

From: Tucker Matt: H&F

Sent: 10 June 2025 09:55

To: 'Nicky Richards - The Secrets Group' <nicky@thesecretsgroup.com>

Cc: Overton Adrian: H&F <Adrian.Overton@lbhf.gov.uk>

Subject: RE: Secrets Hammersmith Hearing 11th June

Dear Nicky – thank you for your ongoing patience whilst we consulted with Legal.

I have been informed that the statement from Stephen Less' and two other third parties (listed as Appendix 1 and 2) can be passed on to the Sub-Committee, and all other parties, as a Supplementary Agenda Item (attached). However, as we both know, Appendix 1 and 2, would only be classed as supporting statements as they are not considered valid Representations made within the consultation period:

- Appendix 1 was not classed as a valid Representation because it was sent to us outside the consultation period.
- Appendix 2 was never received by us (as it was sent to the wrong e-mail address), and sent after the public consultation ended, so cannot be considered a valid Representation.

Kind regards

Matt Tucker

Interim Licensing Policy and Administration Team Leader

Licensing

Place Department

Hammersmith & Fulham Council

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From: Nicky Richards - The Secrets Group <nicky@thesecretsgroup.com>

Sent: 02 June 2025 14:14

To: Tucker Matt: H&F <Matt.Tucker@lbhf.gov.uk>

Cc: Overton Adrian: H&F <Adrian.Overton@lbhf.gov.uk>

Subject: Secrets Hammersmith Hearing 11th June

Hi Matt

I hope you are well.

Please find attached a witness statement from Stephen Less, Director of Secrets Hammersmith. Please include this document in the bundle notes for the Secrets Hammersmith hearing on 11th June.

We note we have not received any video footage as referred to in page 4, 8, 45 and 48 of the representations attached, and now assume given the email exchanges in April that the officers have decided it will not be circulated to members or ourselves in advance of the hearing.

Please find as follows a list of who will be attending the Hearing -

Sarah Le Fevre, Barrister representing Secrets Hammersmith

Suzanne Davies, Consultant

Stephen Less, Secrets Hammersmith Director

Alex Findlay, Secrets Hammersmith Operations Manager

Elena Grigorescu, Secrets Hammersmith Club Manager

Please confirm receipt of this email by return.

Thanks.

Kind regards

Nicky

Nicky Richards

Technical Manager

nicky@thesecretsgroup.com

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SECRETS

30th May 2025

APPLICATION FOR THE RENEWAL OF THE SEV LICENCE IN RESPECT OF SECRETS, 62 GLENTHORNE ROAD, HAMMERSMITH - WITNESS STATEMENT OF STEPHEN LESS.

1. My name is Stephen Less. I am the owner of Secrets at 62 Glenthorne Road, Hammersmith. I have been involved in the entertainment industry for over fifty years and currently operate other leisure venues in the capital. I take my responsibilities as Secrets' Director extremely seriously.
2. Secrets acquired the premises in July 1997. The premises had previously operated as a noisy, unsafe disco. Secrets completely transformed the property, spending considerable sums in order to renovate the building and commence trading as a table dancing club.
3. The premises are located close to high volume alcohol premises (which Secrets is not), namely the Stonemasons Arms located diagonally opposite the entrance to Secrets and the Dartmouth Castle which is a four minute walk away. In addition there is an off licence called Save 4 You which is located less than a minute walk from Secrets and is open until midnight Monday to Saturday.
4. Secrets seeks the renewal of the SEV licence. The application is made on a 'no change' basis. To be clear, in particular, no changes are sought to the operating hours; there appears to be a misconception on behalf of some of the objectors in this regard. The current trading hours are 9pm until 4am Tuesday to Saturday.
5. Secrets is not a high volume, alcohol driven venue. An entrance fee of £20 before 11pm and £25 after 11pm is charged which assists in maintaining manageable customer levels. The average number of customers per night is 33. The average number of staff per night is 10 with 2/3 door staff. The average number of dancers is 15.
6. Secrets seeks to create an ambience in which customers and dancers can have a conversation, so music levels are not high. In accordance with this operational policy Secrets does not hire or employ a DJ, there is no disco and no dance floor. Also to distinguish Secrets from public houses we do not serve bottled beers either at the bar or at the tables and all our drinks are premium priced.
7. We operate very strict management controls ensuring customer and staff safety. Staff are all made aware to ensure implementation of the policies, including recording of any incidents should they occur. The incident sheet is reviewed daily by senior management and any necessary action is taken, as appropriate, however, incidents of disorder are extremely rare. We also have rules for customers which are published throughout the premises including on the tables. In addition there are welfare policies for the maintenance of dancers' wellbeing. Dancers report any concerns to management or security and issues are dealt with at once. Management meet with dancers regularly, again to ensure their wellbeing. I was delighted to receive a positive endorsement of the support that we provide for the dancers following a visit to the premises by Adrian Overton from London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham Council and Caterina Giammarresi of VAWG (Ending Violence Against Women and Girls) on site. Caterina spent time meeting with a number of dancers. The feedback from the dancers as to how they are treated was very positive and no issues or concerns were raised. The dancers were very supportive of Secrets.

----- Page 1 of 3 -----

The Hammersmith Bar and Lounge Limited

62 Glenthorne Road, Hammersmith, London W6 0LR. Tel: 020 8563 7974 Reg. in England 13223537



@SecretsClubsLdn

Email: info@thesecretsgroup.com



Secrets Clubs

Web: www.secrets-clubs.co.uk

SECRETS

8. I have been made aware of and viewed a video relating to an incident outside the venue in November 2024. As I have stated incidents of disorder, alcohol related or otherwise are extremely rare. As I also mentioned, senior management thoroughly investigate any incidents of this nature. We are grateful to the local resident for the video footage which assisted our investigation. The incident relates to two male customers who were rude to one of the dancers who became aggressive when staff asked the men to be more respectful and behave appropriately. Security sought to diffuse the situation and escort the customers from the premises. Unfortunately, whilst he thought he was helping, the barman also got involved in the situation and remained involved once the matter had been taken outside. The customers continued to be aggressive outside but desisted and dispersed once they were informed that the police had been called. We maintain extensive CCTV coverage throughout the premises inside and out, to include coverage in the immediate vicinity of the venue and in accordance with our licence conditions. We retained footage of the relevant incident in order to assist with our investigations and those of the police.

As a result of the incident we have taken the following action:

- a. The barman was suspended whilst we investigated the matter. Following those investigations, we have terminated his employment with Secrets.
 - b. The Manager and Assistant Manager have undertaken SIA training to update their management and security experience.
 - c. In the unlikely event that there should be any repetition of such an incident, the customer would be ejected and staff, security and management would remain in reception with the outer doors of the venue closed, pending the arrival of the police.
9. In order to ensure there is no disturbance to local residents, after midnight dancers and employees are not allowed to smoke outside the front of the premises.
10. I am aware that the SEV renewal application has attracted a number of objections from local residents. As a member of the community I am keen to address the concerns that have been raised. First, I would like to mention that the police are not objecting, which is significant. The police have made it clear at previous hearings that crime related issues diminished considerably following the change of operation from the previous owners from a noisy disco to table dancing club. It is generally accepted that there are fewer incidents of crime and disorder associated with table dancing clubs than bars and nightclubs. In fact, we are regularly asked by the police to provide CCTV footage of external areas to assist them with their enquiries unrelated to Secrets.
11. As far as the issues of urination and littering are concerned, it is my view that such accusations are levelled at Secrets inappropriately. As I have stated, Secrets is not an alcohol led venue and we provide sufficient toilet facilities for our small number of customers. The toilets are supervised and no queuing is involved and therefore it is not necessary for customers of Secrets to urinate outside. In our view it is more likely that those urinating in public places are coming from other venues and not from Secrets. As far as the litter related issues are concerned, again as I have stated Secrets does not serve bottled beer to customers and accordingly the litter is not emanating from Secrets.

