

## Appendix F

### Licence Review SD Wines

I write in response to your letter regarding a request for a license review for SD Wines, 131 Bath Road, Slough SL1 3UW.

Contrary to popular belief the demographic of the average consumer at SD Wines after the hours of 11:00pm are the working public who are either finishing or starting shifts, at the multitude of businesses in the local vicinity. The convenience provided to these customers is varies from the benefit purchasing food and drink items as well as paying bills as they have missed the opportunity during 'working hours'. We also sell a varied range of products which we have become known for, often referred to as "life savers" items such as electricity/gas top-ups, calpol, dummies, baby milk, padlocks, fuses, plugs, bicycle repair and even starters for tube lights. A running joke with a few locals is "Raj to the rescue" when coming to the shop late at night. These relationships have been built over years of servicing the needs of the local community at their hour of need.

Being located on the Bath Road, on the doorstep of the trading estate gives HGV lorry and coach drivers a place to pull in and pick up various items. We have been told on numerous occasions how beneficial this is for them as they are unable to drive articulated lorries on smaller roads. Our location gives them the opportunity to pick up their essentials. Removing the licence from 11:00pm until 2:00am would be of great disservice to this sector of the hard working public who will be un-necessarily penalised through no fault of their own.

We STRICTLY do not promote or have cheap offers on alcohol during these late hours. This is to promote sensible drinking, and as such have seen a huge change in the type of customers we get during these hours. I must also state this isn't a drive to boost profits as we would sell far more if our prices were lower. High strength lagers/ ciders are NOT sold to unknown passing customers. We operate a strict policy of checking identification on customers deemed to be under the age of consent at all times.

It would be of great benefit if trading standards would divulge how many times we have passed test purchases since October 2006; since my joining the family business, to gain a better picture of whether we are abusing our licence. You will find that simply isn't the case. We have shown responsibility and respect the conditions of our licence and do our utmost to adhere to those regulations.

Unfortunately selling gas, electricity and other convenience items doesn't deliver a high enough profit for sustainable operation during these late hours, there just isn't enough foot-fall to be profitable, hence, why it's essential to be able to provide all available products within the store.

We have built up a few regulars over the years not to mention a few celebrities who having been filming late into the night at the Pinewood Studios. Personally, it is of great satisfaction to be able to serve the stars for a bottle of wine and be

able have a quick chat. Unfortunately most of the time my father doesn't have a clue that he's serving someone famous.

In such times of austerity it is essential we help promote and drive good working small businesses, not start witch-hunts over past feuds which we firmly believe this is. We are open to discussions with all regulatory parties and always will be. If anyone feels they have a concern with our shop policies or in the manner in which we run our business we would welcome them to discuss this in an open manner with us. We will always give a concerted effort to alleviate anyone's concerns with regards to our shop and our position in the local community. We are a family run business and wish to be a part of a growing multinational integrated community, which we have proved to be over the years we have been running.

Being the only shop outright owned in the parade we have come under increasing pressure and understand why it would benefit other parties to have us removed, for the purposes of redevelopment. However, in order to protect our livelihoods we will and must continuously fight to protect our business.

Since 2008 we have had an overhaul of our security camera systems. This was not at the request of any authority but a decision taken by ourselves to improve our local security. This proved to be of good effect, it allows us to monitor issues with minors approaching passers by to purchase them goods. Cameras were also added to the rear of the property to ensure no anti social drinking would occur in the service alley behind the shops. This has worked well as the number of incidents has been reduced dramatically. We also do our best to help the police when they ask for footage from particular days. These are hardly the actions of an irresponsible licence holder. A refusals register is also used, and I will ensure that this is monitored more closely when I, myself am not at the premises.

We have made every effort to ensure the safety of children and make a concerted effort so the sale of alcohol to the under-aged does not occur. The fact that we have passed every alcohol test purchase in the past 5 years goes some way to demonstrate this. If this was not an off licence, would there be a licence review for a failed cigarette purchase?

The cigarette test purchase that has led to this application for a licence review was simply a case of mistaken identity and I urge you look at the situation with the clear facts at hand. We have worked tirelessly over the past years to ensure the business is run responsibly.

Trading standards also recommends imposing an age restricted order for Surinder Rajasani. Surely any punishment should be proportionate to the offence. Removing somebody from their job and only source of income is extreme to say the least. Surinder has a mortgage to pay and a pension pot which has dwindled into insignificance. Actively suspending somebody for a case of mistaken identity is ludicrous. If Surinder Rajasani is imposed from selling age-restricted goods from a shop which relies on the sale of alcohol,

cigarettes and magazines this effectively means he can no longer work in that role. How would he pay his mortgage? At 67 it is highly unlikely he would be able to find another job with ease.

I don't feel enough of an onus has been given to the response of the passed test purchases since 2007. One failed test purchase does not suggest there is an underlying pattern of intent to sell to minors. Lessons have been learnt from past mistakes and this incident was an accidental case of mistaken identity. Please check through the complete facts carefully before deciding to progress with a licence review. The same day also saw us pass the test purchase for alcohol.

I fully respect and understand the role of trading standards and the licensing departments, but surely this is a duty of care to the public to trace out rogue traders and not punishing genuine mistakes.

If I can be of any more help or you would like to discuss the matter in detail please do not hesitate to contact me.

Kulvinder Rajasansi  
SD Wines