



Licensing Sub-Committee

MINUTES of the OPEN section of the Licensing Sub-Committee held on Thursday 20 November 2025 at 10.00 am at Innovation Space, Ground Floor, 160 Tooley Street, London SE1 2QH

PRESENT: Councillor Kath Whittam (in the chair)
Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle MBE
Councillor Ellie Cumbo (reserve)

**OTHER
AUTHORITIES
PRESENT:** P.C. Walter Minka Agyeman, Metropolitan Police Service

**OFFICER
SUPPORT:** Debra Allday, legal officer
Wesley McArthur, licensing officer
Esther Jones, licensing team leader (observing)
Andrew Weir, constitutional officer

1. APOLOGIES

The clerk opened the meeting.

In the absence of the chair, Councillor Dora Dixon-Fyle nominated Councillor Kath Whittam to chair the meeting. This was seconded by Councillor Ellie Cumbo.

The chair explained to the participants and observers how the meeting would run. Everyone then introduced themselves

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Barrie Hargrove. Councillor Ellie Cumbo was in attendance as the reserve member.

2. CONFIRMATION OF VOTING MEMBERS

The voting members were confirmed by a show of hands.

3. NOTIFICATION OF ANY ITEMS OF BUSINESS WHICH THE CHAIR DEEMS URGENT

There were none.

4. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS

There were none.

5. LICENSING ACT 2003: BERMONDSEY ARTS CLUB 102A TOWER BRIDGE ROAD, LONDON SE1 4TP - REVIEW

The licensing officer introduced the report. Members had no questions for the licensing officer.

The applicant for the review addressed the sub-committee. Members had questions for the applicant for the review.

The officer from the Metropolitan Police Service addressed the sub-committee. Members had questions for the police officer.

The other persons supporting the review addressed the sub-committee. Members had questions for the other persons.

The sub-committee noted the written representations of the other persons who were not present at the meeting.

The meeting adjourned for a comfort break at 11.25am. The meeting then reconvened at 11.35am.

The representatives from the premises then addressed the sub-committee. Members had questions for the representatives from the premises.

All parties were given up to five minutes for summing up.

The meeting adjourned at 12.18pm for the sub-committee to consider its decision.

The meeting reconvened at 1.30pm and the chair advised the attendees of the decision.

RESOLVED:

That the council's licensing sub-committee, having considered an application made under Section 51 of the Licensing Act 2003 submitted by an other person for the review of the premises licence issued in respect of Bermondsey Arts Club 102a Tower Bridge Road, London SE1 4TP having had regard to all relevant representations has decided to modify the premises licence.

Hours

Live music (indoors):	Sunday to Thursday: 09:00 to 22:30 Friday and Saturday: 09:00 to 00:30
Recorded music (indoors):	Sunday to Thursday: 09:00 to 22:30 Friday and Saturday: 09:00 to 00:30

Performance of dance (indoors):	Sunday to Thursday: 09:00 to 22:30 Friday and Saturday: 09:00 to 00:30
Late night refreshment (indoors):	Friday and Saturday: 09:00 to 00:30
The sale by retail of alcohol (on sales only):	Sunday to Thursday: 09:00 to 22:30 Friday and Saturday: 09:00 to 00:30
Opening hours	Sunday to Thursday: 09:00 to 23:00 Friday and Saturday: 09:00 to 01:00

Conditions

All conditions that form part of the minor variation namely:

- 1.1 That conditions 340 and 341 shall be removed and replaced with “That there shall be no glassware, alcohol or drinks permitted in the ground floor terrace area after 22:00.
- 1.2 That condition 344/429 shall be removed and replaced with “That customers shall not use the ground floor terrace area after 22:00 with the exception of those wishing to smoke which shall be limited to a maximum of five persons at anytime. This shall be monitored and controlled by staff or SIA registered door supervisors.
- 1.3 That the CCTV system installed shall be of high-definition quality in all lighting conditions and shall cover all public area inclusive of the frontage of the venue.
- 1.4 That an incident log shall be kept at the premises to record details of any of the following occurrences at the premises:
 - a. Instances of anti-social or disorderly behaviour.
 - b. Calls to the police or other emergency services.
 - c. All complaints received.
 - d. Any refusals of entry made.
 - e. Any ejections of people from the premises.
 - f. Any visits to the premises by the local authority or emergency services.
 - g. All malfunctions in respect of the CCTV system.
 - h. All crimes reported by customers or observed by staff.
 - i. Any other relevant incidents.