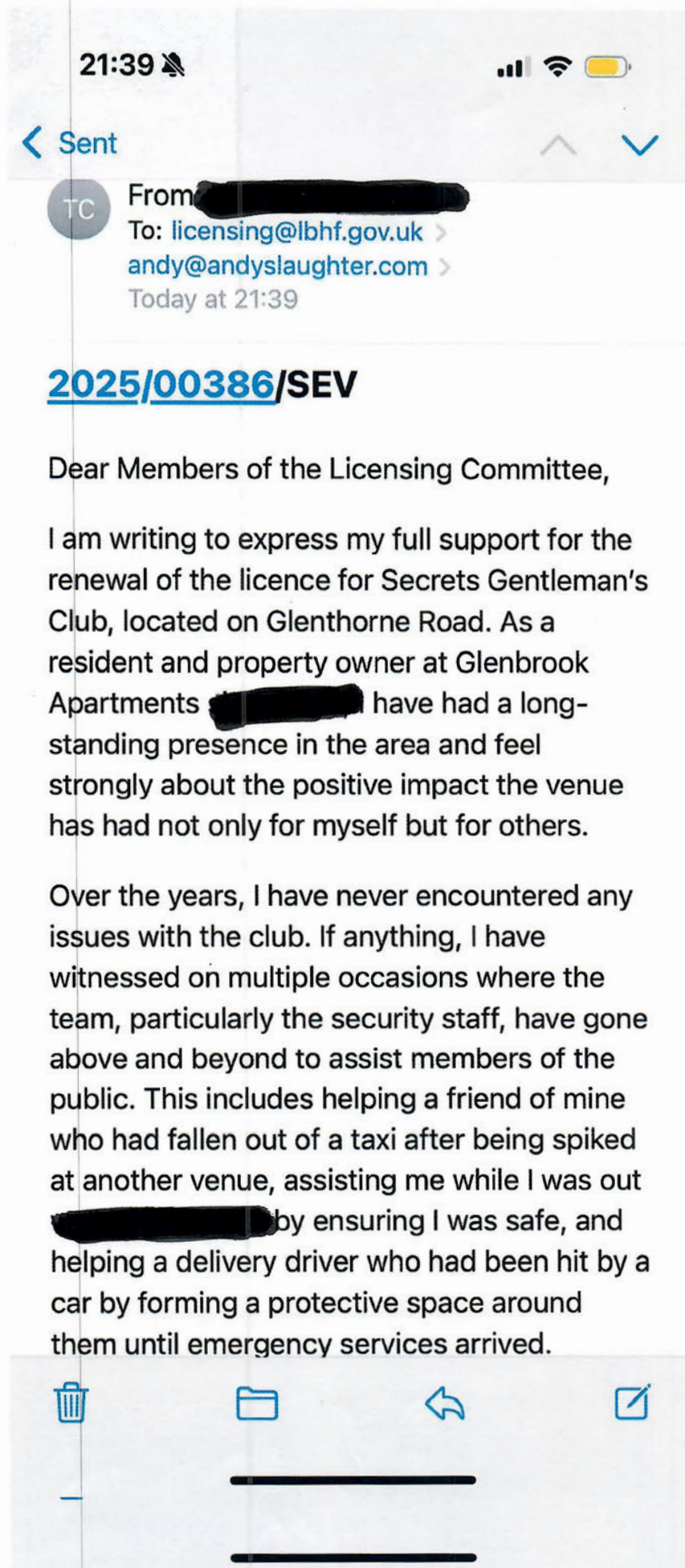
SECRETS

12. As far as I am aware, the situation is the same as far as parking is concerned. The majority of our customers arrive on foot or by taxi and not by private car. There is prominent signage at the premises reminding customers to leave quietly and with respect for local residents. Customers are asked to wait inside until their taxi arrives. Doorstaff supervise those leaving and ensure that they do so quietly and orderly. Customers generally leave in manageable numbers over the entire night. At the end of the night all dancers are escorted by doorstaff to their transport home which is usually by taxi or collection.
13. As I have stated, Secrets has operated since 1997 and we pride ourselves on being a responsible member of the community. In order to demonstrate this, I would like to refer the Committee to support expressed by a local resident, who wishes to remain anonymous, who informed us of their support and set out their comments in a letter (attached at appendix 1 to this statement) in which they clearly express how much they value Secrets. I'm grateful for their support, which was unsolicited, and extremely proud of Secrets' staff for the role they are playing in helping the community. In my experience, it is unusual for people to go to the trouble of writing an unsolicited letter of support, however, I believe their comments reflect feedback we have had from other members of the community who often tell us how the presence of security staff outside Secrets makes them feel safe.
14. I have also been made aware of a letter of support from Mr. Peter Elcock (attached at appendix 2 to this statement) who also states how safe he feels at the venue and how professionally the premises are operated. Again this letter was unsolicited and I am grateful to Mr. Elcock for taking the time and trouble to show his support. I believe this reflects how the staff are trained to operate professionally and be responsible, caring representatives of the community.
15. I take my responsibilities as a Director extremely seriously. Also, I am keen to work with the communities in which we operate. To that end, I have previously offered to meet with residents and make my contact details available, which I have done in the past at Secrets and which I am content to do again. I hope it is apparent from the unsolicited letters of support that this ethos of cooperation is one that I insist on from my staff and which I believe is being delivered at Secrets. I am, of course, happy to assist the Committee further in any way that I can but subject to that I would invite the Committee to grant the application on the terms sought.

