



LOUGHTON RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION



LuXe – major changes!

On May 30th, the District Council held a licensing hearing on the police's request to review LuXe's licence, after a string of serious incidents.

LRA Cllr Jill Angold-Stephens spoke on behalf of Loughton Town Council (and her ward residents) and I spoke on behalf of the LRA Plans Group.

Four residents also attended, of which three spoke about the disturbances they suffered from customers leaving LuXe.

Although the police application was for LuXe's closure, at the last minute LuXe and the police agreed that LuXe could continue in business, as a "gastro-pub" serving food up till at least 10pm, (fixed seating for at least 40 downstairs and more on the first floor).

The police were focussing on "crime and disorder".

LRA Cllr Jill Angold-Stephens (on behalf of Loughton Town Council and the residents in her ward), me (on behalf of the LRA Plans Group) and three residents spoke on this and two of the other licensing objectives – public safety and the prevention of public nuisance.

Closing time in the week will be at 23.30, and 00:30 on Fridays and Saturdays. (Current closing is midnight Sunday- Thursday and 02:30 for Fridays and Saturdays).

On New Year's Eve, closure will have to be at 1am (this is unusually early for licensed premises on this night).

They will spend £300,000 on the re-fit, which will include removing the black paint and reverting to the Royal Standard name.

The police asked for a further three months' complete suspension (LuXe asked for only two months) for the re-fit and staff training. The panel decided on three months from now, *which will mean peace and quiet for residents over the summer months.*

Use of the terrace - the licensing panel agreed to my plea for the alcohol licence to match their planning permission (no customer use at any time).

They will be allowed to have “incidental background music” – the legal requirement is for customers to be able to hold a normal conversation over it.

Any live music must finish by 11pm.

I expressed concern over the future use of TENS (which allow later closing on a one-off basis, and which the Council and/or the police can object to, but which don't allow for any public involvement).

Many residents will be very disappointed that LuXe wasn't closed down completely. However, once the police had agreed to their gastro-pub proposal, the way the (national) legislation is drafted meant there was no possibility of this happening. So the Panel's decision to bring forward the closing time on Sunday - Thursday to 11.30pm from LuXe's original proposal of midnight (as agreed by the police), and getting confirmation about the terrace, are considerable improvements.

I am sure that the large number of objections which residents sent in to the Council played a great part in persuading LuXe's management that radical changes were needed. In addition, these objections, and the strong personal testimony of the residents who spoke at the hearing, meant the Licensing Panel were persuaded to take a firm line.

Obviously, residents and the Plans Group will be monitoring what happens when the premises re-open – another review can be requested if problems reoccur.

When we looked at the situation in Loughton last November, there appeared to be no practical way of preventing Nu-Bar, LuXe and *fifteen* (York Hill) from carrying on as early-morning licensed venues - we have come a very long way in the right direction!

David Linnell, LRA Plans Group

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NOTES

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5. To enlarge a picture, click on it and then drag one of the corners outwards
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David Linnell

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