

Licensing Sub-Committee

Supplementary Agenda

Wednesday 2 August 2023 at 6.30 pm

This meeting will be held remotely.

Watch the meeting live: youtube.com/hammersmithandfulham

MEMBERSHIP

Administration:	Opposition:
Councillor Mercy Umeh (Chair) Councillor Wesley Harcourt	Councillor Dominic Stanton

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Public Notice

This meeting will be held remotely. Members of the press and public can watch the meeting live on YouTube: youtube.com/hammersmithandfulham

Speaking at Licensing meetings is restricted to those who have submitted a representation and registered to speak.

Date Issued: 01 August 2023

Licensing Sub-Committee Agenda

2 August 2023

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Agenda Item 4

In the Hammersmith and Fulham Licensing Sub-Committee
In the Matter of Woody Grill, 1-3 Uxbridge Road, London W12 8LJ

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In the Hammersmith and Fulham Licensing Sub-Committee
In the Matter of Woody Grill, 1-3 Uxbridge Road, London W12 8L、

WITNESS STATEMENT OF	

Personal Introduction and Relevant Background

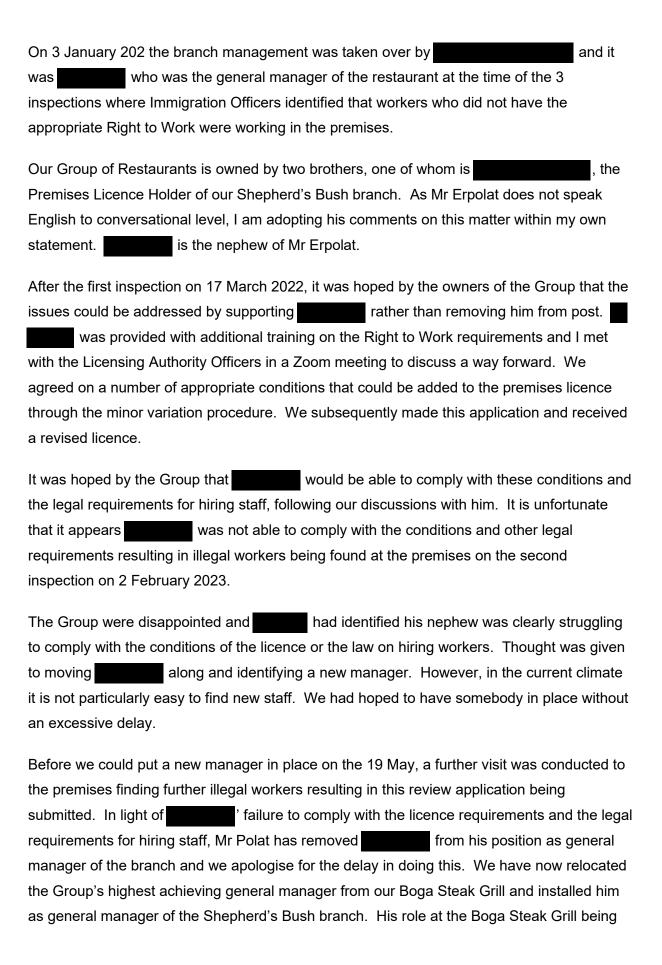
My name is ______. English is my second language and I have made this statement with the benefit of an interpreter. I am the Group Operations Manager for the Woody Grill Group. We operate 5 restaurants in Central London under the Woody Grill brand, including the premises in this review. We also operate 2 steak restaurants and a fully licenced 1,000 capacity wedding venue.

I have worked for the Group for more than 10 years and my role includes maintaining standards and compliance with statutory requirements within the Group. As things stand, every restaurant in our group has a maximum 5 Star Food Hygiene rating and we have maintained this record for over five years. As for our Health & Safety at Work Act compliance, we have not had a reportable incident in 7 years. So far as ensuring we do not employ illegal workers, every one of our restaurants is in full compliance with the Right to Work regime; however, as is clearly set out by the Immigration Service in this application for a Review, that was not the case at our Shepherd's Bush branch for an 8-month period and I am both embarrassed and disappointed that this has happened. I offer my apologies to the Licensing Authority and the Immigration Service that the issues at the premises were not resolved sooner.

Premises History and Relevant Background

We opened Woody Grill Shepherd's Bush¹ on 28 February 2006 and it was initially managed by Today, the premises employs 12 staff, most of who live locally.

¹ Images of the Premises can be found in the Photographic Document at Exhibit 1.



taken on by his assistant general manager who has been trained up over the past three months.

Revision of Group Compliance System to Accommodate Auditing of Right to Work Checks.

To enhance our Group compliance procedures we have procured an on-line compliance system that can be interrogated and audited by Group Management and is also subject to an external audit by our compliance consultant, that requires the general manager to ensure that all relevant data, including the completion of Right to Work checks are filled and entered onto said system.

I have obtained a statement from our compliance consultant who has produced the system setting out its functions and features. I would ask the Committee members to consider this not only to be a demonstration of our commitment to ensuring best practice, but also as evidence that these unacceptable incidents will never happen again.

CCTV at the Premises

Our CCTV system on site can be viewed in 2 ways; by viewing on a monitor that we have set up next to the hard drive, and by viewing through any internet enabled device, such as a mobile phone or a tablet.

When the officers attended on 19 May 2023, it is correct that the hardwired monitor was not working (due to a fault with the cable that had been notified to the CCTV company previously) but the system was still operating and recording as it should. The footage on the system Could be viewed on any internet connected device and staff in the premises would have been able to show the footage to officers, but I am informed that the officers did not want to see it on a mobile device.

