

Re: Life Baby Scanning - Licensing Hearing Sub Committee Meeting
Tuesday 15th November 2.00pm.

Here is some information on my background and as to why I have applied for a variation to my already existing premises license.

I run a business on Unsworth Pole called Life Baby Scanning. We took on the lease and invested an enormous amount of money into the business setup and remedial works to the building due to poor disrepair. Our current business is of a niche nature and the industry accumulates significant costs due to clinical obligations. We have had the premises now for 3 years. Unfortunately, we have experienced severe leaks within the premises over the past 10 months. Which has resulted in the ceiling collapsing in the reception area and the flooring throughout the building being totally ruined and unable to be salvaged.

After a long battle with the insurance they have agreed to reinstate part of the ceilings and flooring, however they are very reluctant about loss of earnings and so on. The extent of the damage resulted in no other option but to close the business on Sunday 21st August. This was to enable the contractors to commence however, since work got under way, through intrusive surveys, there is further damage which we were unaware of, as this was not visible. Therefore, not covered within commercial budgets nor factored into the overall length of the construction programme. This has meant our business has been closed longer than planned which has incurred further costs onto myself.

We have had to seriously re-assess our business and review the detrimental impact due to the length of closure and how long it is going to take to rebuild our business and recoup debt due to on-going running costs. It would be the equivalent to starting all over again, in a business sector where now a number of competitors have opened within the area.

Being tied into a lease, and having staff we feel committed to continuing with their employment, we have had to prepare for a plan B. We have been very critical of the area and assessed what would improve the parade on the pole? We have bravely decided a coffee shop to bring the community together, would be greatly welcomed and become a bit of a community hub.

We have big plans to do a variety of coffee mornings to reach out to all ages within the community. So far we have had amazing support and encouragement. After the isolation of COVID19 and now the current state of financial affairs everyone is facing in their everyday life, coming together as a community and ensuring you are running a business where people with all budgets big and small can access is crucial. Not only financially but for peoples mental health also.

There are a lot of lonely people within our community where the person who serves them in a shop or they say good morning to in the street may be the only person they speak to all day. I always go out of my way to make people feel welcomed and where necessary appreciated.

To move the coffee shop forward we have had to apply for a variation to the premises license, that we already had. I think a lot of people in the area were unaware we already had a premises license, until we displayed the blue notice to amend it. This, we feel, is what has scared some of the more elderly people in the immediate area and was the catalyst to the objection to the changes.

As we are aware when applying for a alcohol license you have to complete possible times for example New Years Eve and so on, which does not necessarily mean you intend to use them. They are a requirement when applying and have to be stated on the application.

A couple of elderly ladies approached the electrical contractor in a very aggressive manner :) and told him not to bother carrying out the work, as they were starting a petition to stop the opening of a late bar and nightclub (which it most definitely will not be). We fully understand where they are coming from and sometimes when you have not got the full information about changes being made within the area you live, it can be quite daunting. This then becomes the point when people may jump to the wrong conclusions, which is what we feel has happened in our case.

I immediately reacted when the contractors made me aware of the statement the ladies made and we responded by putting a statement on Unsworth and Whitefield Facebook. Here we received positive feedback and a lot of people wishing us well. We also immediately put together a further notice reassuring people about our intentions and put it up under the blue notice on the exterior of the building so that it was available at all times for everyone to read.

We wanted to reassure everyone concerned this is going to be a family run, local and independent business with the heart of the community firmly within our sights. We want to be able to continue trading on Unsworth Pole and not become another business that closes down. Especially in this very uncertain economic climate we currently live in. Times are hard and even harder when you are self-employed and don't know when your next pay pack is coming from. However we are being brave taking on this change and continuing to invest in Unsworth. However we are prepared to do it and think the Unsworth area is worth it.

So after that very long-winded explanation of why we have moved to Plan B there it is. I need the help and support of the people objecting by way of understanding we are just going to be a warm and welcoming venue with nice food, locally made cakes, amazing friendly staff, easy listening music and definitely not late nights or loud music. As I mentioned earlier we are a family run business and we enjoy spending time with our families, so unfortunately late nights will not be for us.

I hope the above covers it. If you need any further information from me please be in touch.