The incident log shall record the time, date, location in the premises and description of each incident, details of any action taken in respect of the incident and the printed name of the person reporting the incident and. The incident log shall be available / be accessible at the premises at all times that

the premises in use and shall be made immediately available to Police and authorised council officers on request. Details of incidents shall be recorded contemporaneously. If the incident log is a paper hardcopy then the signature of the person reporting the incident in the log shall also be included. All relevant staff employed at the premises shall be trained in the use of the incident log. Details of such training, including the printed name(s) of the trainee(s) and the date(s) that the training was given, shall be recorded in the staff training logs at the premises.

- 1.5 That 'Ask for Angela' posters (or posters relating to whatever similar scheme may be recommended by the council and / or the police at any time) shall be displayed in the female toilet facilities and kept free from obstructions at all times. All staff shall be trained in the 'Ask for Angela' scheme (or similar scheme) and shall perform the appropriate course of action in the event of a customer requesting assistance. Details of such training, including the printed name of the trainee and the date of the training, shall be recorded in the staff training logs at the premises and made immediately available to Police and authorised council officers on request.
- 1.6 That the premises will have a welfare and vulnerability policy. The policy shall include but not be limited to the following:
- a. A clear policy on how to prevent drinks spiking.
 - b. How customers alleging such are cared for and reported to police.

All new staff must receive this training before starting their role and all staff must have refresher training every 12 months. All training must be recorded, and these records must be made available immediately on request by Police and authorised council officers.

- 1.7 That the venue's dispersal policy shall be enforced by the venue at all times the venue is open. The policy shall assist with patrons leaving the premises in an orderly and safe manner. A copy of the dispersal policy shall be accessible at the premises at all times that the premises are in operation. The policy will include (but not limited to) the following:
- a. Details as to how customer/ staff egress at the premises shall be managed to minimise causing nuisance.
 - b. Details of the management of any 'winding down' period at the premises.
 - c. Details of the use of security and stewarding in respect of managing customer dispersal from the premises.
 - d. Details of any cloakroom facility at the premises and how it is managed.
 - e. Details of road safety in respect of customers leaving the premises.
 - f. Details of the management of ejections from the premises.
 - g. Details as to how any physical altercations at the premises are to be managed.

All relevant staff employed at the premises shall be trained in the latest version of the dispersal policy. Details of such training, including the printed name(s) of the trainee(s) and the date(s) that the training was given, shall be recorded in the staff training logs at the premises. If the dispersal policy is a paper document, then the signature of the trainees shall also be included. The dispersal policy shall be made immediately available to police and authorised council officers.

- 1.8 That the designated premises supervisor must identify the requirement for additional SIA registered door supervisors by way of a risk assessment, which must be made available for inspection by police and authorised council officers. Where the risk assessment identifies the need for additional door supervisors to be deployed, Door supervisors must be of sufficient in number to be able to control entry to the premises and deal with any instances of disorderly behaviour within the premises simultaneously. Door supervisors must remain at the premises until such time the premises are closed, and all members of the public have left the venue.
- 1.9 That where SIA registered Door Supervisors are employed, there must be a register of every SIA person employed at the premises that contains the following details:
 - a. Full name
 - b. Security Industry Authority licence number
 - c. Time and date each security staff starts and finishes duty.
 - d. Each entry must be signed by the door supervisors
 - e. That register must be kept fully always updated and remain at the licensed premises and be available for inspection immediately by police, authorised council officers, and the Security Industry Authority.
- 1.10 That there shall be a zero tolerance drugs and weapons policy undertaken at the premises:
 - a. Anybody found with / using drugs and / or weapons will be ejected from the premises and shall not be admitted to the premises again.
 - b. The details of any person found dealing drugs or using weapons will be taken (if possible) and given to the police.
 - c. Any person who is suspected of having drugs on their person will be asked to consent to a search, and should they refuse the search that person shall be ejected from the premises. All relevant staff shall be trained in respect of the premises' drug policy. The details of such training, including the printed name(s) of the trainee(s) and the date(s) that the training was given, shall be recorded in the staff training logs at the premises. The training logs shall be maybe immediately available to Police and authorised council officers upon request.

