

Our ref: STEJS077460.00001
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 Please ask for: Jason Stevens



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Teresa Martin
 Peterborough City Council
 Environmental Services
 Bridge House
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27 July 2011

Dear Madam

Licensing Review – Eastfield News, 32 Eastfield Road, Peterborough

We act for Eastfield News who is the subject of a review of the premises licence under the Licensing Act 2003.

We have enclosed a copy of a statement provided by Mr Parvez Akhtar who is the proprietor.

The circumstances are that the Applicant attended Eastfield News on the 19th of April 2010. After inspecting the premises the HMRC seized a quantity of alcohol and tobacco papers believed to be illicit goods in that the duty had not been paid. The foundation for that belief is that the member of staff present at the time of the HMRC attendance was unable to produce receipts for the goods when asked to do so.

The review application provides insufficient information in respect of the goods seized. Mr Parvez Akhtar was not present at the time of the seizure of his property and is unaware of what stock has been seized. He is therefore unable to provide copies of the invoices for the goods seized.

We respectfully request that the Applicant provides Eastfield News with an inventory of seized goods and the respondent will endeavour to produce the invoices for the goods.

We would be grateful if you would confirm receipt of our letter and enclosure.

Kind regards.

Yours faithfully

hc solicitors LLP
 jason.stevens@hcsolicitors.co.uk

WITNESS STATEMENT OF PARVEZ AKHTAR

I, Parvez Akhtar, say as follows:

1. I reside at 138 Cromwell Road, Peterborough PE1 2EU and I am the owner of Eastfield News Off Licence and News Agent of 32 Eastfield Road Peterborough PE1 4AN. I have been the owner of the business for 11 years.
2. It is a family run business. The shop is open from 0600 hours until 2300 hours every day. I work approximately 35 to 40 hours a week in the shop. I open the shop three times a week and I close the shop every night.
3. I have several family members working for me. They are:
 - a. Mohammed Tanveer – Designated Premises Supervisor - DOB 20 May 1980 (Brother)
 - b. Bhasharat Hussain DOB 15 August 1991 (son)
 - c. Shaffart Parvez DOB 1 March 1988 (son)
 - d. Mohammed Munir DOB 10 December 1974 (brother)
 - e. Mohammed Saghir (brother-in-law)
4. Mohammed Tanveer is the Premises Licence holder and also the Designated Premises Supervisor [DPS]. Mr Tanveer attends the shop everyday in his capacity of DPS.
5. I have been served with a copy of the application to review the premises licence and I make this statement in response to the allegations therein.
6. We have only ever purchased alcohol or tobacco from reputable sources such as Best Way Cash & Carry Limited, Booker Limited, Hyperama Wholesale and similar trade outlets. We have never knowingly purchased alcohol or tobacco without the duty being included in the purchase price.
7. The Applicant states that the HMRC seized a quantity of alcohol and Blunt wraps. The information, in respect of the seized stock, in the review application is insufficient. I am unable to check my invoice records for the purchase invoices unless I am provided with an inventory of what was taken from my shop. My records are extensive and I have a wide and varied stock. It would not assist the Licensing Sub-Committee or the Applicant if I served a copy of my invoices over the last few years. Once I am provided with an inventory of the brands I will endeavour to produce the relevant purchase invoices.
8. I reserve the right to produce the invoices to the products seized on the 19th of April 2010 once I have been provided with more information.
9. I received planning permission to extend the shop premises on 9 June 2010 – Ref 10/00491/FUL. This authorised an extension to be built at the shop premises. The building works began in August 2010 and were not completed until October 2010. During the building works it was quite chaotic because we had to move stock around the store to make room for the building works. The building works intruded on the day to day operation of the business.
10. When I attend the cash and carry I always obtain a full receipt and invoice for the stock that I have purchased. The invoice is very helpful in that it includes the price for which I bought the products and next to it, a recommended retail price.
11. Once the goods are brought to the store, I or one of my colleagues price the goods in accordance with the recommended retail price listed on the invoice. This means that I or one of my colleagues would be provided with the invoice. The invoice is put on the counter and is

used throughout the day as the stock is priced up and shelved/stored. Depending on how busy the store is it can take several hours to price, stack and store the goods that have just been purchased. I can envisage that during the building works that I or one of my colleagues could have misplaced an invoice. I am not aware that I have lost any invoices however during the building works it is possible that this has happened.

12. I am not able to ascertain if that is the case until I receive an inventory from the applicant.
13. It is not uncommon that wine and vodka stocks can remain in my stock room or on the shelf for some time. These products do not go out of date and therefore if there is a special offer on I will buy excessive stock to take advantage of the deal. This means that I could have wine stocks in my store for a long period of time, even years. Again, I will not be able to produce evidence of a legitimate purchase until the inventory has been provided.
14. I was not present at the time of HMRC attendance at my office. My son Shaffart Parvez was present. My son is 23 years old and works part-time. My son would not know how to locate the invoice records that he was asked provide. My accounts are kept separately from the shop stock and there is no reason why he would know where they were.
15. I dispute the HMRC's contention that I have been trading goods that have not had the relevant duty paid. I have been trading for many years and I have never traded illicit goods.
16. The Applicant proposes that the Licensing Sub-Committee revokes the Premises Licence in respect of our family business. This would be a draconian step to take, particularly when there is no evidence that I have traded in illicit goods.
17. I am a local businessman providing a community service. My business supports myself and many members of my family. Without the ability to serve licensable products I would not have a business. I rely on the sale of alcohol to attract customers to the shop who then purchase other convenience items. Even a short suspension of the Premises Licence would cause me great difficulty and place my business in jeopardy.

This statement is true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Mr Parez Akhtar

Dated 25 July 2011

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