building.

Because of the points raised during this meeting I have introduced a series of measures to help to control noise levels within the bar and the Function Room:

- Consider the position of amps and speakers within the different parts of the bar in relation to the type of music being played
- Use the Function Room, with heavy curtains in place to contain some noise, for events that are anticipated to be louder than others
- Use the sound meter that we now own during events to monitor the level of noise at different points around the bar and Function Room
- Speak to DJs before their sets and be aware of the level of the bass channel through the amps. Advise DJs to turn bass and/or volume down if outside meter readings shown an increase in noise levels
- Advise DJs not to “build up” the volume of the music towards the end of their sets. If they want to do this then they must start their set at a much lower level
- Use only the in-house sound equipment which I have had checked and verified that it is suitable for our purposes
- Opening doors at the rear of the building (the side wall of the Function Room) to provide a smoking area and thus reduce noise emanating from the bar
- We have postponed indefinitely another planned performance by Dub Silo as a direct result of the applicant’s complaint and since then we have discontinued using another DJ who repeatedly ignored my advice on managing sound levels of the music he was playing.

I performed checks at another event (a lady’s 50th birthday party) on Saturday April 12th for which another Temporary Event Notice was in force. During the performance one of the DJs was advised three times to reduce the noise levels but subsequently went against my advice. I replaced him another DJ to complete the set. This DJ will not play again at the Old Mill. During that evening I monitored the noise level at various times and I have a record of these levels. Later that night I observed the applicant and his wife leaning out of a rear bedroom window pointing a mobile phone at the bar. They have been observed doing so on other occasions by members of my staff and some customers. Surely this would give a reading of the noise outside and not inside their home. In any event this will pick up noise from other licensed premises nearby. The applicant admits that the decibel meter on his phone is “not calibrated to courtroom standards”. For this reason I would prefer to rely on professional and unbiased evidence of noise levels.

The applicant lives on a busy High Street between three licensed premises. Just behind the Old Mill Bar is the Community Centre and 50 metres from that the premises of the Mount Inn. I have observed, and recorded, levels of noise coming from these premises on numerous occasions. One weekend relates to a music festival (known locally as King's Fest) which was held at the rugby club in Smithfield Street. My wife, Vicki and I all noticed that the noise coming from King's Fest was excessive up into the late evening. No complaint has been submitted by anyone in relation to this.

At the weekend a lot of noise comes from other premises in Great Oak Street and the High Street. One of the licensed premises hosts live, amplified music until late and I have observed and recorded this in my log. The other licensed premises has benches outside for smokers who can be very loud. At closing time there is always a lot of noise in this area. In the early hours of Sunday 12th April, I walked with my son back to his flat in Great Oak Street. As we walked along the High Street about ten customers were making noise leaving one pub. Outside the other pub there were police officers dealing with an incident so there was much disturbance here as well. I understand that no complaints have been made by the applicant in relation to this disturbance. I also understand that the Old Mill Bar is the only licensed premises that the applicant has ever complained about.

The applicant makes mention of noise from the regular Sunday evening folk session hosted at the bar. The applicant describes the music as "semi-acoustic". I don't know what is meant by this description but it suggests some form of amplification. This is not the case. The instruments are all acoustic and usually consist of guitars, mandolins, violins, woodwind instruments and accordion, accompanied by vocals. We are unaware of any complaint from the residents at 44 High Street and have never had a complaint from the applicant about the folk night. This is just another example of the applicant stating "facts" in his submission which he cannot possibly know to be true.

A guidance note to the Licensing objectives states that the third licensing objective, the prevention of public nuisance, will not extend to every activity which annoys another person but will cover behaviour which, when balanced against the public interest, is found to be unacceptable.

I am not saying that I have got it right yet, but I continue to explore solutions and methods for controlling the noise leakage. I feel that I should be given the opportunity to continue with my efforts (without further restriction or condition on the premises license). I take this matter very seriously. I do have respect for the fact that neighbours should be able to enjoy their homes. Contrary to the applicant's assertions I think that I can prove that I am actively taking measures to deal with nuisance He would not know of the improvements that we have made (and continue to explore) because he has never set foot in the bar and he has never taken up my previous offer to contact me if there was a problem that he wanted to highlight or discuss.

Criminal Activity

I see practically no evidence whatsoever in the applicant's submission to support the bar's involvement in or responsibility for criminal activity. I'm not even sure that what little information that he has provided constitutes a "crime". In any event he provides such little detail that it is difficult for me to respond in the manner that I would prefer (i.e. factually). He says that "several incidents have been reported to the police and logged by them". I will be making enquiries at Llanidloes Police Station later this week to see what crimes, if any, have been recorded. I would be obliged if the representative from the Police at the hearing could also provide precise details of these alleged crimes.

The location of the applicant's home means that rowdy customers from any of the licensed premises in the town could be passing and that it is they, and not customers of the Old Mill, that have

committed the alleged crimes. As stated before, there is a walkway through the Mount Street car park, across the Old Mill's land to the tunnel leading to the High Street. I have seen drunken men (not our customers) using this access and I have already described the generally rowdiness in the High Street/Great Oak Street areas after closing time.

Even if the alleged crimes were the responsibility of my customers (which I strenuously deny) surely this would be of little significance in comparison with other major crimes that have been committed in the area:

- Earlier in 2018 a girl was badly wounded by having a glass pushed into her face outside a pub in Great Oak Street.
- Some time before this at the same premises, a man had his femur broken by a drunken youth who had jumped on his leg
- A man was viciously beaten outside licensed premises in Longbridge Street and because of head injuries was in a coma for some time

The Old Mill Bar itself has had an incident where someone has obviously urinated in our entrance (I don't know if this is the incident that the applicant refers to). It was noticed on a Monday morning when the bar was being cleaned and I witnessed the stench myself. I had worked the evening before (a folk session) and had closed the bar without incident. Customers had left the bar using the side door to the function room. I am certain that none of these customers would have been the culprit

In any event I have never been visited by the local police to assist with the investigation of any alleged crime. We have only had the police attend the premises on one occasion to assist with the ejection of a customer who was threatening staff and other customers. The police officers arrived quickly and ejected this man who has since been banned from using the bar.

I take my responsibilities as a licensee very seriously and I have ample knowledge of the Licensing Act to be able to enforce it. I do not tolerate any criminal behaviour and I can assure the committee that my customers are not the sort of people who would engage in such activity.

The truth of the matter is that the applicant lives in a town with a good number of licensed premises, most of which have a later license to sell alcohol than the Old Mill Bar. The events (such as they are) could be attributed to anyone in town who is passing through the High Street area after drinking.

Finally, I understand that the Licensing Committee will take into account that certain criminal activity or associated problems may take place despite the best efforts of myself and my staff to run a reputable and lawful establishment.

Summary of response to the application for a License Review

There has been a lot of support for the Old Mill Bar since notification of the review consultation period was received. I have in my possession almost two hundred signatures on a petition that customers and visitors to the bar have signed. I have asked the signees to include their age and occupation in order to show that these are respectable people who would not cause nuisance or indulge in criminal activity or disorder. Some signees were visitors to the town and they were very complimentary about the bar. There is a good spread of ages: there are a number in the 18 to 40 age group but the majority are in their 50s, 60s 70s or older (our oldest patron is 92 years old and

celebrated his birthday in the bar recently). The last three birthday parties held at the bar have been a 50-year-old, a 60-year-old and a 65-year-old.

There is also a good spread of professions among those who signed the petition. They do not seem to me to be the type of people to frequent a *"late-night drinking destination"*. The following professions/jobs are represented in the petition:

- Education: lectures and teachers
- Medical profession: Doctors, nurses, a midwife, a pharmacist and an osteopath
- IT: Software engineers and developers
- Tradesmen: plumbers, electricians and builders
- Small business owners
- Musicians and artists
- Business consultants and accountants

I am also sending extracts from reviews of the Old Mill Bar from the website www.tripadvisor.com. All except one review (and this review is of dubious origin) give excellent reviews and ratings of the bar, highlighting many positive aspects of the premises. Once again, the list includes visitors to the town – a very much needed population of happy customers to boost local trade. Many have promised to come back.

The Licensing Officer will by now have received several letters and emails from customers. Many are outraged at the opinions and insults level at them by the applicant. I will let their views speak for themselves.

The applicant asserts that the building that houses the Old Mill Bar *"is in many ways unsuitable for a licensed premises"*. He obviously holds a different view than that of the Powys County Council Licensing Officers over the years that granted licenses to the premises for over 50 years as the United Services Club, more recently as The Old Mill Bar and again earlier this year when I was granted the license. He did not reside at his present address during the years that the United Services Club was in full swing so he does not know about the general atmosphere surrounding the Club during that period. Many of my regulars, who used to drink in the Club during those years, have laughed out loud at his assertion the members were *"generally quiet, well-behaved and considerate of their residential neighbours"*. I can assure the applicant that if he cared to speak to local people who are *"in the know"* he would gain much anecdotal evidence of the general noisiness and rowdiness that were frequently experienced, especially at weekends when dances and other functions were held.

As mentioned before in my submission, the applicant lives on a busy High Street in the midst of several licensed premises. The other licensed premises on occasion cause noise in the High Street. My staff and myself have logged dates when noise from these other premises has been at very loud levels. I understand that the applicant has never complained about these other premises. I mentioned that other functions are held nearby and again I have logged occasions when noise from these venues is clearly audible in the courtyard area by the bar. I understand that the applicant has made no complaint in relation to these functions.

The applicant's complaints have been selective and aimed only at the Old Mill Bar. He objected (unsuccessfully) against the granting of a license to the previous management team. Up to this point he has been that only person in the High Street that has complained about the Old Mill Bar. I have spoken to two of his close neighbours and they have informed me that they have no problem with

the operation of the bar. I cannot explain the applicant's reason for waging such a long-standing vendetta against the bar.

Having read through the applicant's submission several times I still cannot find much evidence for the complaints and the request for the license review. The document is mostly a flimsy construct of inaccuracy, hearsay, supposition and wild assumption. I request that the Licensing Committee dismiss his request to close the Old Mill Bar.

Trip Advisor ratings and comments for the Old Mill Bar, Llanidloes

On May 25th the following rating and review of the Old Mill Bar was published on the Trip Advisor website by "Graeme C". This man has posted 204 reviews of other establishments and has many followers of his posts on the website.

Community hub? No way

With some misgivings we decided to give this place a second chance having heard it was under new management. Had it improved? Sadly not. If it was my community I would hate to have such a noisy smelly neighbour. We didn't enjoy the shouting, swearing or fag smoke . It lacked any redeeming features so we quickly downed our drinks, cut our losses and left for somewhere that was a proper community hub

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g1071015-d5483060-r582576350-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html

The same "Graeme C" had previously posted a review of the Old Mill Bar in November 2015:

One to avoid

Llani is a lovely town to visit-vibrant and individual. That made it doubly disappointing to visit the Old Mill. Hidden away- and deserves to be. We agree with the previous comments about the staff and the quality of the food and drink. The evening we visited the place had an air of failure about it- like their website. The music was far too loud and it had smokers outside leaving doors open for the smell to drift back in. We didn't last the evening- Llani has so many good places as an alternative. Avoid!

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g1071015-d5483060-r323853518-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html

Some investigation of the Trip Advisor reviews by this person and on the LinkedIn and Companies House websites led me to believe that there is in fact a connection between the writer of this review and the applicant. I certainly do not recognise the bar or its customers from the description of the "alleged" visit in May 2018 and I am taking the matter up with Trip Advisor.

Many of our customers have felt disgusted and insulted by this post and in response we have received approximately twenty five 5-star reviews from our regulars which challenge this review. They also directly contradict the description of the bar and its customers put forward in the applicant's letter to the Licensing Officer.

The comments have been copied on the following pages. I have underlined some text (but made no other changes to it) where I believe it disproves or disagrees with the applicant's wrong impression of the bar. He has never set foot in the place since it was refurbished in January 2018 and I believe that he paid one visit to the bar in the last 5 years.

I have the opinion that the attached information (real, honest opinions from people who frequent the bar) show that the applicant has been reckless in his statements about the Old Mill Bar. Many of the comments are from visitors to Llanidloes so I believe that the Old Mill Bar is providing a great service in promoting the town and all it has to offer.

Customer reviews of the Old Mill Bar on Trip Advisor

Lovely friendly place. *Submitted June 10th*

During a brief stay in Llanidloes, we popped in here for a drink. We were given a lovely welcome and found the atmosphere very warm which is fitting given that we've always found Llanidloes to be such a happy, friendly place. We'll be back next time!