- d. That clearly legible signage shall be prominently displayed in the toilets where it can easily be seen and read by customers, advising to the effect that the taking of illegal drugs will not be tolerated at the premises. These notices shall be kept free from obstructions at all times.

1.11 That those customers leaving the venue after 00:00 shall be subject to a further search before re-admission.

The following conditions shall be amended as follows:

1.12 Condition 344: That no more than five customers be permitted up to ground level to smoke in the outside terrace area after 22:00 (only) each.

1.13 Condition 4AD: That there shall be two SIA registered door supervisors whenever the premises is open after 23:00 and will remain until 30 minutes after the last patron has left the premises.

1.14 Condition 808: That there shall be no admittance or re-admittance to the premises after 00:00.

1.15 Condition 813: That amplified music shall cease 30 minutes before closing time.

The following conditions shall be added to the licence:

1. That there will be litter picking will take place at least once every two hours and the last litter pick being made after the premises has closed.
2. That the premises will adopt the Women's Safety Charter.

Reasons

This was an application made by an other person for the review of the premises licence issued in respect of Bermondsey Arts Club 102a Tower Bridge Road, London SE1 4TP.

The licensing sub-committee heard from the applicant, who had also submitted a representation in support representation and also could be identified as other person 1.

The applicant complained that The Bermondsey Arts Club (BAC) was a persistent source of crime anti-social behaviour and disorder. Patrons of the premises would congregate outside the premises during opening hours and loiter after the premises closed drinking, fighting, shouting, playing music and litter the area. The corner of Grange Road and Tower Bridge Road outside the old Barclays Bank was a hotspot for anti-social behaviour, crime, and disorder.

The problems had been ongoing for a few years, but there had been a significant increase since the COVID lockdowns. The applicant had repeatedly raised issues with the premises which were largely dismissed with the BAC management who appeared either unwilling or unable accept any responsibility.

The applicant provided a log of incidents that had been witnessed by them and other residents, that dated back to July 2023 and contained in excess of 50 incidents as examples of crime and anti-social behaviour residents had experienced; many of the incidents included links with video footage.

The review application also referred to licence conditions that residents considered were breached regularly and cited: conditions 344, 346, 348, 429, 804, 808, and 813. Although members did not specifically question the applicant of the review about the breaches of these conditions, members have set out their observations later in this decision notice.

The licensing sub-committee heard from the Metropolitan Police Service representative who advised there had been 13 reports associated with the premises from the last two years, on the police systems. The officer's representation on pages 28 and 29 of the agenda explain the reasons why BAC could not be held fully accountable for the incidents. This could possibly also explain a slightly higher proportion of 'no further action' on these occasions.

The officer stated he had liaised with the premises management concerning the residents' complaints which had resulted in the premises submitting a minor variation that included conditions the police had recommended to them. That minor variation had received objections so was subsequently withdrawn by the premises. The minor variation application was included in the agenda pack together with the conditions.

The licensing sub-committee then heard from other person 4, and other persons 5 and 6 who were represented by a local resident.

Other person 4 advised that they lived directly opposite the BAC premises and that there had been issues with the premises over a sustained period. They advised that a log recording the incidents had been compiled.