Examples of the images as they are viewed on a mobile device can be seen at Exhibit 002. That exhibit also shows that we have appropriate CCTV signage up around the restaurant. The sign on the counter by the till has been there for some time, and the sign in the window was put up a week ago.

Comments from Other Parties

In light of the comments made by a number of local residents, I would like to address the issues they have raised.

Waste Management

It is correct that in 2021, we had a number of issues with our waste management company that resulted in them failing to collect our commercial waste (please note that this can only be disposed of through an appropriate commercial waste handling company) and we received a penalty charge notice that was then discontinued as I demonstrated to the Council that we had a waste management contract in place with a third party company and a Waste Transfer Note² for the relevant waste; however, the waste management company went on to let us down and we received a further penalty charge notice that we paid. As the waste management company continued to let us down, I moved our waste contract over to the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham; however, collections sill seemed to be missed on occasion. I have continued to liaise with the waste management team and we have not had any problems with our waste collections since 16 December 2021.

Intoxicated Customers

Even though we do not sell alcohol at this site, we do on occasion have to deal with customers who are intoxicated. Our staff are trained to ensure that the welfare of any customer is always protected and, that customers are managed in such a way that we do not end up with incidents taking place in or around the premises. There are only three incidents in the past 8 years that I can identify. These are as follows:-

Incident: 17.07.2015

A passer-by broke our restaurant window in the mid-afternoon. They were outside the premises when they did it and were not one of our customers. We gave CCTV images of the incident to the Police and had to make a claim against our insurance company. I have attached a copy of the Victim Card we received as our business was the victim of this incident.

Incident: 31.12.2015

In the late evening, prior to the midnight New Year's Eve celebrations, passers-by who may have been drinking but were not customers of our premises, entered the premises and smashed a number of our plates and broke a display fridge. One of our staff called the Police and we provided the Police with the CCTV. Again, we were

² Please see Exhibit 003.

victims of a crime that was not associated with our operation and happened outside of our licensed hours.

Incident: 12.07.2023

A female came into our restaurant between 10:00pm and 10:30pm. She had an altercation with a customer as the customer was eating his food. The female took a knife from the table (a table knife for dining) and she was escorted from the premises by our staff who were in the process of calling the Police. By the time the Police Officer arrived, the female had run into a nearby park. The Police Officer then followed her to the park but did not see her as she had already left the area. No one was injured in this incident.

Parking

The vast majority of our customers, especially in the later hours, are locals who walk to the restaurant. We do not find that many, if any, of our customers in the late hours come to our premises by car. We operate through Deliveroo to provide food to people who are further away than they may want to walk, and so again, I cannot see why people would drive to our premises to buy food in the early hours. We are well aware that people do park in the neighbourhood to avoid having to pay to park in Westfield Shopping Centre³, if they are attending the restaurants and late-night entertainment venues nearby but those are destination venues unlike our restaurant which in the later hours caters for people who wish to buy food that they then take home.

Food Hygiene

I have seen that there is a claim that our premises is not clean and has been fined for breaching food hygiene standards. The incident people may be referring to happened back in 2015. At that time, I suffered from some health issues that took me away from work for around 2 years. During this time, we had employed a manager () to oversee our Acton branch and our Shepherd's Bush branch. Unfortunately, that manager was not able to meet our standards and failed a food hygiene inspection at Shepherd's Bush (they also had some issues in the Acton branch). I had to come back from sick leave in order to deal with the issues that this manager had left. The manager was dismissed and we remedied the issues resulting in a 4 Star rating at first which was upgraded to a 5 Star rating

³ A map of the surrounding area can be found at Exhibit 004.

in 2018 and has remained a 5 Star rating since then. A copy of our Food Safety Pack can be found at Exhibit 005.

Supporting the Police

As you will see in the attached documents, we have a number of CCTV cameras outside of our premises (as well as those we have inside) and this is the same throughout our Group. We have always been prepared to offer the Police 24-hour access to this system and have on several occasions provided footage of activities outside of our premises to assist the Police in investigations and on a small number of occasions, of footage from inside the premises where Police have been investigating any activities where it resulted in some form of incident inside the premises as I detailed above, or where it was to assist in an investigation in relation to incidents elsewhere.

I would also ask you to note that we have been a keen supporter of the Police Community Initiative to support children in local schools and our staff have been trained in and support the Ask for Angela initiative that gives women and vulnerable persons the ability to request support in a covert manner when they feel that they are not in a safe situation.

Conclusion

In conclusion, that illegal workers were employed at the premises is unacceptable. As a Group we should have removed rather than try to retrain him. Once that retraining proved to have been ineffective, we should have moved him on sooner. We know this was our responsibility. I hope that the steps I and the team have set out in this statement demonstrate that we have taken a serious, considered look at the failings and developed an appropriate and effective way forward.

In the past, where incidents have arisen, we have addressed them and ensured no repetition. This reflects our approach to compliance that has seen our group meet and exceed regulatory requirements. We only ask that the Committee considers the steps we have taken as a Group to ensure no illegal workers are ever employed at this or any of our branches moving forward, and allow us to continue operating our premises under its Premises Licence.

Losing our Licence will greatly reduce our operating hours, and likely result in a loss of jobs. We want to avoid this and we hope the Committee feels we have now shown that our late night operation does not create a nuisance to our neighbours, and will not result in illegal workers being employed. We want to move forward as a sustainable business able to allocate sufficient resources to promoting the Licensing Objectives and employing our 12

dedicated staff. We value the consideration and feedback of the Committee, and will always work to adopt any best practice the Committee proposes.

I and the Woody Grill team will be in attendance at the hearing on Wednesday, to answer any questions the Committee may have.

