

Baltija 148 Huntly Grove, Peterborough

The Trading Standards team are submitting an objection to the grant of a premises licence for 148 Huntly Grove under the licensing objective of preventing crime and disorder.

Trading Standards have had a number of dealings with the premises;

In March 2015, an application to transfer the premises licence relating to Jip Convenience Store 148-150 Huntly Grove was received from the applicant Mr Marwan Jalal JABARI and stating the designated premises supervisor as Ms Gitana Siatkiene. The shop had been renamed Baltia Store.

Once Trading Standards became aware of Ms Siatkiene involvement further investigations were made. It transpired that Mr Jabari who applied for the licence had given a false address that was Ms Siatkiene's home address. Mr Jabari lived in Scotland and was Mr Jabar's brother. In May 2015 a review hearing took place where the history of criminal activities was explained and that Mr Jabari had no controlling influence or any business connection with the premises. The premises licence was revoked.

Ms Gitana Siatkiene previously owned the Euro Shop 135 Dogsthorpe Road, Peterborough with her partner Mr Saade Jalal Jabar.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> October 2012, Mr Jabar pleaded guilty on indictment in relation to the fraudulent evasion of Excise Duty relating to 3 seizures and was given a 2 year custodial sentence. In relation to these 3 seizures, on all occasions the goods were found concealed within Euro Shop, their home address and personal vehicles. The seizures made in Euro Shop were witnessed by Trading Standards and Ms Siatkiene was present on each occasion.

In August 2013, Ms Siatkiene applied for a new premises licence for the Euro Shop. This application was strongly objected by Trading Standards. On the 4<sup>th</sup> October 2013, a hearing took place where it was explained to the Licensing Sub-Committee the history of illicit alcohol and tobacco with Ms Siatkiene and her partner Mr Jabar. The Sub-Committee refused to grant the licence for the premises.

On the 10<sup>th</sup> May 2015, Trading Standards assisted HM Revenue & Customs in executing a warrant at Baltia Store, 148 Huntly Grove Peterborough. Both Ms Siatkiene and Mr Jabar were present when we arrived.

A seizure was made of non-duty paid spirits and non UK duty paid cigarettes that were concealed within the premises and were seized from Ms Siatkiene, the shop manager. Mr Jabar's vehicle that was parked outside the shop contained a large number of cigarettes, hand rolling tobacco and spirits all non UK duty-paid.

The total amount of goods seized from Mr Jabar between July – November 2014 and including 10<sup>th</sup> May 2015 are 658,800 cigarettes, 44.5 kgs hand rolling tobacco, 55.3 litres spirits and 9 litres wine. Total evaded revenue **£213,464.00**. HMRC Investigations concluded where Mr Jabar was sentenced to another 2 years and 8 months imprisonment. He was released in May 2017.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> July 2017 at approximately 13:50 hours, Trading Standards visited Baltija, 148 Huntly Grove to speak to Mr Dildar Hamid Salih regarding the application for a premises licence. Mr Salih was not present however Mr Jabar was in the staff area of

the shop cooking his dinner. He advised he was not working there however his partner Ms Svetlana Kalmina was present and working behind the counter. Mr Jabar advised that Mr Salih would be at the shop in a few moments then later advised he would be there after 4pm. Mr Jabar advised that Ms Siatkiene had stopped paying so his friend Mr Salih was taking over.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> July 2017 I spoke to Mr Salih on his mobile phone. He advised that he had been there 3 weeks and that he was not the owner, just renting the shop. It was pointed out that he had signed the application in the capacity as owner. He explained that Ms Siatkiene had stopped paying the rent and that he was taking over her payments. Mr Salih could not remember who he pays the rent to. He confirmed that all the utilities and bills are still in Ms Siatkiene's name and that he was paying them for her as she cannot pay. He also stated that he was waiting for the lease and asked if he can have 2-3 days to sort with his accountant and will telephone me back. Mr Salih could not advise the name of his accountant as he had forgotten the name.

On the 17<sup>th</sup> July 2017 I telephoned Mr Silah. He advised that he had spoken to his landlord and waiting for the lease. Mr Silah advised that the landlord was from Derby and was unable to advise the name, only that it was a Pakistani name that was hard to say.

It was confirmed that no purchase is being made for the shop, only that he was taking over the bills.

Trading Standards have concerns with the ambiguity over who is the controlling influence of the premises and whether this application is being used to circumvent the revocation of the previous licence for the same premises. Mr Jabar in the past has been seen working behind the counter and information received shows that the tenants pay rent direct to Mr Jabar. A land registry check has confirmed that Mr Saade Jalal Jabar is the leaseholder of 148-150 Huntly Grove.

If the licence is granted and persons previously involved in the business still have control in some capacity, then further concerns that reports of illegal activity would continue and would not promote or uphold the licensing objectives.

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