

Notice of Representation

Members of the public can submit representations in objection to or in support of the premises licence applications, within the 28 day consultation period.

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The licensing objectives are the prevention of crime and disorder, prevention of public nuisance, public safety and the protection of children from harm.

Please be aware that where representations are considered relevant copies of the representation will be provided to the applicant and the Licensing Sub Committee.

Please note: Objections will only be considered where a name and address are supplied.

Name: SUSAN HEDLEY Address: GRIANAN, ROTHBURY ROAD, LONGFRAMLINGTON,

MORPETH, NE65 8AH. Licensing Objective: ALL 4 LICENSING OBJECTIVES

Premises: MARTINS, SANDERSON ARCADE, MORPETH, NE61 1NS.

Reason for Representation:

(continue on separate sheet if necessary)

CONCERNS THAT NONE OF THE FOUR LICENSING OBJECTIVES CAN BE MET IN THIS LOCATION IN THE BUS STATION, AND THAT IN THIS PLACE OPEN FOR ESSENTIAL USE BY ALL MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC DURING ALL OF THE PROPOSED LICENSING HOURS, THE PREVALENCE OF CRIME AND DISORDER AND PUBLIC NUISANCE, AND THE RISKS TO PUBLIC SAFETY AND THE PROTECTION OF CHILDREN FROM HARM ARE ALL LIKELY TO BE INCREASED BY THIS PROPOSAL, AND SO, IN THE LONG-TERM, THIS WOULD CONSTITUTE A MAJOR PUBLIC NUISANCE TO THE COMMUNITY AS A WHOLE AND ITS SURROUNDING SETTLEMENTS BY DISCOURAGING PASSENGERS FROM USING THE BUS STATION, WHICH WOULD MAKE BUS SERVICES LESS FINANCIALLY VIABLE, AND ULTIMATELY DAMAGE MORPETH'S PUBLIC TRANSPORT INFRASTRUCTURE CREATING AN ADVERSE IMPACT WHICH WOULD DISPROPORTIONATELY DISADVANTAGE GROUPS WITH PROTECTED CHARACTERISTICS AND OTHER VULNERABLE AND DISADVANTAGED MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY.

FOR DETAILS, PLEASE SEE THE ATTACHED 5 PAGES WHICH I HAVE TYPED FOR EASE OF READING.

Signed



Date 3rd October 2023.

Please send this notice to the address below:

Licensing Department

Business Compliance & Public Safety Unit

Public Protection Service

Northumberland County Council

West Hartford Business Park

Cramlington, NE23 3JP

Telephone: 01670 623856

Email: licensing01@northumberland.gov.uk

Representation from Susan Hedley re. Premises Application for Martin's, 1, Sanderson Arcade, Morpeth, posted on Tuesday, 3rd October, 2023.

Licensing objective:

Please note that, because these premises are in the bus station, I am sending this notice of representation with regard to all 4 licensing objectives:

prevention of public nuisance; public safety; protection of children from harm; prevention of crime and disorder.

[Firstly, I am concerned that in Northumberland County Council's public notices in the Morpeth Herald newspaper on Thursday 21st September 2023, and on the blue notice displayed at the premises for which the licence has been requested, the address for sending representations in writing to was given as Licensing Section, Northumberland County Council, Stakeford Depot, East View, Stakeford, Choppington, NE62 5TR, but on this Notice of Representation Form downloaded from the Register of Current Premises Applications on the Northumberland County Council website after these notices were posted, the address is the Licensing Department at West Hartford Business Park.

When I rang Northumberland County Council Enquiries late on Wednesday 28th September 2023, and was put through to someone in the correct department, she told me that the correct address to send representations to was the West Hartford address on this form, and seemed concerned to be told that the notices on the premises still displayed the Stakeford Depot address. This suggests to me that there is no formal arrangement for forwarding representations to the West Hartford address if they have been sent to the Stakeford Depot as the notice instructs.