Statement of Truth

The facts set out in the above statement are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

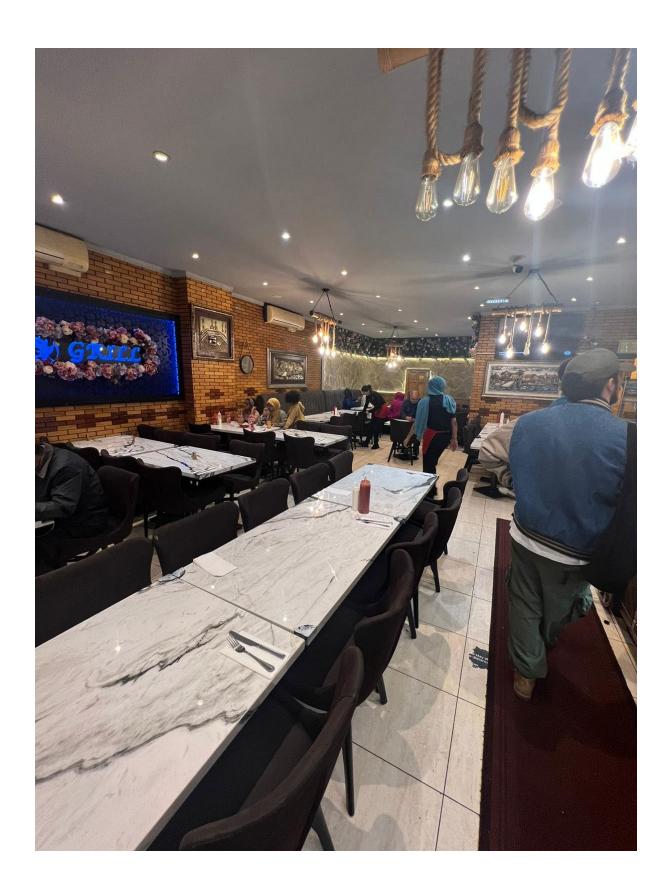


31/07/2023

Date

EXHIBIT 001 PHOTOGRAPHIC DOCUMENT





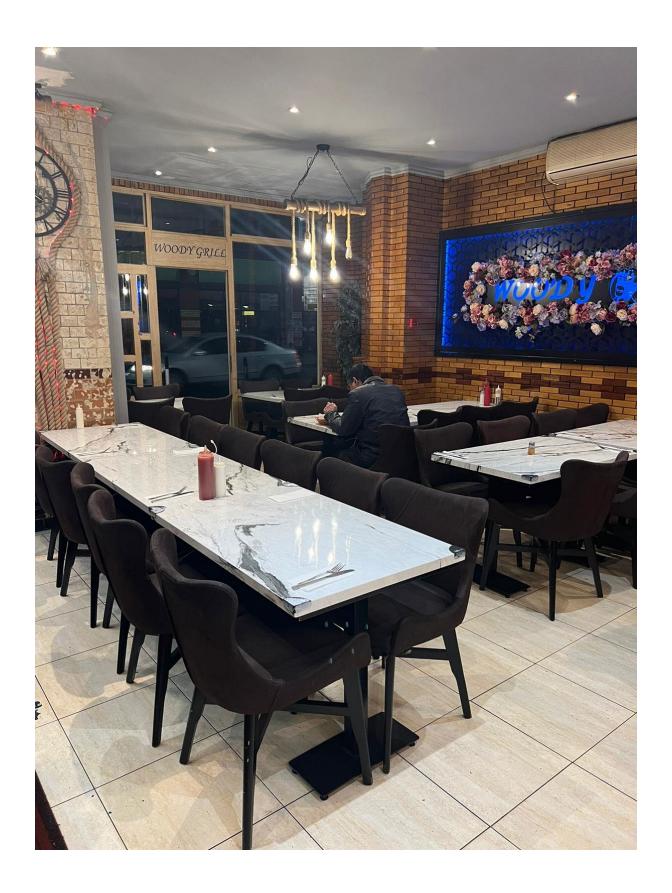


EXHIBIT 002 CCTV IMAGES

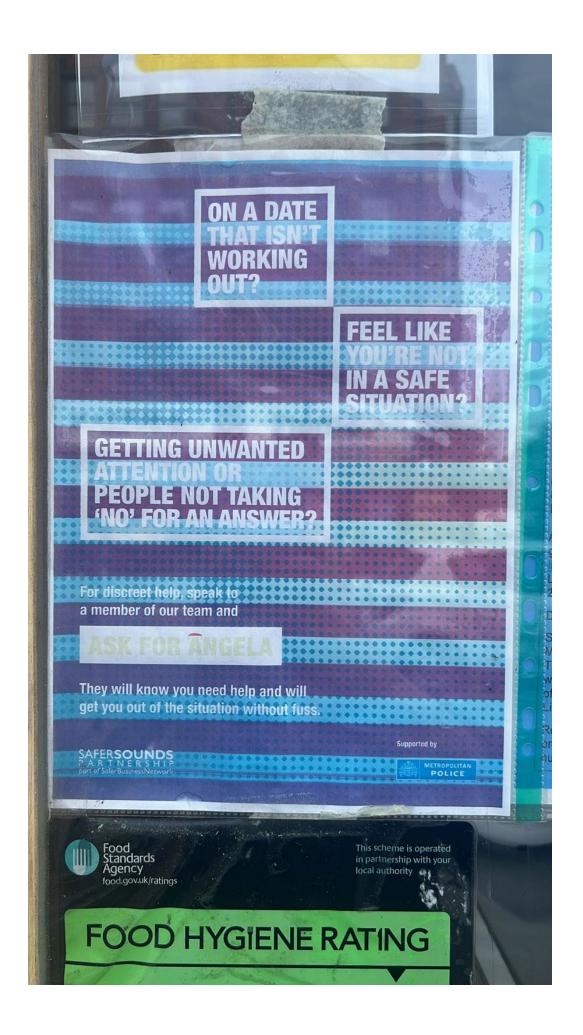










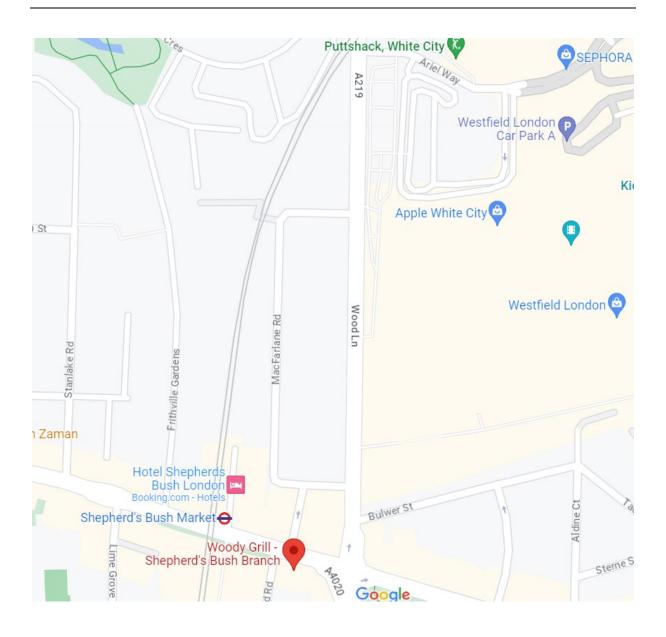


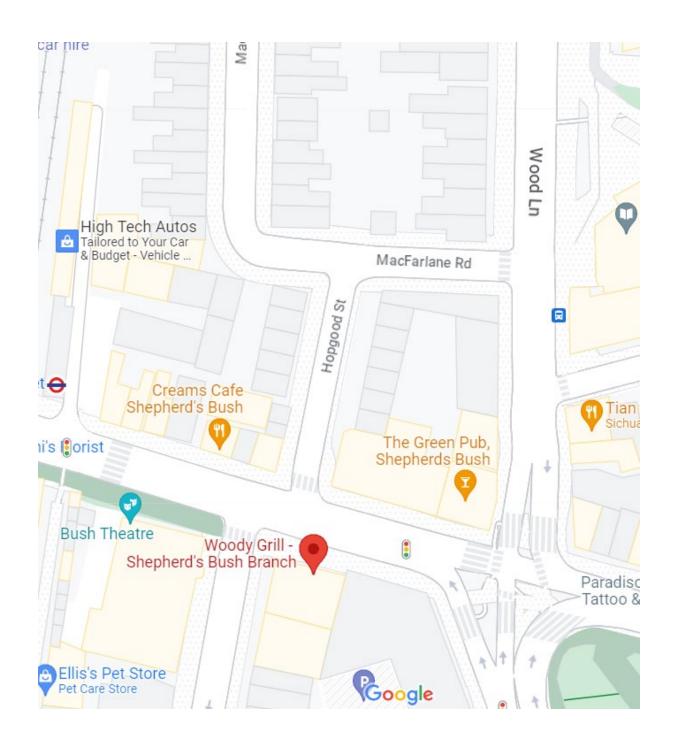
In the Hammersmith and Fulham Licensing Sub-Committee In the Matter of Woody Grill, 1-3 Uxbridge Road, London W12 8LJ	
EXHIBIT 003 WASTE MANAGEMENT EMAIL	

Reference Number:
Thank you for your correspondence and for supplying your valid waste transfer note.
I can confirm that notice number in the last now been closed and you will not receive any further correspondence regarding this matter.
Kind regards,
Waste Enforcement Team
From: Sent: Friday, January 29, 2021 11:30 AM To: waste enforcement <waste@nationalenforcementsolutions.co.uk> Subject: Fw: CheaperWaste BP058771 [ref:_00D4JGOil5004JM6gaH:ref]</waste@nationalenforcementsolutions.co.uk>
RE: WOODY GRILL 1 UXBRIDGE W12 8U
DEAR SIR/MADAM
PLEASE SEE ATTECHMENTS FOR WASTE CONTRACT OF WOODY GRILL RESTAURANT WHICH IS YOU REQUIRE WHEN YOU HAD VISIT THE RESTAURAT 27/01/2021 WITH REGDARDS
From: Customer Services Inbox <customerservice@cheaperwaste.co.uk> Sent: 29 January 2021 11:22</customerservice@cheaperwaste.co.uk>
To: Subject: CheaperWaste BP058771 [ref:_00D4JGOil5004JM6gaH:ref]
Good Morning,
Please find attached your Contract
Regards,
In-Service Support CheaperWaste