The resident stated they had witnessed affray, fighting and assaults involving BAC patrons, some of which spilled onto the public highway, including the incident of a male being assaulted in Grange Road (by being repeatedly kicked in the head), patrons using drugs, patrons leaving the premises to urinate (on the Barclays Bank walls), drinks being taken out of the premises and consumed in the street, and patrons loitering on the public highway, causing obstructions to traffic.

The resident advised that they had approached BAC regularly about the issues, but BAC failed to do anything. The hours that the premises operated far exceeded those recommended in Southwark's statement of licensing policy 2021-2026 (SoLP). Because most of the incidents took place in the very early hours, other

person 4 stated that at the very least, the hours should be brought in line with the recommended policy hours.

The licensing sub-committee heard from a local resident who read statements on behalf of other persons 2 and 3 who were not in attendance. The statements outlined that both residents had repeatedly raised concerns with the premises concerning persistent disorder, noise and anti-social behaviour detailed in the logs presented to the sub-committee, and the lack of action taken by them undermined the licensing objectives.

The licensing sub-committee considered the representations from two other persons who supported the premises (a couple who were identified as other persons 7), who were not in attendance at the hearing.

The licensing sub-committee considered the representations from two other persons who supporting the review who were not in attendance at the hearing.

The licensing sub-committee then heard from the premises licence holder. The sub-committee members had also considered the premises licence holder's response to the incident and CCTV log prior to the hearing.

The premises had opened in 2014 and was a niche cocktail until approximately 2017. They previously had licences for two other premises which were unsuccessful and had to be closed. It was accepted by BAC that the premises was not the same as when it first opened. This was primarily due to the economic conditions which the whole of the hospitality industry was experiencing.

Turning to the allegations, BAC took the allegations seriously, but stressed that they were disadvantaged in so far as they had not been made aware of the extent of the resident upset nor had they been provided with either CCTV footage or the incident log prior to the review application. If both had been provided to BAC when they occurred, the BAC management would have been given the opportunity to properly review and investigate the incidents and been able to take remedial action.

Many of the incidents referred to people congregating, loitering, and causing noise, urination, and anti-social behaviour around the public bench opposite the venue. The premises licence holder emphasised that the bench was public street furniture, which the premises had no control over. BAC management had previously requested various agencies to remove/relocate the bench which had become a hub for the area's anti-social behaviour.

Despite this, the premises was advised that the bench was a valuable place for the elderly and vulnerable passers-by during the daytime. In the light of this, residents incorrectly attributed the anti-social behaviours the fault of the premises.

Regardless, the premises had heeded the residents' concerns and had invested in proactive neighbourhood safety patrols, that were carried out by our SIA security teams prior to start of each shift. The SIA walked around the surrounding streets, slowly and carefully checking for discarded items that could be used as weapons (e.g. sharp objects, metal bars etc.), broken bottles and hazardous waste near the charity bin outside the old Barclay's Bank site.

Concerning the littering and fly-tipping, the premises specified that the charity bin (outside Barclays Bank) attracted the fly-tipping of electrical goods and household items. The premises had previously contacted the council and reported the fly-tipping and the accumulated waste, in addition to requesting the removal of items that BAC considered were placed dangerously or obstructively.

Furthermore, BAC stressed that the incidents of 28 July and 9 August 2025 had been carefully selected video clips and had misrepresented BAC staff moving items as if they were perpetrators of fly-tipping, whereas, both incidents were of BAC staff moving the items from outside the premises to keep the area safe and clear, at times when council services were not available for their removal.

Overall, many of the log entries and CCTV video footage failed to depict individuals who had not entered the premises, individuals refused entry, individuals who carried drinks not provided by the premises. The sub-committee were also informed by the premises licence holder that the police confirmed many of incidents were unconnected to BAC. As such, BAC could not be held responsible to individuals unconnected to the premises gathering in a public space close to the premises.

