

The Field House Tydehams Newbury Berkshire RG14 6JT

Environmental Health (Licensing)  
West Berkshire District Council  
Council Offices  
Market Street NEWBURY  
Berkshire RG14 5LD

13 August 2012

Dear Environmental Health (Licensing),

*Newbury Rugby Football Club Limited, Monks Lane, Newbury, Berkshire  
RG14 7RW*

*“Prevention of Public Nuisance” Review under the Licensing Act 2003 (Premises  
Licences and Clubs Premises Certificates) Regulations 2005*

We wish to support the Council’s review of the Rugby Club’s licence in view of the fact that the Club has been unable to achieve the objective of Preventing Public Nuisance in managing and operating the Club premises.

As Tydehams residents of 26 years, we made no objection when the Club applied to set up its site on Monks Lane to train for and play games of rugby football. This we expected to involve some acceptable levels of noise – or “sound pollution” – through spectator support and of “light pollution” through artificial lighting.

### **Beyond Rugby Football**

However, a number of things have occurred since the premises were first opened for these purposes that have caused us to have to complain both to the Council’s Environmental Health Department and to the Club itself, on grounds of serious nuisance for reasons beyond the mere training for and playing of the game of rugby.

We have on several occasions had cause to contact the Council because we have been kept awake late into the night by unacceptable volumes of music (especially bass notes), when the premises have been hired out to private hirers for parties. This has caused us to need to close our windows on hot summer nights, and yet the noise has still come through despite well-insulated walls and high-specification double-glazing.

We had been given to understand by the Club’s management that the conditions for hiring out the premises for such functions included that music be played at reasonable levels of volume and that the building’s windows be kept shut during such hirings.

Further, when the Club set out several years ago to encourage family attendance at Saturday afternoon matches, they began to play popular music over their public address system in the period leading up to kick-off. This they did at volume levels – and over a prolonged period – that we considered unacceptable and inappropriate. We contacted the Club’s management at the time and quite reasonably asked them to reduce the volume levels, which, following a visit to our house to experience the noise for themselves, they agreed to do, by changing the position of and turning down their loudspeakers. However, over time the situation has deteriorated and we have often subsequently experienced the playing of unacceptably loud music again.

On a recent three-day weekend of events, about which we residents in Tydehams were given no prior notification, there was loud music accompanying throughout the day and late into the evening for the entire weekend.

It appears that, recently, the Club has sought to extend the hours during which it can provide “entertainment, refreshment and alcohol” on the premises. We can only assume that, as these hours are extended to embrace not only Saturdays but all days of the week, the sound pollution can only potentially become worse and lead to increased nuisance to local residents, ourselves included. Because of the lie of the land between the Clubhouse and residential areas beyond Monks Lane, the noise becomes amplified and directed away from the Clubhouse and towards our own property in ways that might not be immediately obvious.

### **In conclusion**

The prospect of extended licensing hours, not only within the day but also across the week, added to the fact that the Club’s management has not always ensured that organisations hiring the premises have kept their side of the bargain with respect of noise nuisance can only lead to an increase in our need to contact the Environmental Health (Licensing) Department.

We submit these observations for the Department’s consideration and look forward to learning that, all things considered, the Department will consider that the Club’s failure to achieve the “Prevention of Public Nuisance” objective in managing and operating their premises should render the requested licensing variation both inappropriate and unsuitable in the circumstances.

Yours sincerely,

*R Whiting*

*Robert WHITING*

*Patricia Whiting*

*Tricia WHITING*