03301 242 535

EXHIBIT 004 LOCATION MAP

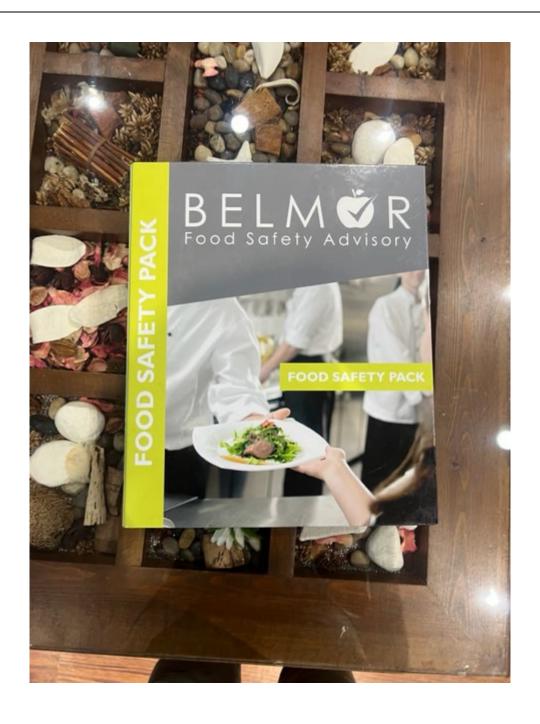


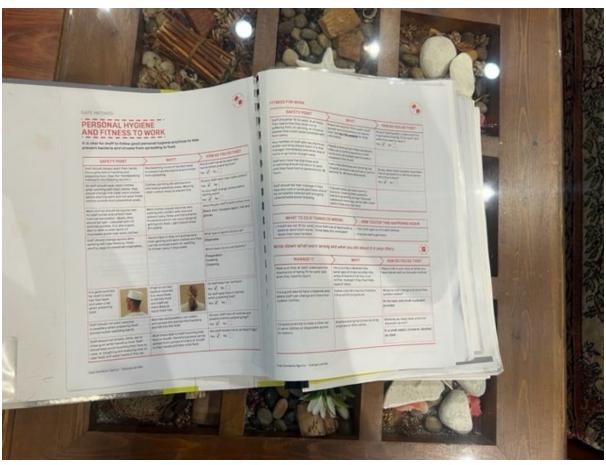


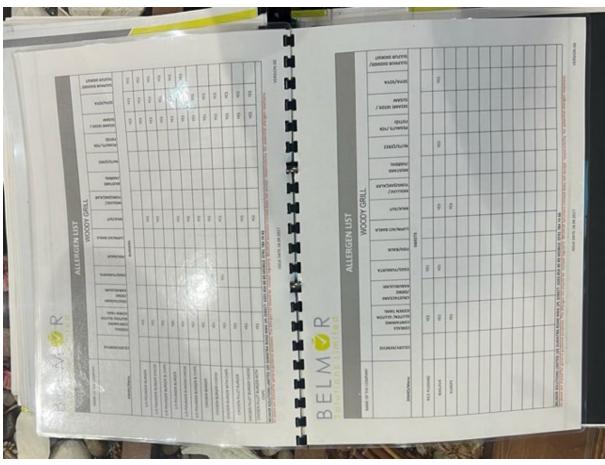
VIEW FROM PREMISES, LOOKING INTO HOPGOOD STREET

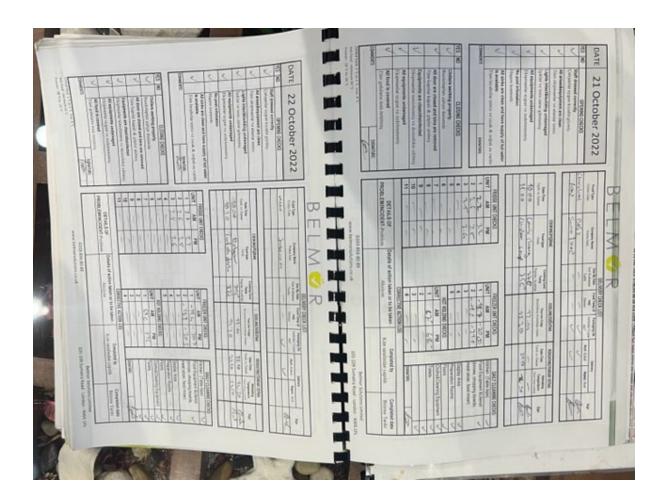


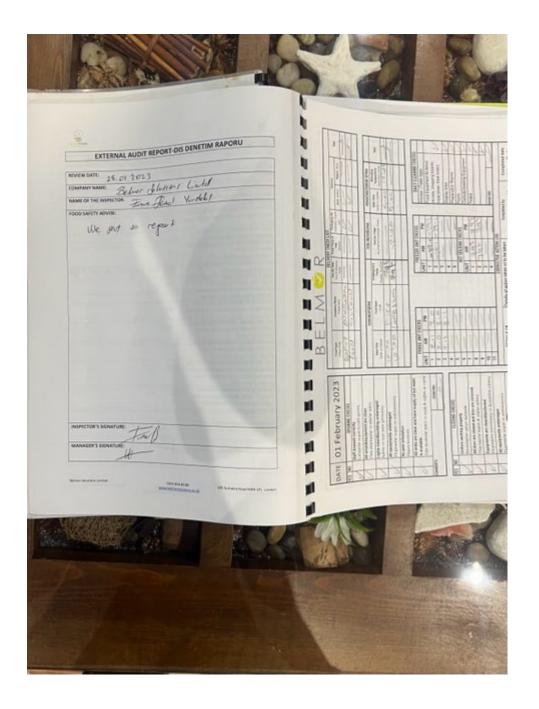
EXHIBIT 005 IMAGES OF FOOD SAFETY PACK

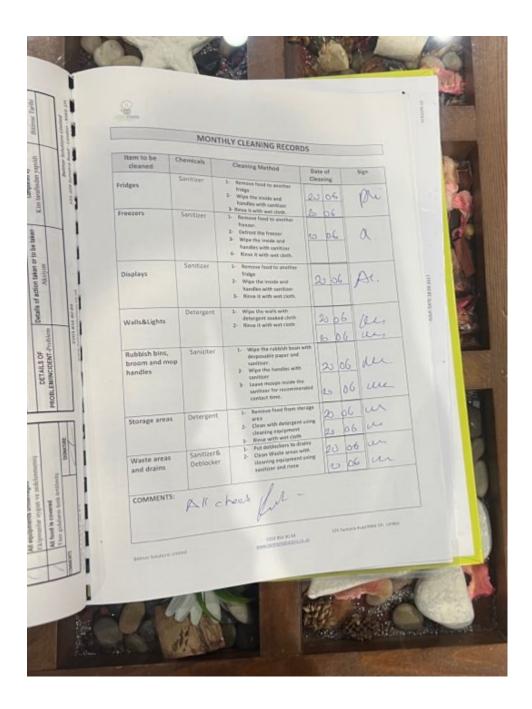