Given that the users of the bus station are mostly those who cannot use cars, such as the elderly and vulnerable, or who cannot afford to run cars, and therefore might not be able to afford to go online either, and I know that most of the elderly and vulnerable on my bus do not use computers, these notices will be the only information which they have access to about this premises application, and these are the people who are most likely to feel intimidated by the availability of alcohol in the bus station, so it is important that any notices of representation which they send should be available for proper consideration, and not at risk of being mislaid at the wrong address.]

1) I have been using Morpeth Bus Station for over 50 years, and have seen that after Arriva closed their office there in the early 2000s so that it was unstaffed, there was no one there to control the teenagers who then felt able to congregate there at night, and so use of buses on Sundays and after office hours fell drastically because passengers felt too unsafe to use the bus station in case they were overwhelmingly outnumbered by the congregating teenagers with abusive and threatening ring-leaders.

When the new bus station opened in the Sanderson arcade, where there was CCTV and security staff, and it looked like one of the best in the region, people gradually started to make more use of the buses outside of office hours, but it took about 2 years for a full range and greater number of passengers to come back to using the bus station outside of office hours.

I am therefore of the opinion that anything which again discouraged passengers from thinking that they could use the bus station safely, and therefore reduced the number of people feeling able to use the buses when they need to, would constitute a public nuisance, both to individuals and to the sustainability of the community, because it would make bus services outside of peak hours less financially viable, and effectively inaccessible to the more vulnerable sections of the community, so resulting in both more journeys by less ecological forms of transport, and more expensive forms of

support being required for people who were rendered more housebound, and therefore possibly less healthy in mind and body.

2) It should also be borne in mind that the premises are right beside the automatic door to the bus station. The doors to the individual stops are only supposed to be used for entering or alighting from buses, because they otherwise lead straight onto the access and turning area for the buses with no separation between vehicles and pedestrians. The only other door available to bus users is at the opposite end of the bus station from the premises, but this is heavy and not automatic, so is difficult for anyone who is frail. Having worked in shops in Morpeth for almost 20 years and got to know a very large proportion of Morpeth's residents, I am aware of the various problems that its alcoholics and the families and other people who support them face. Alcoholics can probably no longer drive, and a great many are trying to recover, but this can mean that they are forced to use buses to get around, and are too frail to use anything but the automatic door right beside the premises for which the licence has been requested. If the licence is granted, this will be putting the temptation of alcohol right beside these people, with no other way around it for them.

I would therefore regard this is a public nuisance and an increased risk to public safety, both to the health of individuals who are trying to avoid the effects of alcoholism and the severe and immediate dangers of relapse, and as increasing the risk of crime and disorder should people who have managed to be abstemious succumb to the temptation of alcohol which is right beside them whilst they are waiting for their bus.

Public Safety and Prevention of Crime and Disorder

3) Even without the immediate availability of alcohol, I would say that Morpeth bus station fails in these objectives, because there are not enough forces available to maintain public safety.

It seems to most of the bus-users who I speak to that the hours and visibility of the security provided by the Sanderson Arcade has been reduced in the bus station over the last year or so. This means that at the beginning of the summer holidays, and again in the autumn at the beginning of the school year, a new cohort of younger teenagers is added to those who are already there from early evening, and, as I use the bus station for variable shifts on all days of the week, and at all hours until 8.35 pm, I know that they can be there until at least that late time of the evening. They are mostly not harming anyone, but they constantly vape inside the bus station, and if any of the elderly ladies who aren't used to it remonstrate, they are met with a shocking level of abuse. I have also witnessed the teenagers riding a bike up and down the bus station and doing wheelies, regardless of the safety of the frail or partially sighted, heavily laden, or with pushchairs and small children, who aren't mobile enough to step out of their way easily. The Sanderson Arcade security guards used to deal with this as far as they were able, but now that they have less of a presence, and seem to disappear entirely by 5 pm, the teenagers are free to do as they please, since they take no notice of anyone else who remonstrates with them.

I have also seen a local alcoholic in the early part of the evening threatening to stab people (although without having a knife visible), when there was a full range of passengers numerous in the bus station, including families with young children who were very frightened. He was regularly in the bus station and menacing the staff in the premises in question. The police often attend, but not always, and in the case of teenagers in the evening, if the police appear at all, it is usually in a vehicle which the teenagers see in time to escape through another door, or just have a chat with, and as soon as the police leave, the teenagers come straight back and go on with vaping or whatever else they were doing just as before. Some of the worst of the teenagers do seem to have forsaken the

bus station over this summer, but from years of observation I know that this is cyclical, and there will be more very bad behaviour within a year or two.