The premises licence holder categorically denied allegations of staff spiking drinks. They stated that when residents have made complaints staff had acted immediately. Concerning the recent failed inspection on 14 November 2025 regarding the lack of SIA on duty, there had been an inspection at approximately 19:00-19:30 and further inspection, later in the evening. The SIA was on duty but was likely outside doing a "sweep" of the area. Although this was amounted to a non-compliance, it was a technical failure only, because the SIA was on duty, but not in the premises.

The Bermondsey Art Club is a late night premises that is situated under a small traffic island at the junction of the A100 Tower Bridge Road, A2206 Grange Road, and A205 Bermondsey Street, on a busy road junction and part of a small shopping parades surrounded by a residential area.

The licensing sub-committee were informed by the licensing officer that the statement of licensing policy 2021-2016 identified the premises were located in a residential area where the recommended closing times for public houses wine bars or other drinking establishments was 23:00. Nightclubs were not considered appropriate for this area.

Prior to the hearing, members considered both the CCTV footage provided by the residents in addition to the incident log. Although the quality of some of the footage was “grainy”, it was quite apparent why the corner of Tower Bridge Road and Grange Road was considered the hub of anti-social behaviour, with individuals congregating immediately outside the premises and immediately across the Grange Road, congregating/loitering on and/or around a public bench.

Members also noted that there was a good amount of video footage that could be viewed with ease together with very clear audio, which gave members an insight as to what residents endured. Some of the footage members were particularly troubled with:

13 October 2023 at 01:27: A fight allegedly spilled out from BAC of a man being punched unconscious and then repeatedly being stamped on and kick his head (see: [Assault 13th Oct 23](#)).

24 October 2024 at 00:33: A resident allegedly contacted the police due to noise and a group of individuals playing blaring music from the bench area and was assured that local Police would investigate. A patron of BAC is seen leaving the club, talking to the gang and then urinating against the dry cleaners before returning to BAC (see: [24th Oct 24 pissing](#))

21 June 2025 at 00:00: Female on all fours on the pavement close to the kerb directly outside the premises. BAC do not intervene (see: [21st June 25 woman screaming copy](#))

28 July 2025 at 07:35: Staff from the premises seen fly-tipping of a big grey fridge from the premises BAC, across the Grange Road to outside the former Barclays. (see: [Fly tipping grey fridge BAC 28 July 25](#)).

09/08/2025 at 03:54: Staff from the premises fly-tipping a dishwasher from BAC, across Grange Road and left outside the former Barclays Bank. (see: [Fly tipping dishwasher 9th Aug 25](#)).

16 August 2025 at 03:00: BAC patrons clearly seen congregating outside the premises, with some individuals entering/leaving the premises. A number of individuals were holding drinks from the BAC, and some use the BAC terrace (five hours after terrace is licenced to be used). (see: [16th Aug, 3:00am](#)).

16 August 2025 at 03:04: Patrons leaving the premises clearly seen standing in the road, obstructing traffic. A car could be using its horn and narrowly avoids colliding with the group. (see: [16th Aug, 3:04am](#)).

With the video footage in mind, the sub-committee were satisfied that BAC breached the following licence conditions:

1. Condition 344 - No more than 5 customers permitted up to ground level to smoke after 23:00 on any day. This appeared to be a regular occurrence.

2. Condition 346 - That management regularly monitor outside the premises to ensure that the volume and bass levels of any licensed entertainment shall be kept at a level that does not cause disturbance at the closest noise-sensitive facade to ensure compliance with the licensing objective regarding the prevention of public nuisance. None of the video footage clearly showed staff or SIA checking the outside areas.
3. Condition 429 - Customers shall use no outside area after 23.00 hours other than those who temporarily leave the premises to smoke a cigarette and no more than 5 at any one time. Again, this appeared to be a regular occurrence.
4. Condition 808 - That there shall be no admittance or re-admittance to the premises after 02:30. This was apparent particularly on the 16 August 2025 incident.

Because the sub-committee could not ascertain the content of the cups shown in the video footage being alcohol, it couldn't be satisfied that there had been a breach of condition 340 (no alcohol shall be consumed outside premises after 23.00).