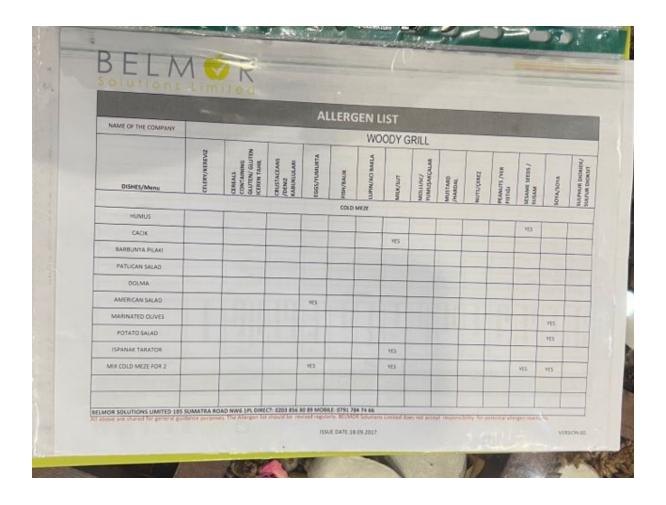


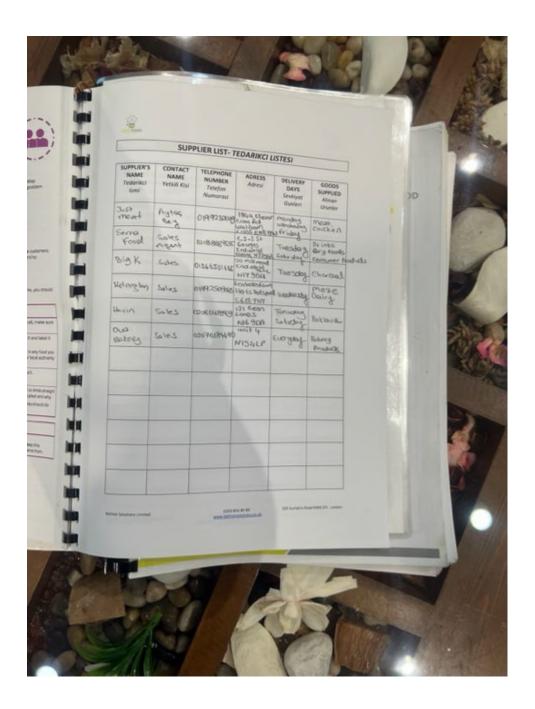


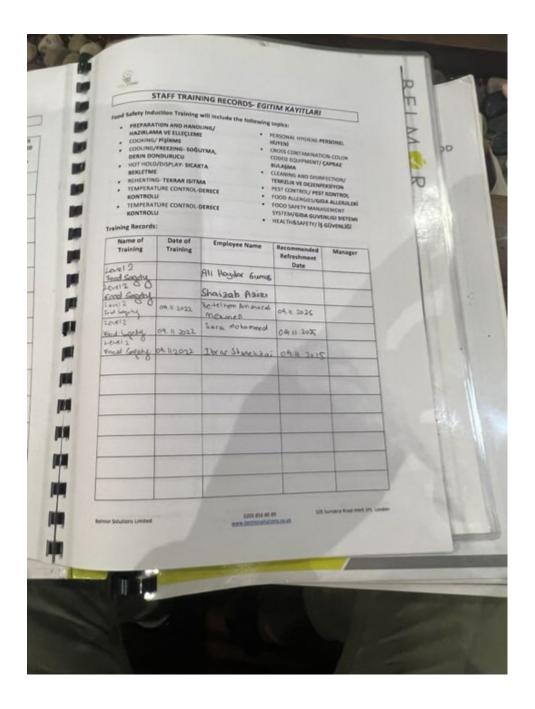


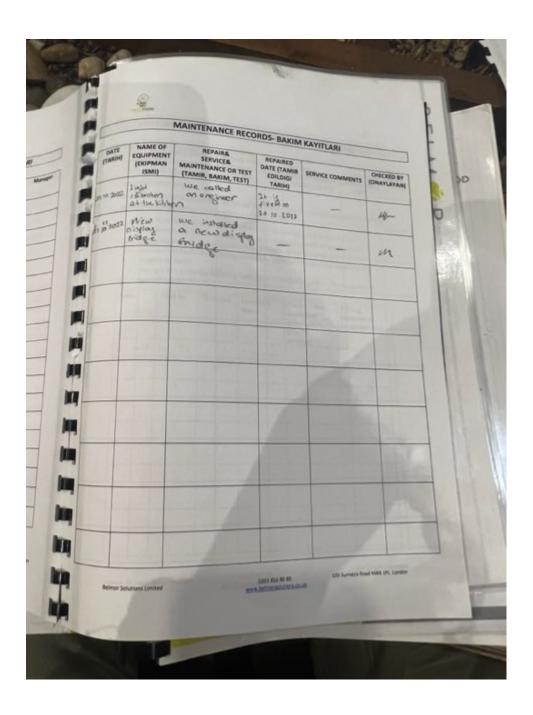


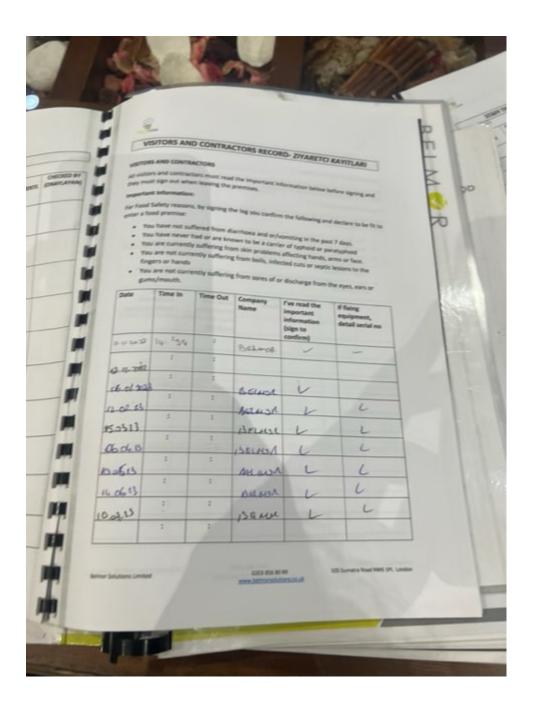


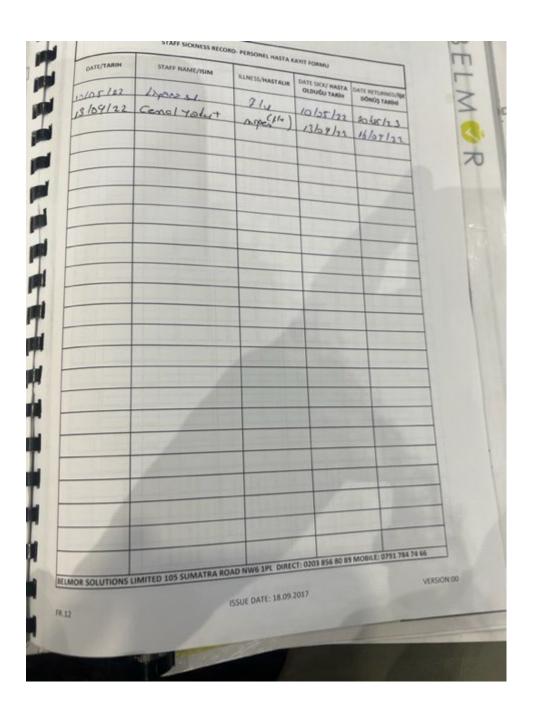


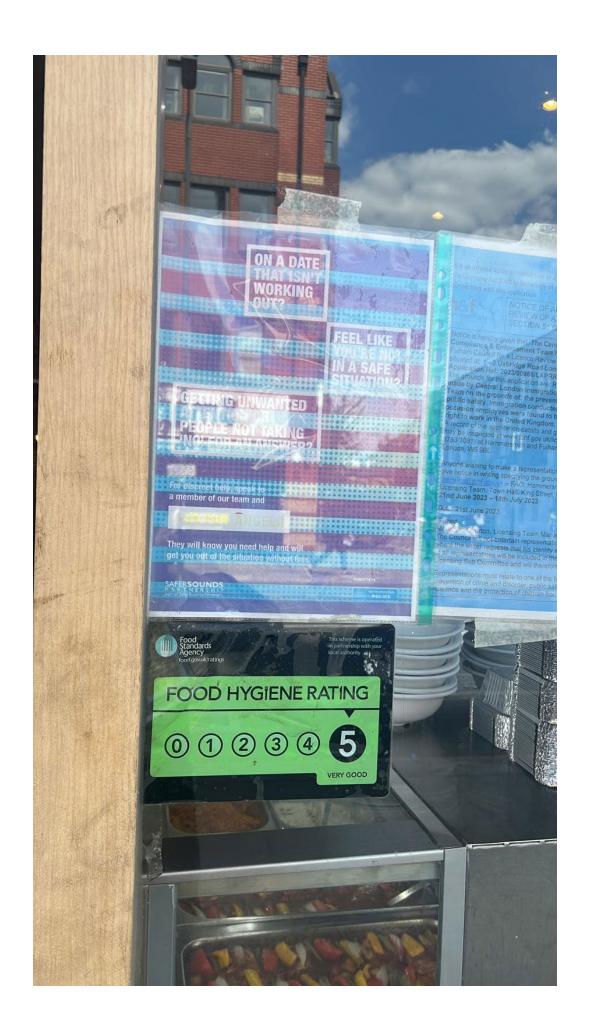














Woody Grill 1-3 Uxbridge Road London W12 8LJ

Introduction

- I, Michael Watson, of Better Compliance (formerly Licence Consultants Limited), make this statement to provide relevant information regarding a Review of the Premises Licence under section 51 Licensing Act 2003, for Woody Grill.
- 2. I have been a licensing consultant since 2004. My consultancy service has a respected reputation amongst the Police, local authorities, and our private clients.