If this licence is granted, to maintain public safety, it will require a much more extensive and effective security presence at the very least.

4) To date, the presence of the staff in the newsagents which is located in the premises in question have been a hugely positive element in maintaining public safety, because they have good communications with the Sanderson Arcade staff and the police, but in recent years this has been reduced to a single member of staff per shift.

If they are engaged in the added responsibilities of selling alcohol, and the extra danger which it poses to them, they will have less time to devote to paying attention to the general behaviour in the bus station, and if they are selling later in the evening, there will be no-one consistently available, if available at all, to help them if they are threatened, and this may result in an unusually high turnover of shop staff familiar with their customers' vulnerabilities.

The plan submitted with the licensing application appears to me to show the premises as they are at present, with no indication that there will be any modifications. It does not show the premises in relation to the rest of the bus station, so please see my plan attached on page 5 to explain my concerns.

If the premises remain in the form which they are now in, with a single member of staff, they will be unable to have any view as to whether they are proxy selling, i.e. selling to adults who are buying on behalf of those who are under age, because the premises are around the corner from most of the bus concourse, and facing in the opposite direction.

A single member of staff will be unable to leave the premises, and could indeed be trapped behind the counter by aggressive members of the public, because the staff have only one exit, which is right beside the public access to the premises. Their counter barely separates them from their customers by an arms-length, and their only protection at present is a Perspex screen. The most regular service into the bus station is the Arriva 35, which serves Pegswood and Ashington, and I often see groups of people coming into Morpeth on that service for a night out. On their way back later at night, these groups may well have drunk too much already, and be a threat to the member of staff in the premises if they are refused the sale of more alcohol.

Even if groups or individuals are still in a fit condition to buy alcohol, the fact that there is seating at all of the stands will be a temptation for them to sit and drink there, and there will be no-one available to prevent them, so any licence granted to the premises will effectively operate as a licence for people to sit and drink in the whole bus station, and not just as a licence to the premises for selling alcohol to be drunk elsewhere.

Given that alcohol brings about a much more immediate and dangerous effect than the age-related products which are already sold by the premises, which are tobacco products, this will greatly increase the risk of crime and disorder and threats to public safety in the bus station, not to mention the public nuisance to bus drivers and bus passengers.

I have heard of other places where seating has been removed to reduce the likelihood of people sitting there and indulging in anti-social behaviour, but if this were an eventual outcome, this would be a huge public nuisance to those who cannot stand for long when they are waiting for a bus, especially when it is late or an infrequent connection, and would have a disproportionately adverse effect on those with protected characteristics, not to mention the nuisance to the community by making the use and so the running of public transport less viable.

The automatic door already seems to be locked at certain times when it might discourage the teenagers from congregating there, so the bus station has already been made less accessible to frail passengers at certain times.

Since the bus station toilets were closed during Covid, and then converted to a nail bar, there are no public toilets in the bus station, or anywhere near after shops close in the evening, except in other

licenced premises, so it would probably result in a deterioration of the health and safety of the bus station and its surroundings if people could buy alcohol there.

There is also the likely reduction of protection of children from harm, because so many of the school children wait for buses there in the afternoon, and also congregate there on their way to school, in numbers which are impossible to keep under close surveillance, so students over 18 or other adults could easily buy alcohol for younger children and quickly hand it over without being detected. At these busy times there might also be increased mixing of schoolchildren with adults who have drunk too much alcohol to maintain sound judgement.

I have always been of the opinion that the teenagers who congregate in the bus station, though they might give the impression of appearing to be intimidating in significant numbers, are actually better being in the bus station where everyone there can see them, than if they were congregating somewhere where no-one can see them. However, given their age and the time of night that they are gathering there, and the fact that I rarely see them using mobile phones, I suspect that they might be from challenging backgrounds, and that they might be more at risk than the rest of their age group. The selling of alcohol in a place where they congregate is likely to pose an extra risk to them directly, but it might also attract more dangerous people to the location who could lure them into more criminal activities when there is still a chance that they could be pointed in another direction if they have got no further than congregating in the bus station.

