

## **UVA HITCHIN WINE BAR AND SHOP/LET'S PARTY**

### **Representations by Other Persons**

**Christine Evans-Pughe**  
**24 Bucklersbury**  
**Hitchin**  
**SG5 1BG**

I am writing to object to the Variation of the Premises License for UVA Wine Bar (Let's Party karaoke) 26 Bucklersbury, Hitchin, run by Mr Miceli (License no. 8057), on the basis of Public Nuisance, and Disorder.

**Summary:**

My house is two doors down from #26 and has a shared party wall with the venue.

I've enjoyed living and working in this vibrant, friendly, mixed, and community-spirited end of Bucklersbury for over 11 years. I'm a freelance in the creative economy (writer and illustrator). I also contribute regularly to Hitchin's cultural and live music scenes as an amateur musician.

However, for the last year, this unique corner of Hitchin – next to residential Tilehouse Street and including the Los Reyes tapas bar (a large, well-managed former pub) – has been blighted by noise and disorder associated with Let's Party. This has had a hugely detrimental impact on my ability to live and work in my own home, compounded by personal safety concerns around the venue's 'anti-resident' social media posts.

Let's Party hosts groups of 40 or more people who sing / shout into as many as ten microphones to amplified backing tracks in a tiny listed building. Unlike the welcoming vibrancy of background music and happy customer chatter from Los Reyes, what emanates from Let's Party is similar to a shouting / singing football crowd. The volume of this penetrating and often aggressive noise rises through an evening as customers sing / shout louder and louder, revved up by favourite songs, alcohol or both.

Customers spill out onto the street in front of #26, where they smoke, talk, swear, shout, run around the road etc. Recently, Mr Miceli has also encouraged customers to occupy the front of the motorbike shop Del Basso's across from my house around a table, creating a new source of noise and anti-social behaviour.

Because of the location and fabric of the building, # 26 was already deemed "not suitable for such an activity," in a written objection by the NHDC's senior council noise officer for a sub-licensing hearing on 8th December 2023, during which extended hours were refused for Let's Party.

A series of late-night temporary event notices TENS from 11th May to 13th July 2024, closing at similar times as proposed variation, have had such an impact I am considering a review of the venue's license under section 182 of the Licensing Act. High volume noise into my bedroom continued right up to and beyond closing times. Licensing hours were breached. The cumulative stress, disturbed sleep, safety concerns from living near this business, means I've needed prescription medication. My work and ability to make a living has suffered.

Any permanent extension of hours would be immeasurably more damaging for the well-being of those living near this business, and for those who enjoy socialising safely in this lively residentially-dense area.

**Details/background:**

Mr Miceli first rented #26 (a former hairdressing salon) six years ago as a craft shop. Other ventures followed including a bar that had a noise abatement notice for 'silent discos' in 2020. Miceli started the karaoke business in late spring/summer 2023, without addressing the causes of the 2020 abatement notice.

Noise nuisance from Let's Party (which is still under a council noise investigation) meant that in February 2024 NHDC issued another abatement notice. Mr Miceli then had no choice but to install professional noise-proofing to the party wall on the other side of my kitchen/diner (a room that for nearly TEN MONTHS had been unusable when the bar was in full swing because of noise – you could hear every single word of every song and it was too loud to hold a conversation). This long overdue measure, however, made no difference to the noise from the bar coming from the front of the building into my bedroom and upstairs living room.

Evidence from the recent TENS from 11th May to 13th July 2024 show this venue cannot be trusted to manage later night hours or noise from karaoke or from customers in the street:

- Two-day TENS on Saturday 11th May/12th May (finishing time 00.30), karaoke singing and customer noise continued in breach of license from 00.43 and beyond, with customers shouting in the street at 01.17 and singing karaoke at 01.18. I estimate that the license was breached by at least 1 hour and 18 minutes.

- Three-day weekend TENS from 14th to 16th June (01.00 finishing). The noise-intensity of the karaoke coming into my house after midnight on 15th and 16th was loud enough to drown out standard conversation, and to terrify my dog which was whining with fear.

- Two-day TENS Sat/Sunday 22nd/ 23rd June (01.00 finishing). Noise-intensity of karaoke still loud at 01.01 (breach of license).

- Three-day weekend TENS 28th to 30th June (01.00 finishing). Noise-intensity of the karaoke loud enough to drown out standard conversation on 30 June at 01.05 (in breach of license). At 01.19, voices in the street noise also close to that level of loudness.

(Time-stamped noise recordings available – NHDC noise app, and mobile phone.)

Examples of disorder and anti-social behaviour over the last five months, show that this venue is already incapable of managing customer behaviour in the street. See below:

- Customer running up and down the road with a microphone chasing passers-by, while other customers outside the bar watch and shout [Saturday 30th March, around 8pm]

- Customer semi-conscious on my windowsill. I helped moved her to my doorstep for safety, upon which she vomited over the entrance of my house [Saturday 27th April, around 10pm]

- Mr Miceli in the street yelling at my first-floor window on a hot summer evening, asking why the window was open [Friday 21st June, around 10.30pm].