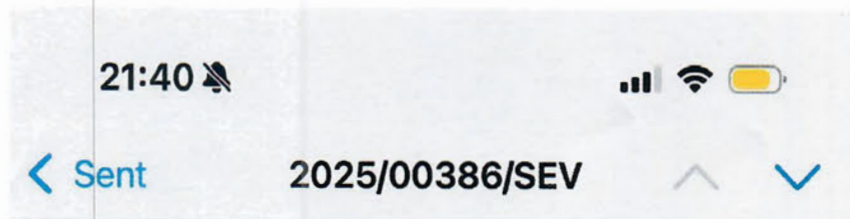
Signed.....
Stephen Less

Date 30-5-2025

APPENDIX 1



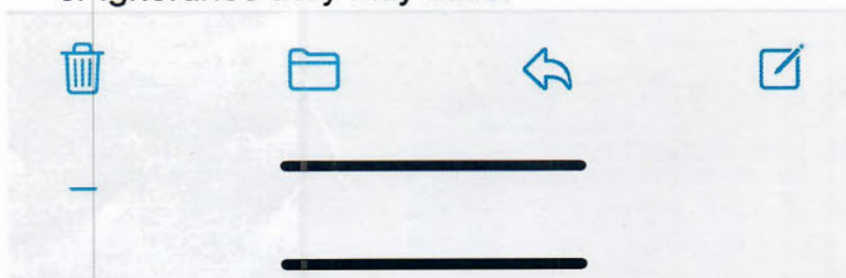
APPENDIX 1



In another instance, when I had lost my keys and needed to wait for someone to come with a spare set, the club's staff kindly provided me with a safe space. The security team, bar staff, management, reception team and other members of Secrets, have consistently been friendly, professional, and welcoming. I am also greeted by name whenever I pass by.

The presence of Secrets provides me with a sense of safety and reassurance, particularly during late hours. Whether returning from a night out [REDACTED] I always feel safer knowing their team is nearby and looking out for the local community.

I respectfully urge the Committee to renew the club's licence. I firmly believe the club brings a valuable and often overlooked sense of safety, respect, and community to our street. Those opposing the renewal should consider that this venue has been on Glenthorne Road for a number of years now and any objections should be dismissed, as I feel this is down to uninformed judgments. Many of us moved here fully aware of the club's presence, and I believe it is unreasonable to attempt to change this based on individual preferences or ignorance they may have.



APPENDIX 1

Thank you for your time and consideration. I would also welcome provided any further assistance should this be required in order to support the renewal of Secrets.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted signature]

Dear [Redacted], thank you for your e-mail and I hope you are well.

Regrettably, the deadline for public comment on the Secrets Renewal passed last Friday at midnight. Therefore, we cannot consider your comments as a representation in this case.

Kind regards

Matt Tucker
Interim Licensing Policy and Administration
Team Leader
Licensing
Place Department
Hammersmith & Fulham Council