Members were not enamored with BAC's notion that they were moving the fridge and dishwasher from the immediate vicinity of the premises. The video footage showed the items being moved by BAC staff up the stairs, suggesting they came from the premises.

Similarly, the members were not happy with BAC's explanation of the failed inspection on 14 November 2025 and the SIA registered door supervisor being in the vicinity of the premises doing the sweep. If that were in the immediate vicinity, such as the external terrace area, which they should be, they could have been contacted (by a two-way radio/mobile phone) to present themselves and avoid a failed inspection.

The sub-committee was overwhelmingly satisfied that the premises contributed to anti-social behaviour in the vicinity.

It is not for the sub-committee to question the reasons for the absence of responsible authority representations but it noted that members were surprised only the police submitted a representation supporting the review.

When considering review applications, it is the role of the licensing sub-committee to establish the cause or causes of the concerns raised in the application and representations. Any remedial action should address the causes, which should not be punitive but an appropriate and proportionate response to address the causes of concern (paragraph 11.20 Home Office Section 182 Guidance (February 2025)).

The options available to the sub-committee are:

- i. Do nothing. The sub-committee were satisfied that the incidents reported by residents demonstrated a poor management and/or implementation of policies. Taking no action was not an option.
- ii. Revoke the licence. At the start of the members deliberations, revoking the premises was seriously considered. However, the premises was previously very well regarded and provided and if managed properly, could be a valuable asset to the nighttime economy and the local community. As the discussions continued, it was agreed that certain conditions could address the matters raised. Revocation was therefore considered an unreasonable response to the matters complained of.
- iii. Exclude a licensable activity from the scope of the licence. This would be tantamount to the loss of the licence, which members viewed as a disproportionate response.
- iv. Remove the designated premises supervisor. The members of the sub-committee were not satisfied that the complaints were specifically directed at the DPS and therefore, did not warrant his removal.
- v. Suspend the licence for a period not exceeding three months. Members accepted a suspension so close to the holiday season would likely have a devastating impact on the premises and felt such action would be largely punitive only. Members therefore concluded that this option was unreasonable.
- vi. Modify the conditions of the licence. This was the most appropriate and proportionate response to the review application.

Reinforced policies and procedures in addition to robust conditions and BAC's compliance of them will ensure the BAC's accountability.

Finally, under Southwark's statement of licensing policy 2021-2026 the premises is located in a residential area and the recommended appropriate closing time for public houses, wine bars or other drinking establishments within this area is 23:00 daily. The sub-committee have reduced the hours for the sale of alcohol so that it is in line with the recommended hours in the statement of licensing policy as it is felt this will reduce any anti-social behaviour in the area.

If, following the implementation of the modified licence conditions incidents substantially reduced, BAC is invited to submit a variation of the licence for later hours. Until this time, the residents deserve the respite from the late-night behaviour.

In view of the bench on the corner of Tower Bridge Road and Grange Road being the focal point of the anti-social behaviour it is the very strong view of members that this bench is relocated to a more appropriate place. Further, steps should be taken for the relocation of the Scope charity bin. The licensing unit are directed to forward this notice of decision to the highways team with these recommendations.

In reaching its decision, the licensing sub-committee had regard to all the relevant considerations, its equality duties and four licensing objectives and considered that this decision was appropriate and proportionate.

Appeal rights

This decision is open to appeal by either:

- a. The applicant for the review
- b. The premises licence holder
- c. Any other person who made relevant representations in relation to the application.

Such appeal must be commenced by notice of appeal given by the appellant to the justices' clerk for the Magistrates' Court for the area within the period of 21 days beginning with the day on which the appellant was notified by this licensing authority of the decision.

This decision does not have effect until either

- i. The end of the period for appealing against this decision; or
- ii. In the event of any notice of appeal being given, until the appeal is disposed of.

The meeting ended at 1.36pm.

CHAIR:

DATED: