

Representations

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 07 June 2022 19:38
To: Licensing <licensing@coventry.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Application 241 Walsgrave Road, Coventry by Meekar Slots Ltd FAO Carleen Simms

Good morning Carleen,

Thank you for your time today, even though we may differ in our positions on this matter, it was still nice to speak to you.

I am a local resident living close to Ball Hill and I have become aware that a licence has been applied for - a "bingo licence" to be established at the old Barclays Bank Building. You have kindly clarified the type of place it would be (slot machines) and the hours within which it might operate (10am to 10pm). The times currently allowed by the gambling commission may at some point change so that is a concern.

As I said earlier I know that gambling can be fun, I play lotto, occasionally bingo, fun raffles, it's a personal choice and it's usually relates to fund fundraising. However I do feel that opening such an establishment in an area with mixed fortunes is exploitative. It would have a negative impact on the area, there is already a bookmakers on the opposite corner and Shipleys down the road- is this what we want in our already deprived communities? Gambling addiction is a huge issue in our society, this will not help those who are hooked on slot machines.

You did mention that the demographic of Shipleys tends to be retired peaceful types and is run very well, which on one hand sounds nice, however I wonder why another gambling place is therefore necessary? To have too many of the same type of establishment in a small area changes the atmosphere and dynamic of a community, not always for the better.

Also - what will the organisation be putting back into the community? Will it be maintaining the premises and surrounding area? ie litter, security, crime fuelled by gambling addiction, noise pollution etc? Referring to your Gambling Policy, Statement of Principles 2022/2025 (7.2) it mentions protecting those that are vulnerable- those who are gambling beyond their means, suffering from mental health, disabilities etc. How on earth is this established? Are customers vetted and spoken to by a counsellor / psychologist, are their credit ratings and financial status looked at? I think we know the answer is no. So - How are customers protected?


It is well known that people who accrue gambling debt often resort to desperate means to fund it. Drug dealing, stealing from friends and families, fraud etc. This particular road, and surrounding area already has regular criminal activity (drug dealing, burglary, shop lifting etc) which affects the community- another such establishment may increase this trend. Link from the government below re effects of gambling on individuals and society.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/gambling-related-harms-evidence-review/gambling-related-harms-evidence-review-summary>

I understand there is a deadline of 22nd June, is this email classed as an objection?

I look forward to hearing from you.

Regards


St Osburgs Road

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 14 June 2022 10:44
To: Masih, Rekha <Rekha.Masih@coventry.gov.uk>
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re: FW: Gaming License

Dear Rekha,

Thank you for your email below.

I am very concerned that a Gambling Establishment plans to open in a very deprived area of Coventry. Just to give you some background of this area. Ball Hill once had 5 or more Banks or Building Societies in Walsgrave Road . Sadly within the last 2 years they have all shut up shop with the ATM's going as well. The last Bank to close down was a Barclays Bank Branch (to become Merkur Slots) which left the area in January 2022. There is now only one ATM serving the area being at the Tesco Store.

A Gambling Establishment in such a socially deprived area is likely to draw customers that may ill afford to lose monies which may otherwise go to feed their children/families or pay such things as energy bills. We live in difficult economic times and the last thing these areas need is a Gambling Business which may pull the area and livelihood of people living in the area down.

The location itself sits on a busy junction and with the parking problems in the area this may get worse with illegally parked cars often parked half in the road and on the pavement blocking pedestrians right outside the building.

This also is a High Crime area with often homeless people sitting on the pavement outside Tesco and other businesses in the area Street Begging. This can be a daily occurrence. It is likely this Gambling Establishment may draw " Beggars/Homeless People" to their doors. In many cases these people are vulnerable and may have drug or alcohol addictions.

Without knowing the proposed licencing hours of this proposed business a 24/7 opening trading period could cause added noise and disruption in the area. Although it is claimed that " Bingo" is to be the main attraction. I suspect Gaming Slot Machines will also be on offer.

I would like to understand why Merkur Slots feel this is a good area to open this type of Business or is it merely to exploit a socially deprived area.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]
Hastings Road
Coventry
CV2 4JF

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 21 June 2022 23:20

To: Simms, Carline <Carline.Simms@coventry.gov.uk>

Subject: Re: Representation against this proposal - New Application - Merkur Slots, 241 Walsgrave Road, Coventry, CV2 4BB.

Hi, Carline!

Thanks for responding to my e-mail.

I'm sorry I didn't make it clear that my objection to the proposed use of the old Barclay's bank building is based on the first objective: "protecting children and other vulnerable people from being harmed or exploited by gambling".

My point is that, if you create yet another opportunity for gambling, wherever it is placed, then you are potentially attracting people who may be vulnerable to the pressures caused by such activity. Especially at a time of growing poverty and the inability of many people to cope with high prices and low incomes, offering gambling as a possible way out is a disaster waiting to happen. As I said in my e-mail, of course not everybody who gambles ends up addicted but it will always attract vulnerable people who see it as a life-line, only to find themselves addicted, with little help to recover, especially when there are so many opportunities to continue with their addiction.

I hope that this and my previous e-mail help to make my objection clear.

Regards,

[REDACTED]

From: [REDACTED]

Sent: 20 June 2022 21:26

To:

Subject: Re: Representation against this proposal - New Application - Merkur Slots, 241 Walsgrave Road, Coventry, CV2 4BB.

Dear Martin,

Thanks for letting me have all this documentation. It's a pity that it wasn't accessible without your help, as I suspect some people might have been put off when they couldn't find it where they expected it to be.

As a resident of St. Osburg's Road (which meets Walsgrave Road just opposite the building in question), I am concerned about the prospect of yet another gaming facility in Ball Hill. Currently we have Shipleys, with its gaming machines, and a William Hill betting shop. In such a small area, while the Council may feel able to allow one or two such premises, I believe a third is excessive.

It's not clear from the documents what exactly will be offered in the proposed Merkur enterprise but, if I read it correctly, there will be bingo and some gaming machines. Both of these are types of gambling and both can lead to addiction. I'm not suggesting that everyone who goes into such a place will inevitably develop an addiction but there is evidence to show that addiction figures are much higher than the betting industry claims.

Why does the Council feel that this is a desirable business to encourage? Have there been no other proposals for the use of the old bank?

Regards,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] St. Osburg's Road,

CV2 4EG

