



Tasmin Hardy
Business Compliance & Public Safety Unit
Housing and Public Protection Service
Northumberland County Council
Stakeford Depot
East View
Stakeford
NE62 5TR

5/28/2020

Dear Tasmin

It is noted that the Cock and Bull currently are applying for a variation to their licence to allow 'off-sales'.

Earlier, as Town Clerk I requested clarification about the regulations on 'off-sales' from you as NCC Licencing Officer. Your response was:

'In order to restrict the sale of alcohol to unopened containers it would require a condition on the licence. At present there is no such condition.

Should the application be granted in its current format it would allow the patrons to buy alcohol to consume outside the premises (it does not stipulate where they can consume it).

The consumption of alcohol is not a licensing activity and so any restriction would need to relate to the sale of the alcohol.

The application also requests the extension for the sale until 11pm Monday to Saturday and Sunday until 10:30pm.'

The applicant is now asking to be allowed to serve alcohol in a pop up at the nearby Town Square. The authority should be aware that to do so would contravene the Public Spaces Protection Order for Amble currently in place- which bans alcohol in a public space- because the alcohol would need to be carried from his premises to there across such a designated area. The order specifies that it not only applies to consuming alcohol but also to an intention to consume.

In the current coronavirus situation, Amble Town Council cannot physically meet to discuss this application but, as allowed under the new regulations, are holding meetings electronically and have agreed to **object** to this application. In September last year members agreed to send a letter to NCC where issues with the Cock and Bull were raised. I draw your attention to these quotations from the letter which addressed problems already occurring as these are pertinent to Amble Town Council's view on this variation application.

Quotes from letter sent to NCC September 2019:

'Although ATC encourage and support new businesses coming into the town, since the day this venture opened we have been subjected to several complaints from members of the Public as well as from Councillors.'

'The walkway in front of the premises and towards the Public Toilets is being used as an extension of the drinking area and as such is resulting in other members of the Public having difficulty accessing the Toilets. In some instances, members of the public have been subject to verbal harassment especially young females and family members as the customers tend to be congregated nearer the entrance to the Ladies Toilet. This is also being used as a smoking area with the resulting detritus from that.'

'The area in front of the premises has become a social drinking area with the provision of bench seats and tables for customer usage and occasionally becoming again a point of intimidation for those trying to access the Public Toilets. According to the planning application for change of use, this area is not part of that and it was therefore understood that permission to use it had not been sought. Overflow customers have been observed in the adjacent Memorial Gardens and even sitting on the War Memorials drinking alcohol!

It should be noted that the whole of Amble is subject to a byelaw preventing the consummation of alcohol in Public spaces. The licensee was made aware of this byelaw by ATC and also by NCC Licensing Officers but still the practice continues.

'The business owner claimed that his lawyer and NCC were addressing the issue of the leased land as he had understood that he was leasing the area in question. In the future, if he is granted a lease, the tables would return.'

The applicant was then subject to an enforcement order to remove the tables and seating.

'We now understand the noise levels have been increased by customer noise which dramatically increases in volume as the evening progresses much to the detriment of those living in George St.- enhanced further by the drinking outside.'

'Whilst there are a number of serious concerns, it was conveyed to the business owner that it is believed the Cock and Bull could be a great asset to the Town and should be encouraged to continue to trade. ATC have no objections to this and would willingly encourage them if they abide by the guidelines and/or attempt to alleviate the concerns raised by working with the community and NCC.'

'It was pointed out that if they are seen to be deliberately flouting the rules (whether by design or ignorance) then there is a serious possibility that others may follow their example, especially if it is perceived that no actions have been taken. An example of this is the Byelaw; in the past, anti-social behaviour, broken glasses and bottles, fighting and swearing established the town centre as a wild area during Friday/Saturday evenings creating a no-go area for the general public which had a negative effect on Amble and Tourism. This has now been transformed by the introduction of this bye law which has enhanced the town's reputation into a 'go-to' place for all and a welcoming environment for visitors'

[For information: The Public Spaces order is due for renewal later this year. It has been noted that without 24/7 policing, the order is difficult to enforce, but the fact that it is there does deter many people.]

In the town, concerns have been voiced about the understanding that the applicant has negotiated a lease of an area of the town square- under Amble Development Trust's responsibility- subject to the granting of a licence. This would now appear to be well founded as the application for variation refers to the Town Square.



Following your advice, it would appear that should this variation be granted, patrons could purchase glasses of alcohol and then take them anywhere in the outside vicinity of the premises to consume as well as purchasing them from the pop up to consume there.

Whilst the Town Square is the responsibility of Amble Development Trust, Northumberland County Council placed a covenant within the land transfer to them which states:

To use the property as a Town Square and for no other purpose whatsoever.

The community of Amble have always understood that whilst the area would be available for intermittent community events for them to partake in and enjoy, which is the usual expectation for a town square, that at other times they would be free to use this as a public space and not be impeded by a venture such as being requested here which once granted permission could be there every day of the week.

Yours sincerely,

Vicki Smith
Town Clerk

Cock and Bull

Jeffrey Watson

3 April 2020 at 13:46

To: Tasmin Hardy <tasmin.hardy@northumberland.gov.uk>

Hi Tasmin

I wish to formally object to this application.

The proposed development would go against what we have been trying to do in Amble i.e preventing crime and disorder and public nuisance in the Town

There is a bye law against drinking on the streets and this is in conflict with that law

Several nearby residents have complained to me about noise as well

These are the reasons for my objections

best

Jeff Watson

County Councillor Amble West with Warkworth

Jeff Watson