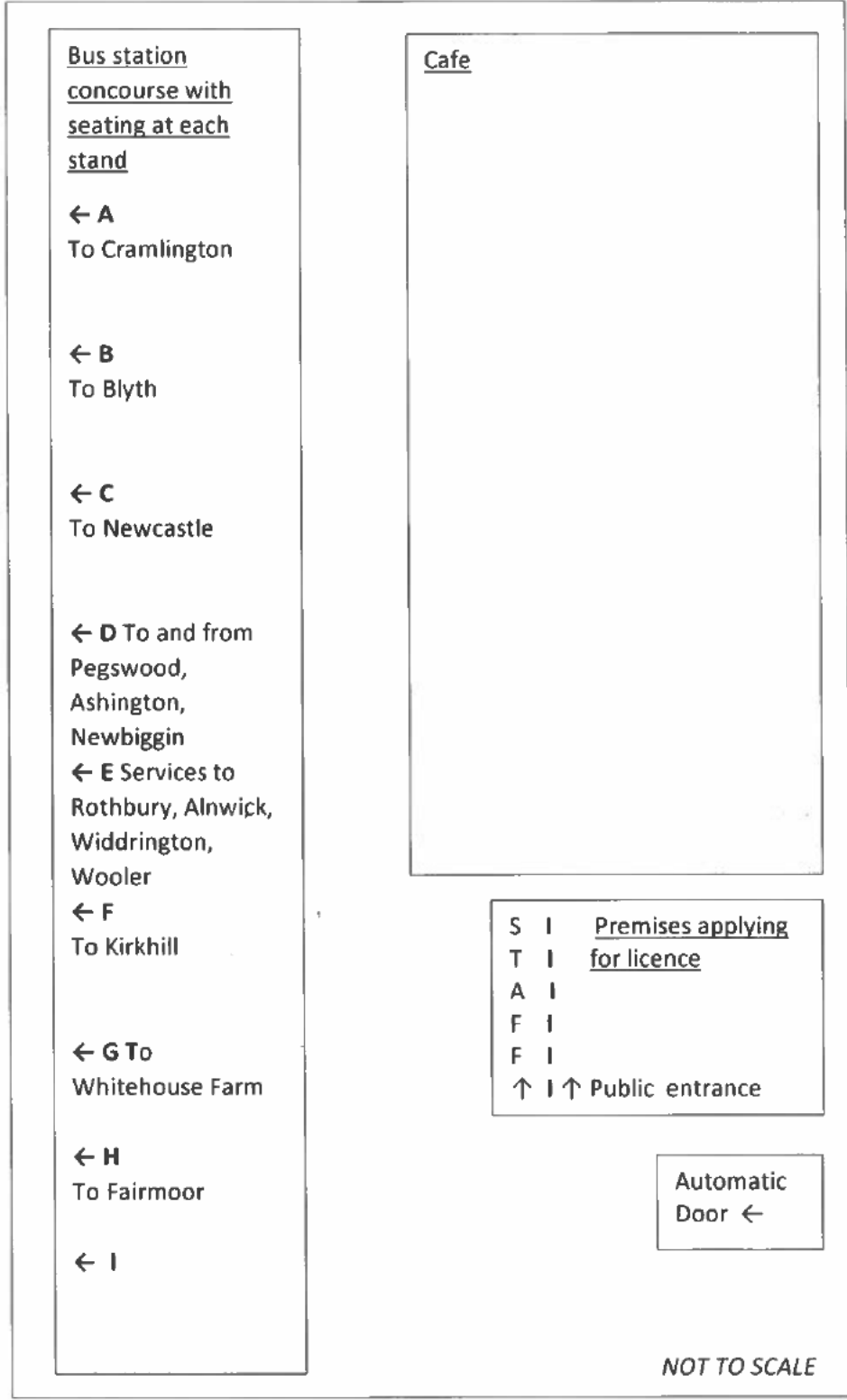
Finally, although the only place mentioning that these premises are to be run under the Morrisons brand that I can see in the application details on the Northumberland County Council website is on the plan, which is a different entry from the written application, and so unlikely to be clicked on by those who are not confident of reading plans, I understand that for a decade and more the bus station at Alnwick has been under the ownership of Morrisons and management of Arriva buses. I have also seen numerous reports of the state of Alnwick bus station and the behaviour of teenagers in it, and I have also been sitting on a bus waiting to depart and seen a youngish woman clearly coming from the neighbouring Morrisons supermarket and handing over a case of lager to a group of teenagers in the bus station, which I can say from personal observation is always squalid. Despite the fact that Alnwick is a major tourist destination, so that initial impressions could be of particular importance to the economy and reputation of the town, nothing effective ever seems to have been done to address the state of the bus station, and so despite what is written in its statements, I question whether Morrisons really does adequately concern itself with reducing the potential for public nuisance, threats to public safety, and crime and disorder, and with protecting children from harm, and whether there is really much care for the communities which it serves.