- Customers blocking my front door and trying to peer into my house [Friday 28th June, around 10.30pm]

- Drunk customers singing along to Tina Turner's 'Rollin' on the River', while running around in circles in the road [Friday 19th July 2024 around 10.30pm]

- Group of teenagers singing in Del Basso's forecourt opposite my windows [around 10pm Friday 16th Aug, then again around 8.30pm Friday 23rd Aug], and again at around 9pm Saturday 24th Aug, this time gathered around the table in Del Basso's forecourt.

- Group of customers gathered around the table in Del Basso's, talking, shouting at people in the street, swearing. [Saturday 31st August, around 7.45pm and continuing much of the evening]

(Photo evidence available and audio on NHDC noise app)

Regular later opening would extend these issues into the small hours of the morning. Extended drinking times would lower customers inhibitions further.

In the virtual world, Mr Miceli has for months been stirring up hostility towards residents on Facebook, via posts on the Let's Party and Antonio Miceli sites, which have over 9,000 followers between them. Customers and followers refer to residents with aggressively abusive language ('cxxxts', 'sad fxxxs', 'bunch of c4nts' etc), and have suggested forms of harassment such as meeting up to 'go and yell and shout down' residents' homes. Around the 8/12/23 sub-licensing hearing, a customer on Facebook asks Mr Miceli to 'name and

shame' noise complainants. Mr Miceli obliges by referring to the council report, and adding a smiley-winky-face emoji and a cheery thumbs-up emoji. (Post evidence available).

Hostile social media posts have already put ALL residents' safety at risk, and that of anyone visiting or leaving residents homes. Later night closing and extended drinking, make this even more worrying.

### **Impact of proposal:**

This application's Noise Management plan tells us that the venue is "committed to develop and maintain good relations with local residents, neighbours and the Local Authority", and that it has an objective to "minimise disturbance to local residents". This is blatantly untrue and implausible, based on the venue's track record including over just the last week. The later it gets, the louder it gets. Residents are disregarded.

During just TWO MONTHS of extended hours, a once vibrant, safe and friendly corner of Hitchin felt so threatening that I withdrew from much loved orchestra rehearsals and from playing in a popular live concert in Hitchin, because I didn't feel safe coming and going from my house at night. I also installed a clearly visible security camera for my safety, and for that of anyone else visiting my home.

My health, my sleep, my enjoyment of my home, my leisure activities and my ability to work and make a living as a creative have already been seriously impacted by this venue. Any permanent extension of hours would be immeasurably more damaging for all other residents' and for this corner of Hitchin.

**Helen and Stuart Chilvers**  
**27a Bucklersbury**  
**Hitchin**  
**SG5 1BG**

#### 1. Background

We Have lived in this rented flat (27a) for over 25 years and have never had a reason to complain about noise or town centre activities. (This included sharing a party wall with a pub / restaurant The Red Hart - now The Kite @ The Red Hart.) We did object about 5 years ago when Mr Miceli and a business partner Mr Duncan Gammy applied to run a wine bar at No 26. The licence was granted with a number of provisions - mainly professional soundproofing. The business never opened and Mr Gammy went on to run a successful wine bar in the Arcade Hitchin.

The situation changed when Mr Miceli opened the wine bar / karaoke - Let's Party. The problems were two fold -volume and people gathering under our window. We objected when he applied for a licence extension. Our objection was primarily that he had not carried out any of the sound proofing or other measures demanded by NHDC and the Police.

#### 2. Current Situation

Although Mr Miceli has installed a limited sound proofing system he also upgraded the sound system so the noise levels are still difficult. We have had several neighbourly conversations with him over the years which he stopped after the tribunal. He also at this point instigated a vicious and intimidating social media campaign among his customers and friends, which blamed his neighbours for the problems he was having regarding his Licence.

We were submitting noise level recording to Alan Stone @ NHDC but as this seemed to aggravate the on line abuse and did not affect the Licence outcomes we stopped.

#### 3 Objection

Mr Miceli continues to encourage his friends and customers to jeer and point at our windows as a response to him having to tell them to be quiet. This is unacceptable.

To have a closing time of 1.30 will, given his past record, mean people in the street under our window until 2 A.M. which seems unacceptable given the aggressive nature of these people. We love living in the town centre, love the "vibe" having been here 25years but

there seems to be a particular problem with Mr Miceli, his friends, customers and attitudes to his neighbours.

You are welcome to come and visit to get a better understanding and make an objective assessment of our difficulty.

### **Cllr Keith Hoskins**

It does seem to me that both the police and Environmental Health are more reactive agencies and so it falls to Licensing to make the decision under what are fairly proscriptive rules.

Anyway this application is worthy of detailed consideration by the committee as the reasons for conditions are not much changed from the last committee discussion. The proximity of neighbours who have lived in the street for many years must give some cause for concern and an extension until 1am or 1.30am at weekends may have serious impact on the health, wellbeing and amenity of those residents. Members will be well aware of the physical constraints of the premises which does limit its potential. The prevention of public nuisance and the prevention of crime and disorder are probably the most relevant licensing objectives that need to be considered in this case given the representations from residents.