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E: Matt.Tucker@lbhf.gov.uk

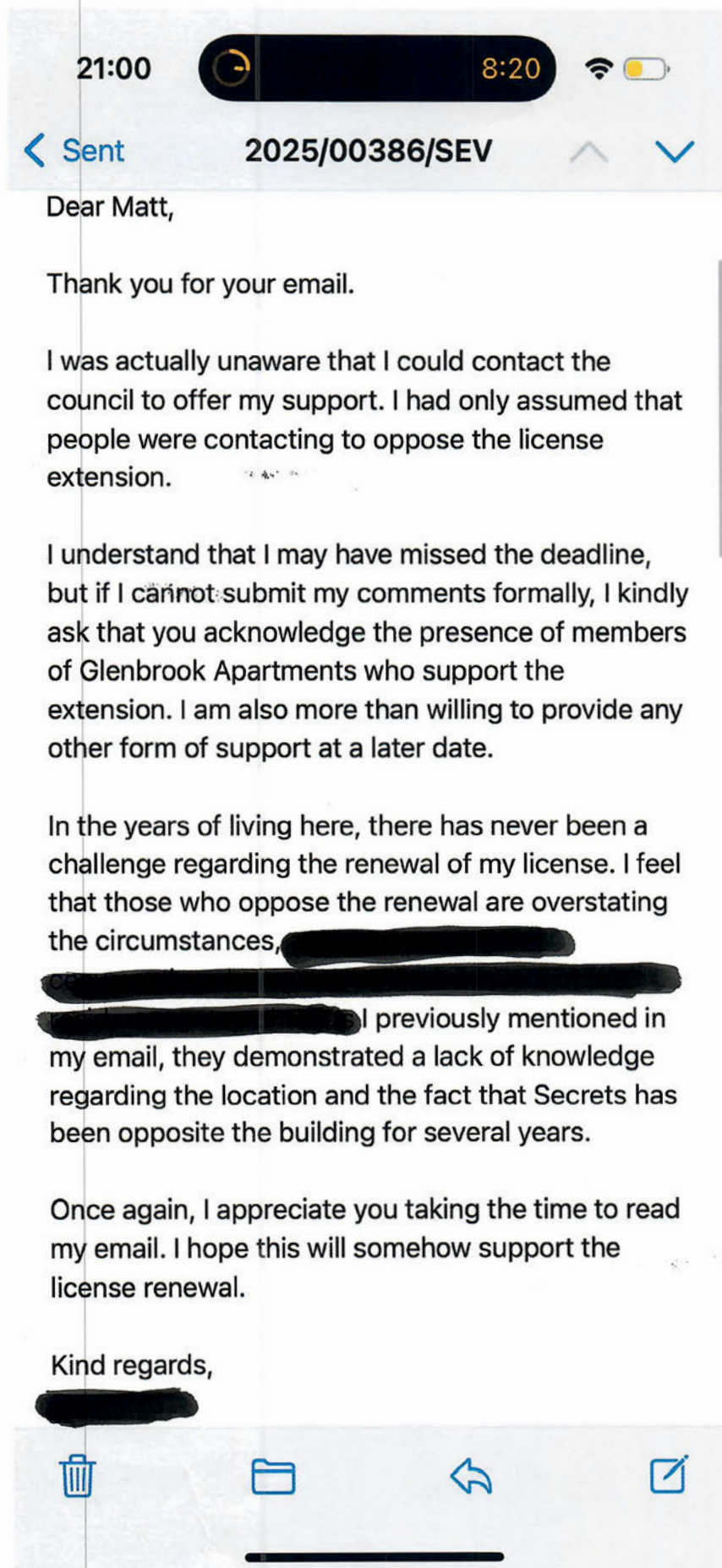
W: www.lbhf.gov.uk



Have you signed up to our email notifications to receive alerts of relevant applications received by



APPENDIX 1



APPENDIX 2

PRIVATE AND CONFIDENTIAL: CLUB at 62 GLENTHORNE ROAD W6 0LR

P

100 licensing@bchf.co.uk
24/04/25 23:00

1

To whom it may concern
Premises at Secrets, 62 Glenthorne Road, Hammersmith W6 0LR

I have been a resident of Hammersmith and Fulham for over 13 years now and currently reside at Wardo Avenue, Fulham, SW6 6RB

It has come to my attention that the gentlemen's club, Secrets in Glenthorne Road has been the subject of some complaints from the local neighbours

Although I am unaware of the nature of these complaints, I am writing to express my support for the club

On the occasions I have been there, I have always been made very welcome have felt most comfortable there

The club manager, all staff and the ladies who work there are polite, professional, easy to talk provide what I regard as an important service and function for our community

The venue has a pleasant, relaxed and calm environment and seems to me to be run most professionally and safely and the staff behave as such

I do believe it is important to have spaces like this in our borough which offer a safe, relaxed and enjoyable environment for our residents and others

Security, I would say, is most robust and again professional and I have never witnessed anything untoward. When leaving the club, people do so quietly and with due respect to the neighbours

I understand the venue has been open for many years and I believe it should continue as such

I hope this letter of support is helpful in dealing with the matter

Yours faithfully,