In the case of this premises application in Morpeth, except on Sundays when most of them have reduced opening hours, there is an off-licence in Newgate Street which is 2 minutes walk through the alleyway from the bus-station, Lidl's supermarket is only about 3 minutes walk away, and Morrison's Petrol station is only about 5 minutes walk away, all of which sell alcohol and are open until 10 pm. Morrisons supermarket, which is between its petrol station and Lidl's, is also open until 9 pm, so there is no shortage of places to supply alcohol which are within very easy reach of the bus station. The only "benefit" to the community which I can see is that this licence could be used to sell alcohol until 11 pm, an hour after the other nearby outlets have closed, and as people are making their way home from pubs just before closing time.

↗ To Sanderson Arcade shopping centre

← North

Manual Door to Bus Station



Bus station
concourse with
seating at each
stand

← A
 To Cramlington

← B
 To Blyth

← C
 To Newcastle

← D To and from
 Pegswood,
 Ashington,
 Newbiggin

← E Services to
 Rothbury, Alnwick,
 Widdrington,
 Wooler

← F
 To Kirkhill

← G To
 Whitehouse Farm

← H
 To Fairmoor

← I

Cafe

S | Premises applying
 T | for licence
 A |
 F |
 F |
 ↑ | ↑ Public entrance

Automatic
 Door ←

NOT TO SCALE

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Name: Lottie Thompson (Centre Manager, Sanderson Arcade) **Address:** Management Suite, Lumley House, Sanderson Arcade, NE61 1NS

Licensing Objective: Serious concerns this premise license will not comply with the four licensing objectives due to its location and already current issues within this location.

Premises: Martin McColls, 1 Sanderson Arcade, Morpeth, NE61 1NS

Reason for Representation:

(continue on separate sheet if necessary)

I am writing to formally object to the premise license application submitted by Martin McColls in Morpeth Bus Station. I have serious concerns that granting this license would not be in the best interest of the community, as it may jeopardize the four key licensing objectives: the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, the prevention of public nuisance, and the protection of children from harm. Morpeth Bus Station is already a location of concern of the 4 objectives before you even add alcohol sales into the mix.

Prevention of Crime and Disorder:

I am concerned that the granting of a premise license to Martin McColls in Morpeth Bus Station will lead to an escalation of crime and disorder in the area, an area where we are already dealing with frequent crime and disorder. Given the transient nature of bus stations, Morpeth Bus Station already is a focal point for antisocial behaviour, including public drunkenness, loitering, and criminal activity, we are trying our best to minimise this by spending over £10k per annum on overnight security, upgrades in CCTV and locking certain areas of the bus station on an evening. If Martin McColls is granted this premise license we would have to seriously review what we had in place to prevent further crime and disorder.