3. Previously, I was:

- a. a civilian licensing officer with the Metropolitan Police Clubs and Vice Unit (CO14) from 1994 to 2001; and
- b. a licensing officer at the London Borough of Islington from February 2001 to June 2004.
- 4. I have attained the Certificate of Higher Education in Licensing Law from Birmingham University and I am a member of the Institute of Licensing (MIoL). I am also an Associate of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health (ACIEH). My role as a consultant is to work in partnership with the statutory authorities. I have given evidence at Licensing Committees, planning appeals, and licensing appeals before Magistrates and the Crown Court.
- 5. I have been an independent licensing consultant for over seventeen years. I have worked with a wide variety of premises including

bettercompliance.co.uk

nightclubs, bars, restaurants, and hotels. My retainer clients include The London Park Lane Hilton (Westminster), the Truman Brewery complex (Tower Hamlets), The Outernet – HERE and The Lower Third (Camden), The Piano Works (Islington and Westminster), The Windmill Theatre Soho (Westminster), Tape London (Westminster), The Box Soho (Westminster) , Cirque Le Soir (Westminster), Reign (Westminster), Raffles (Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea), Tabu (Westminster), Swingers Golf (City of London and Westminster), Lio London (Westminster) and The Night Group – Night Tales and NTs Loft (Hackney).

- 6. I am the co-author of the book, "Staying Open An Essential Guide for Managers of Licensed Premises".
- 7. I have worked with many venues, in many different environments, to design successful management procedures to ensure the promotion of the Four Licensing Objectives, current best practice and compliance with legislation and regulations.

Instructions and Scope of Work

- 8. I am instructed by Mr Marcus Lavell, Keystone Law, regarding the Review.
- 9. I have been provided with the Review application and the premises licence for Woody Grill.
- 10. My instructions are to provide a report on the compliance plan for Woody Grill that would ensure compliance with premises licence conditions, Right to Work requirements, and promotion of the four Licensing Objectives.
- 11.I confirm that, notwithstanding that I have been engaged as a consultant,
 I have prepared this Witness Statement together with all opinions
 expressed herein, as an independent professional licensing consultant.

Licensing Compliance Plan

12. The plan is in two parts; (1) implementation of an online compliance

system, and (2) conduct regular audits of right to work records for the

premises.

Online Compliance System

Report Support is a unique online compliance system for licensed

premises. It has been designed by a team of experts with vast

experience in licensing enforcement, working with leading night-time

economy operators.

14. Report is a secure digital system for licensing due diligence, providing a

centralised platform for recording all compliance activities.

15. Key features of Report Support include a digital daily records system, for

compliance checks, safety checklists, positive guest welfare

interventions, and incident reports.

16. We have created a section within the Report Support system to record

right to work compliance checks and documentation.

17. The right to work section of Report Support allows the following

information to be recorded for each member of staff;

Full name:

Employee number:

Nationality:

Is right to work required? Yes/No

If yes, original proof of right to work documents checked and colour

copies date stamped? Yes/No

Document(s) uploaded? Yes/No

Checked by (manager's name):

Date checked: XX/XX/XXXX

Expiry date of right to work XX/XX/XXXX

Maximum hours allowed to work per week? Yes/No

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If yes, what is maximum number of hours? XX

Hourly wage rate: £XX:XX

18. The system allows for the secure digital storage of employees' right to

work documents.

19. The system will send an automatic e-mail alert to a prescribed list of e-

mail recipients when an employee's right to work expires.

20. The manager in charge of the premises needs to confirm two statements

on the system in regard to employees' right to work:

Right to work checks carried out on all persons that are carrying out work

within the Premises, whether paid or otherwise, temporary, or

permanent, before those persons commence work. Yes/No

Documentation uploaded for each employee: date stamped colour

copies of all documents produced, the name of the person who has

checked the original documents and confirmation that the said person

has seen the original documents, any enquiries made and a right to work

checklist with the relevant box (es) ticked. Yes/No

21. There are different user permissions. A normal user will be able to add

and view records. A user with admin permission will be able to add, view

and amend records.

22. The system has the functionality to run reports of all employees' right to

work statuses and their respective expiry dates. This enables audits of

the staff working at the premises. The system automatically sends an

alert to a prescribed list of e-mail recipients when the next annual audit

is due.

23. Users can access the system on any device with a browser. It works on

portable devices with either IOS or Android operating systems.

- 24. Multiple users can access the system at any one time, viewing records and entries in real time, allowing for oversight and supervision by operational management and head office.
- 25. The system can quickly and easily show enforcement officers right to work records and checks at any time.

Audits

- 26. Comprehensive audits of the right to work checks at the premises will be conducted by a qualified consultant to ensure compliance with right to work requirements and specific conditions attached to the Premises Licence.
- 27. The audits measure the success and effectiveness of operational procedures and aim to build a body of positive due diligence evidence for the premises. They also serve as a management tool; giving confidence that the premises is compliant and acts as an early warning system if issues are identified.
- 28. The audits are conducted at a minimum of once every 6 months.
- 29. The audits are unannounced and are carried out when the venue is trading at peak times.
- 30. The audits will check the right to work of all persons working at the premises at the time of the audit as well as checking historical records for the previous 6 months.

Conclusions

- 31. The measures detailed in this statement will give the business a highly effective means of managing right to work compliance.
- 32. The compliance plan requires a clear commitment from the leadership of the business. I have seen that the business has been fully committed to implementing and enthusiastically maintaining the compliance plan.

33. As such, I have no reason to believe that there is any risk of a repetition of the events which triggered the review.

I confirm that I have made clear which facts and matters referred to in this report are within my own knowledge and which are not. Those that are within my own knowledge I confirm to be true. The opinions I have expressed represent my true and complete professional opinions on the matters to which they refer.

Signed:

Dated: 30th July 2023

Michael Watson