

Community safety unit



Kent
Police



Ashford Police Community Safety Unit

Ashford Police Station, Tufton Street, Ashford, Kent TN23 1BT
Telephone: 01233 896354

Date: 26th October 2018

Dear Mr Sahargul Ahmadzai,

Re: Codfather, 15 High St, Ashford TN24 8TH.

Thank you for meeting with myself and Mr Julian Postlethwaite (Licensing Officer – Ashford Borough Council) on Tuesday 23rd October 2018 I am writing to you to clarify our discussions.

The purpose of the visit was to discuss an incident which took place on 7th October 2018 at 04:47 hours in the High Street, Ashford.

Kent Police were contacted regarding a disturbance taking place. Various persons were seen fighting with each other, and it was by all accounts a volatile situation which went on for some time.

The CCTV footage was shown to you during our meeting so that we could discuss what had taken place. I asked you “What lead to members of staff picking up weapons?”. You informed me that you had closed at 04:00 hours and you were upstairs, your manager was downstairs cashing up. You told me that a fight took place by another premises, and your manager’s car was hit. You said that people had ‘knuckle dusters’. You said that they were your customers but they were drunk. You told them to go away from the shop.

You told me that your premises is normally closed at 04:00 hours, but that members of staff are inside cleaning the premises until 05:00 hours, customers were not allowed to use the upstairs areas, which were private.

I specifically highlighted the issue of a male seen with what I believe to be a kebab knife, a long bladed knife over a foot long. A male who walks towards the Codfather appears to re-emerge from the premises with a long knife held behind his back in public and walks towards the scuffling groups. Thank fully he is encouraged to return the knife to your premises without using it. You said that your staff would never come out with a knife into the public space, when I showed you the footage you denied that it was a knife, or that you knew who the male was. I find this hard to believe.

You accepted that the Codfather does use kebab knives and skewers but these are kept inside the premises. You explained that your premises serves fish/chips, kebabs and burgers and that you use the upstairs for accommodation and storage space.

You told me that your premise has a ‘panic alarm’ in the premises. I asked you why you had not pressed it during such an incident. You explained that the shop was closed, and the alarm does not work when the shop is ‘closed’. Various points that were caught on CCTV were discussed, including a staff member swinging what looked to be a cricket bat at a member of the public, and another staff member who appeared to be hitting out with a broom or mop handle at a member of the public. I accept that anyone would be annoyed about having their car damaged; but picking up a baseball bat (or any other weapon) for whatever reason goes well beyond self-defence, considering it had to be retrieved first. Kent Police will not tolerate anyone bringing weapons onto the streets – for whatever purpose. Your manager was arrested and cautioned for an offence of possession an offensive weapon in a public place.

You confirmed that the premises opening times were 11:30 until 0500 hours Friday and Saturday but that you closed early because of this fight.

Kent Police asked you to attend the Police Station so that this incident could be discussed and a plan put in place to tackle the concerns Police have that the Codfather was not promoting the Licensing Objective of ‘Prevention of Crime and Disorder’ and ‘Public Safety’. Kent Police asked for you to provide footage for the incident on the 7th October 2018. You brought a CCTV hard drive into the Police Station. However without any of the cables I would not be able to access the information, this is because if connected to an incorrect power supply it would damage/destroy the unit. I considered seizing the unit; however you informed me that you did not have a replacement for it. Therefore if I had seized it, it would have caused you to breach



conditions on your Premises Licence. The decision not to seize it was made when you said that it only recorded for 24 hours. You also informed me that you had not checked the equipment for two to three years which is a concern to me. It therefore seemed highly unlikely that it would have contained any footage from the 7th October 2018. Having said this – **I would recommend that you check the footage yourself, as of course this could go to support your version of events that no member of staff would have taken a knife into the public space. This can be shown by you in support of your claim.**

It was explained that Kent Police have concerns and that we wished you to accept conditions onto your licence which will assist you in the promotion of the Licensing Objectives. These were read out and each one discussed. The conditions were:

CONDITIONS:

CCTV

1. CCTV will be provided in the form of a recordable system, capable of providing pictures of evidential quality in all lighting condition particularly facial recognition.
 - Cameras shall encompass all ingress and egress areas to the premises and all areas where the supply of late night refreshments occurs.
 - Equipment must be maintained in good working order, be correctly time and date stamped, recordings **MUST** be kept on the hard drive, kept for a minimum period of 28 days, and handed to Police or member of the Local Authority upon reasonable request.
 - The premises licence holder must ensure at all times an appointed member of staff is capable and competent at downloading CCTV footage in a recordable format to the Police and Local Authority upon reasonable request.
2. Notices are to be placed and displayed on the door and tills advising that CCTV is in operation.

SIA Door staff

3. When the premises are open for trading after 23:59 hours, the premises licence holder will clearly identify a person who is accountable for the business. This person will be present in the premises until the business closes for trade

At all times if trading beyond 23:59 these premises must employ two Security Industry Authority door supervisors. These door supervisors are to be dedicated to the role and not just working on the premises. They are to remain on the premises until the premises are clear of all members of the public. All door supervisors must ensure their badges are being worn and displayed whilst working and wear reflective clothing that can be easily and clearly identifiable on CCTV.

Prominent clear and legible notices will be displayed at the exits asking customers to respect the needs of local residents and to leave the premises and area quietly.

An incident book is to be maintained at all times and any incident relating to crime and disorder reported to the Police immediately.

TRAINING

4. All staff, paid or unpaid will be trained with regard to 'conflict management'. A register of completed training should be kept at the premises and be made available to Police and Local Authority on demand
Refresher training will take place on an annual basis.

All staff will have individual training records that detail the date and nature of training. All records will be kept for a period of 2 years.



TIMINGS

5. Last orders taken at 04:30 (to ensure that the premises can close of 05:00 hours as per the premises licence)

During discussions you agreed that you would accept the CCTV condition and that you would replace the system, and improve it.

In respect of the door staff – you said that there were not problems, and that there wasn't any point as the fight took place outside not inside, and that you were not a pub.

In relation to the Training for staff, you said that you already do this, and that each member of staff has a certificate. Therefore, I believe this can easily be incorporated in these changes.

In respect of 'Timings' - Although this would appear to fit into what you currently do in terms of closing at 0400 hours and staff cleaning until 0500 hours. However you were not happy to change this, because it would affect your business in terms of being competitive with another nearby food outlet.

I asked you if you would reconsider the use of door staff at the Codfather, and you said that you would not.

I informed you that I could not force you to take on these conditions however; I felt that they were necessary to promote the Licensing Objectives. I then informed you that the only option left open to me would be to apply for a review of your premises licence. The Council will then be able to view the footage/consider the options suggested by Kent Police and to assess what changes they wish to make in terms of promoting the objectives at your venue.

I strongly recommend that you approach the Council to vary your Premises Licence to include the above conditions. Should Ashford Borough Council not receive your application within ten working days of the date of this letter then I shall have to proceed with the 'Review Application'. This action would be to prevent crime and disorder and to promote public safety.

Yours Sincerely

PC 10699 Pringle
Licensing Officer
Community Safety Unit
Ashford Police Station.