

Black Horse Review

Written Submission of George Bembenek, 1 St Johns Road, Thatcham

I live right opposite the Black Horse Public House, my front windows are no more than 10 metres from the front door of the pub. I have rented the property from Sovereign Housing Association since September 2006. As far as I can recall the first six months were not too bad. However, from then on the noise issues seemed to start and carried on until May 2011 when Environmental Health Officers came out to witness what I had been putting up with for some years. It then went much quieter, but still we get noise and fights.

I used to work, but eventually had to give up as my sleep was being regularly disturbed and the noise and goings on at the pub got me down. I would dread the weekends so much I would go and stay with friends. When they moved on I became a virtual recluse, staying in, not even wanting to go to the shops. There always seemed to be people in front of my house, drinking and smoking, shouting, swearing and fighting. They would look directly into our homes. Then there is the vehicle noise. We have cars, vans and taxis arriving and leaving at all hours, until early morning, particularly at weekends. The horns are tooted at all hours too, especially from the taxis. People shout as they leave and hang around holding loud conversations outside my bedroom window. I have been spat at and sworn at on numerous occasions and I am frankly too old for all this nonsense. I was terrified at the time and did not want the Council to call out as I was fearful of reprisals from the clientele. I have had my windows smashed and my bins turned over as has my neighbour.

This pub is not a family pub. It is a pub out of the glare of the towns and they think they can do what they like. Drunks get served and then they get in a car and drive home. They also fight and we get the police here. They drink alcohol well after they should do and then they leave, noisily, at about 04.00 sometimes. They will urinate anywhere in the street, sometimes up against my door. I have seen people that have come out of the pub kicking cars as they leave and hitting wing mirrors until they come off. One of my visitors had their car damaged when staying. They play loud music into the early hours too with the door wide open.

In the last couple of years I have felt better and able to tackle the problems myself. I did ask that they left quietly, didn't stand outside smoking, drinking and on mobiles, but all I get is abuse. My rooms face onto the road, and therefore onto the pub; I have no escape, in fact I have slept in the bath before now just to get away from it. My neighbour has been terrified too and would come and knock on my door to be reassured.

It's taken me a long time to gain the courage to get to this point, but now I'm here I want something done. I want the music to stop on time and I want no more late night drinking. I want them to stop using the outside to drink and smoke and shout and swear and have conversations on their mobiles in the early hours. I want the cars to stop tooting their horns at all hours and I want them all to leave quietly so I can sleep.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'G Bembenek'.

George Bembenek