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-q1071015-d5483060-r586632112-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html#

A very special place. *Submitted June 8th*

The Old Mill in Llanidloes, Mid-Wales, is a very special. Part of its charm is that you can't pin it down - pub,bar,bistro. It's all these things, but quintessentially, itself.

Excellent food, real ale, good election of spirits. Good to visit in the day (absolutely child friendly) or the evening. The ambience is wonderfully quirky, the music superb. No juke box, but the marvellous Radio 6 playing or, even? playlist compiled by The Old Mill's regulars! All this only if there is no live music, and there often is, whether that be excellent gigs, or music sessions or open mics.

The Old Mill. A very special place, in a very special town.

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-q1071015-d5483060-r586632112-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html#

A good meeting place¹. *Submitted June 8th*

We met up with family here at the Old Mill and as with our previous visits this venue suited our purpose as it was quiet, friendly and excellent food.

The staff were lovely and helpful with food and drink suggestions. As this is a unique venue, not a pub, not a restaurant but it has its own ambience, quiet, unconventional, safe and quirky - there is so much to look at around you with interesting wall displays!

We had a great time and this will always be our first port of call when we are in the area!

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-q1071015-d5483060-r586632112-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html#

Friendly place with good food. *Submitted June 8th*

My visit was for lunch. Nice ambience. Lovely pea and mint soup! I will definitely visit again.

The Old Mill is right in the middle of the town, slightly tucked away. Worth seeking out if you are in the area.

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-q1071015-d5483060-r586632112-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html#

Best venue in town. *Submitted June 8th*

The Old Mill has established itself as an integral part of the Llanidloes community. Providing a place not only for people to meet for a drink but also a creative space for art, music, dancing and comedy.

It's quirky decor, delicious food and lovely new family owners are propelling it even further into a place that this town can not do without. It is family and dog friendly and I would highly recommend it to anyone fancying something a little different. This is the Old Mill not the run of the mill. Can't wait to come back again soon !!!!

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-q1071015-d5483060-r586632112-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html#

The old Mill. *Submitted June 8th*

We came here for afternoon drinks and breakfast in the morning. Lovely friendly staff, and quirky decor, the food was lovely and all cooked fresh to order using local produce. Great price too! Would highly recommend

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-q1071015-d5483060-r585584267-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html#

What more would you want...*Submitted June 8th*

Perfect atmosphere... great folk... toppop food.
Great ales to accompany the food and always friendly.

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-q1071015-d5483060-r585584267-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html

Brunch Life Saver. *Submitted June 8th*

We had the most amazing brunch at the Old Mill a couple of weeks ago. My son and my husband had the breakfast burrito, I had the pancakes with caramelised bananas and toffee sauce. Fantastic food, really quick service and excellent value for money. We were stuffed! We love the Old Mill for it's friendly staff, unusual décor and recommend to anyone and everyone. Have also been to a rock & roll event with a tribute act singing as The Everley Brothers, Frankie Valli, Buddy Holly and other 60's singers; birthday parties and other music events. This is the only place in town where a good night out is guaranteed without any rowdy or fighty people in sight. Keep it up!

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-q1071015-d5483060-r585584267-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html#

An absolute gem. *Submitted June 8th*

The Mill is a wonderfully diverse & eclectic venue & an absolute hub of the community. We love going daytime, evening, with the children or without. We've always been very welcomed by staff & customers alike & had an amazing time. There is nothing else like it in the area & we travel a good distance just to go there as do many others, it offers a pop up kitchen & many charity events including things as diverse as an African vegan pop up kitchen.

It has an annual comedy festival & several open mic nights a year, which is wonderful & encourages local emerging talent a platform to gain confidence & test their material. Its also a major part of the local community, many charity events are organised there. The food is amazing including wonderful breakfasts. Staff are efficient & courteous. There is nowhere better. Highly recommended

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g1071015-d5483060-r585584267-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html#

A great place . Submitted June 8th

Have been here on numerous occasions and always felt welcome ,warm and friendly and family orientated .lovely place to visit .

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g1071015-d5483060-r585584267-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html

A hidden gem. Submitted June 8th

The Old Mill is a delightfully different cafe, bar, music venue,gallery, and meeting place. It is equally welcoming to children, young mothers, 92 year olds and everyone in between. Llanidloes is very lucky to have such a vibrant and varied venue. A great choice of drinks and beverages and good food.If you live in Llani or are just visiting it is well worth calling in.

