

RISDON & RISDON

SHROPSHIRE, ENGLAND

To whom it may concern.

As a fellow Shrewsbury business owner, I am writing in support of Belinda Griffiths' application to expand her venue the blueBAR.

Shrewsbury is an incredibly unique town and we are very lucky that its Borders location gained it valuable trade with Wales over the centuries, resulting in the wonderful buildings we have here today. Its rural location also spared it the need to rapidly expand or mass demolish old parts to make way for industrial development or larger population.

History and geography have been very kind and we have a beautiful town full of charm and character.

With more and more people choosing to (and having to) stay in the UK for their holidays and days out, Shrewsbury is a gem of a place to visit. Often voted one of The Best Places to Live (The Sunday Times), Happiest Places to Live (Rightmove survey), Best Small Town City Break (The Guardian) we have a very healthy local, national and international tourist trade.

For town centre businesses though these doorstep advantages do not guarantee success. It is a constant struggle to stay ahead. Prior to COVID-19 every business in the town had similar issues of:

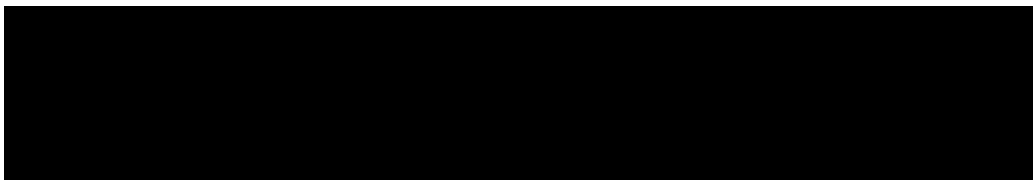
- closure due to flooding, or the town being completely cut off due to flooding.
- the rising cost of Business Rates
- in winter pavements not being cleared allowing people to easily access the town
- high parking charges sending shoppers to out of town stores. Or to Telford or Birmingham.

However, as is extremely apparent, the last 12 months have been totally crippling.

Belinda opened her garden in the summer of 2020 when there was a great need for outside social space. She created somewhere people could meet safely at a social distance, for a relaxed drink. It was an immediate success and also won a national award for customer innovation (Spring Autumn Fair – In-store Creativity Award 2020).

Belinda's venue attracts the middle to high earning customer who appreciate style and quality. They have a good amount of disposable income and if visiting will spend with many other businesses throughout the town. These are exactly the sort of people Shrewsbury needs to encourage more of.

I believe the truly unique setting of blueBAR, combined with the look and feel of what Belinda and Wyle Blue World brings will be a huge asset to the town. She has created a destination that I think Shrewsbury should be shouting about. The intimate nature of blueBAR means it will never be a noisy, young persons venue but somewhere more exclusive and discerning.



It is in the perfect location of Wyle Cop where it will draw shoppers to the other smart businesses equally hoping that trade will again flourish. People are prepared to travel and the owners of The Lion & Pheasant, The Lion, Darwin's Townhouse, plus Airbnb need visitors.

If the blueBAR is stopped in its wonderful tracks it will be a disservice to everyone: Belinda as a business owner struggling through difficult times, the many traders and hotel owners in Shrewsbury and Shropshire as a whole who would also benefit, and the public who yearn for something special to bring back the fun of eating out and understand the importance of supporting independent businesses.

Yours faithfully



Carla Risdon
Founder
Risdon & Risdon