Public Safety:

The sale of alcohol at the proposed location will result in individuals consuming alcohol on the premises or in the vicinity, potentially leading to accidents or confrontations that endanger the safety of both customers and passersby. We already deal with frequent issues on a Friday and Saturday evening of customers using the Bus Station to get home from an evening out, the opportunity of them to drink more in Morpeth Bus Station with

Prevention of Public Nuisance:

We already deal with constant public nuisance in Morpeth Bus Station without the added threat of alcohol sales. Our overnight security team deal with constant issues of noise disturbance (young people playing their own music / shouting), littering and unruly behaviour. We have had to deal with under 18s acting drunk in this Bus Station on a Friday / Saturday evening. We have had complaints from residents around Morpeth Bus Station in regards to youths and alcohol consumption and youths trying to get adults to purchase alcohol for them from the local shop (Best One, Newgate Street).

Protection of Children from Harm:

Morpeth Bus station is highly frequented by children and young people, many of whom are traveling unaccompanied. Allowing the sale of alcohol in such a location poses a serious risk to the protection of children from harm, as it may expose them to the negative consequences of alcohol-related incidents. Morpeth Bus Station is used as the main hub for public transport by local schools, KEVI use this bus station for all pick ups and drop offs.

We know that young people, under 18 are frequently in Morpeth Bus Station as we consistently have issues with anti-social behaviour. Morpeth Bus Station is regularly used as a 'hangout' for young people which we have had to manage with overnight security.

Morpeth Bus Station is already a cause for concern due to its constant issues of antisocial behaviour which we have seen increase over the last two years, and which has been discussed multiple times with Northumberland County Council, Kim McGuinness (Police & Crime Commissioner), Northumbria Police and Morpeth Town Council.

The centre has had to put in place overnight security, advanced CCTV and had to lock certain areas of the bus station on an evening due to issues of criminal damage and antisocial behaviour. It is felt that issuance of a premise license at this location would be an added threat to public safety in an already troublesome location.

I kindly request that the licensing authority takes my objection into careful consideration during the review process and takes all necessary steps to protect the interests of the community.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Signed .. 

Date 09.10.23

Please send this notice to the address below:

Licensing Department
Business Compliance & Public Safety Unit
Public Protection Service
Northumberland County Council
West Hartford Business Park
Cramlington, NE23 3JP

Telephone: 01670 623856 Email: licensing01@northumberland.gov.uk

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Name: Morpeth Town Council

Address: Town Hall, Market Place, Morpeth, NE61 1LZ

Licensing Objective: Prevention of crime and disorder, prevention of public nuisance, public safety and the protection of children from harm

Premises: Martins, 1 Sanderson Arcade, Morpeth, NE61 1NS

Reason for Representation:

Morpeth Town Council objects to the sale of alcohol in Martin's store in Morpeth bus station for the following reasons:

We are aware of regular public concerns about young people congregating in the bus station, both before and after school and into the evening, and the anti-social behaviour which can result. Although the arcade has security staff, police or Community Enforcement Officers have often been asked to attend during school hours. However, after 5pm there is no staff or security presence at all to ensure public safety.

This can deter potential passengers such as the elderly, families and lone women from using the bus, at a time when bus use is being promoted and fares are cheaper. It also gives a bad impression of Morpeth to visitors and causes extra demands on police time. **We feel that the sale of alcohol on the bus station could only make this situation worse.**

The store plan supplied does not indicate where the alcohol will be displayed or stored in order to ensure full staff control and it is our understanding that there is often only one member of staff on duty in the shop in the evening. This lone staff member might have to challenge young customers on their age or deal with adult evening customers who have already been drinking, putting their own safety at risk. Young people could get an older person to buy alcohol for them.

There is nothing to prevent the alcohol then purchased from being consumed by customers sitting in the bus station, contributing to more anti-social behaviour and intimidation of other bus customers and staff.

We therefore feel that the granting of this license would not be in keeping with the 4 criteria for alcohol licensing, ie:

The prevention of public nuisance
Public safety
Protection of children from harm
Prevention of crime and disorder

We therefore wish to support the detailed concerns raised by regular bus user Susan Hedley and copied to Morpeth Town Councillors.

Signed  Date 12-10-23

on behalf of Morpeth Town Council

Please send this notice to the address below:

Licensing Department
Business Compliance & Public Safety Unit
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Northumberland County Council
West Hartford Business Park
Cramlington, NE23 3JP

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Email: licensing01@northumberland.gov.uk