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/ShowUserReviews-g1071015-d5483060-r585584267-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html

A central part of our community. Submitted June 8th

This bar is a wonderful community hub, without which many of us in Llanidloes would not know what we would do... Along with the adjoining Function Room hall it hosts various and regular music, theatre and food events, many are family friendly. The bar is more of a hybrid cafe bar, kids are welcome, the food is great and good value and you can sit and drink tea, beer or cocktails, whatever does it for you! It's a bar that if you are alone you can feel comfortable at being there, you could take your granny there or go out on a date, it all works!

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g1071015-d5483060-Reviews-or10-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html

Great friendly Venue in Llanidloes. Submitted June 8th

The Old Mill in Llanidloes, Powys, is a much needed venue for music, went to a birthday party here,we find the atmosphere lovely, relaxed and friendly. We love visiting here to see different musicians, or DJs play ! A great venue, just what is needed for Llanidloes! Apparently they do great food too, I cant recommend it highly enough - visit there and have a great night!

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g1071015-d5483060-Reviews-or10-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html

A Bar and Arts Venue on the Up and Up. *Submitted June 8th*

We have been regular customers at The Old Mill for about four years now, and I have also organised a major charity fundraiser in the building by hiring the Function Room next door and having exclusive use of the bar on an evening when it would normally be closed. The bar staff were kindness itself and helped us in more ways than we could ever expected

In recent months, since New Year, the management has changed and the new licencees have invested a good deal of time, effort and money in rejuvenating all the facilities, the loos and kitchens especially and extensive reflooring in the large public space. Since they re-opened after the refurb the place has been spotless, fresh, tidy, and well lit, and so welcoming.

I notice there has been a very disparaging review a week ago that seems to have upset a lot of the loyal Llani folk who love what has been done with the old Social Club in recent years. I do not recognise the place from Graeme C's description. Fag smoke? Where and how? Only in the outdoor area perhaps, and the same goes for all licensed premises in town if one sits out of doors. Shouting and swearing? Again, if this was outside, that could describe half a dozen pubs or more in the town, on a Friday or Saturday. Poor food? How does Graeme C know if - as he says - they had one drink and left?

Do yourselves a favour, and go for brunch on a Saturday or Sunday at around noon. The choice is excellent and the standard of cooking superb. Make your own mind up!

And if you want a night out, you can choose between pop-up restaurant nights with a variety of world cuisines, or listen and dance to live music or DJs in various genres and styles. Sunday night is Fok Session night, always well attended and well supported. And which other bar in the mid-Wales area has a tuned and well-maintained baby grand for the use of visiting musicians and talented locals?

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g1071015-d5483060-Reviews-or10-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html

Great friendly Venue in Llanidloes. *Submitted June 8th*

The Old Mill in Llanidloes, Powys, is a much needed venue for music, went to a birthday party here, we find the atmosphere lovely, relaxed and friendly. We love visiting here to see different musicians, or DJs play! A great venue, just what is needed for Llanidloes! Apparently they do great food too, I can't recommend it highly enough - visit there and have a great night!

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A safe' friendly and happening family run bar. *Submitted June 8th*

I don't live in Llani but The Old Mill has been my regular haunt for several years now... it has gone from strength to strength since its recent change in ownership and continues to offer good

food, organise fun events and provide a venue for a myriad of community groups. I would recommend this place to anyone and everyone... a great place to make new friends! :-)

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g1071015-d5483060-Reviews-or10-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html

Great atmosphere. Submitted June 8th

A great pub with a friendly atmosphere. Always felt welcome. Suits any age of person. Great events an asset to the town.

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g1071015-d5483060-Reviews-or10-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html

Warm friendly welcome. Submitted June 1

The Old Mill is a wonderful welcoming place. After tasteful and sympathetic refurbishment, it is a pleasure to go there. The premises are very clean and the owners and staff are very attentive. I had the home made crumpets..which have to be the best I have eaten. I would highly recommend this community spirited and friendly hub of Llanidloes.

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g1071015-d5483060-Reviews-or10-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html

Fab for a single person wanting to beat the blues! Submitted June 1

After my husband's death, this is where I began to get out and socialise again. I suffer from social anxiety and have trouble going to pubs on my own, but this is such a friendly and community minded place that I have had the confidence to go there when there's been music on. Its relaxed, bohemian atmosphere supports the creative spirit and makes it so easy to feel right at home. It suits all ages: my mother, who was elderly and terminally ill with cancer, yet young in spirit, was happy to join me there a few times. Don't get me wrong - the atmosphere is anything but placid, but it's not steaming with teenage frenzy either. I can't even begin to say how much it means to someone single and anxious like myself (50+) to have somewhere to go for all sorts of fun events that's centrally situated and easy to access, and has an upbeat, energised atmosphere that gets you out of your blues. The DJ's and the food has always been top notch with lots of consideration for vegetarians. Before the Old Mill came into existence, life in Llani was just dull!

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g1071015-d5483060-Reviews-or10-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html

I always have a lovely time. Submitted June 1

I have frequented the Old mill for many an occasion, especially the dance nights. Which are much needed for those that seek excellent music and to be surrounded by lovely people. Having travelled the world, the Old Mill is reminiscent of so many lovely places in my mind and would recommend to anyone who remembers what a real pub and music venue is.

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g1071015-d5483060-Reviews-or10-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html

Amazing little gem with the best of music, food and lovely people. *Submitted June 1*

I highly recommend the old mill to anyone coming or passing by llani... Local slang for Llanidloes.. ... I miss it soooo much and I wish I could come back even for a pint ... Hopefully I will do so in the near future... Great music scene, extremely good food locally sourced and exotically cooked...

A Welsh must when around Powys....

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g1071015-d5483060-Reviews-or10-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html

Relaxed happy and inviting. *Submitted June 1*

Ive been to this venue a few time for music nights amd friends birthdays. Its absolutly never a let down i find it hard to relax in most places i go but here i feel completly relaxed and very happy xxx the food ive been told is fantastic although as i live in Newtown i havent ventured that far yet but i cant wait too . Well done to the new management who have an air of friendly host most things are never too much trouble xxx lots of love guys and will definitely be seeing you soon xxx

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g1071015-d5483060-Reviews-or20-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html

So many events, so much community *Submitted June 1*

The Old Mill is a place to meet friends, to listen to folk music and local sessions, to host community and charity events, to have a cup of tea, a homemade crumpet.... It's pub/ coffee house/ tea shop/ friendly, unsleazy bar... Wonderful landlords, fantastic nation-quality events... it's one of town institutions (yes!) that attracts people and tourist money from afar. Don't listen to the haters! Listen to the lovers, of whom the Old Mill has so many.

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g1071015-d5483060-Reviews-or20-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html

Lovely friendly place. *Submitted June 1*

Visited recently and found it so welcoming, lovely buzz of local people enjoying themselves, and it offers such a variety of events, something for everyone. Wish we had a community resource like this in our neck of the woods.

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g1071015-d5483060-Reviews-or20-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html

Fab venue! *Submitted June 1*

The Old Mill is a special place, def worth checking out, particularly if you like things on the alternative side. Its really popular among people of all ages who love music, dancing, to meet for a drink, or celebrate a party or tuck into a tasty sunday brunch. Lots of different nights & events are hosted there. It's cool, friendly & relaxed. I've enjoyed so many evenings there, feel very lucky to have it on the doorstep. A word of caution - it's possible that some negative reviews on here may be associated with neighbours who are trying to give the place a bad name. Worth bearing in mind xx

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g1071015-d5483060-Reviews-or20-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html

Lunch. *Submitted June 1*

What a fan place to come! I love to come here for my lunch on a regular basis. The Old Mill has brought so much to Llanidloes! Great food, great music, great people, great beer! Great venue! The town would be alot less without The Old Mill!

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g1071015-d5483060-Reviews-or20-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html

What a hidden treasure! *Submitted June 1*

I now visit this bar regularly, appreciating the great beers and good food, as well as its quirky nature and welcoming staff. I've also been to some of the music nights there, spanning a range of genres, and have been greatly impressed at what I have heard in a small town in the middle of Wales - not always what some visitors would expect, but not such a surprise for us 'locals' which have long appreciated the vibrant arts community in mid-Wales. Truly an inspiring facility for the whole community, and one to which I will be returning regularly!

https://www.tripadvisor.co.uk/Restaurant_Review-g1071015-d5483060-Reviews-or20-The_Old_Mill_Bar-Llanidloes_Powys_Wales.html