

Representation on Gather application from Councillors Andy Boddington and Tracey Huffer (23/03757/LPREM)

Preamble

Gather is hosted in SY8 Studios, which is the first major investment in East Hamlet, Ludlow for decades. It has brought a near derelict former NHS building back into use without public funds. The concept of SY8 Studios is to create a space for artists and the community in the most socially deprived area in Ludlow.

Gather is an unusual concept. The core business is Hundred House Coffee, grinding and selling specialist coffee. This will partly subsidise the Gather activities; arts and writing spaces, workshops and family events. Films will be shown. Not films that would be shown at the Ludlow Assembly Rooms which needs a bigger audience but films by local filmmakers. We have a lot of filmmakers in the Marches. They will have the opportunity to show their films and then talk about them.

The alcohol licence allows people attending events such as films to have a drink, just like Ludlow Assembly Rooms. It will also provide an extra income and that is needed to support the non-profit activities.

Despite the social media storm, we are excited by this project. It is balanced approach that has the potential to not only support the local community but also the broader arts community in the Marches.

Conditions have been proposed by Public Protection and Licencing. We support those.

A number of objections relate to parking. Applications are currently in the planning system to restrict parking with an ANPR and registration system, which will also apply to SY8 Studios.

We are concerned that planning issues have become confused with licencing issues. Planning will be decided independently of this licencing application.

We fully support this project which is bringing much needed financial and social investment to East Hamlet which has very different demographics from the town centre. The alcohol licence will help Gather balance the books and create an ambience for some of the events and activities.

The prevention of crime and disorder

Shropshire Council and the applicant have agreed the following condition for the licence: "Entry to members of the public after 18:00 shall be restricted to individuals with pre-booked tickets / places and entry to individuals who turn up without a prior booking will be refused." We support this. The studios will not be a boozier (which would require a change of use class to sui generis). The layout of the building means it will not be a party venue. We have no concerns about crime and disorder.

Public safety

We have no concerns about public safety. The serving of alcohol is strictly controlled by licencing and would not be available to patients or drop-in customers.

The prevention of public nuisance

The contention here has been the impact on the hospital wards. SY8 Studios is designed so that social activities are furthest from the hospital wards. Amplified sound is banned by conditions unless there is secondary double glazing on east facing windows. Parking will be restricted by ANPR control. Notices will ask customers and visitors to leave quietly with respect for neighbours. We are confident there will no impact on the wards.

The protection of children from harm

There are no concerns about safeguarding children who will only attend the premises with parents.

Andy Boddington and Tracey Huffer, 11 January 2024.

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Andy Boddington

Shropshire Councillor for Ludlow North

