

## Daniel Lines

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**From:** John MacIntyre <[REDACTED]@small.com>  
**Sent:** 14 September 2020 13:24  
**To:** CE Licensing  
**Subject:** Review of Premises Licence - The Schooner, South Shore Road, Gateshead

Dear Sirs

I write in relation to the notice of the review of the premises licence of The Schooner, South Shore Road, Gateshead.

First, I wish to say that I am perturbed by the language in the notice which I saw posted outside the The Schooner - in particular this sentence: "Throughout the lockdown the owners have continually shown a disregard for the coronavirus and other safety legislation." Given that I would assume, using the principles of natural justice, that your job is to gather evidence and consider it carefully, the language you have used seems to suggest that you have already made a judgement - or at least that your position is biased against the proprietors. This is inappropriate and unfair, and I would ask why you have taken such a stance.

Secondly, the allegation that the proprietors have "shown a disregard for the coronavirus and other safety legislation" is itself a subjective statement and, as I will set out below, incorrect. To say that they have done so "throughout lockdown" also seems to be language suggesting a bias against the proprietors and inconsistent with the facts.

As a regular customer of The Schooner, I can say with confidence that far from "showing a disregard" to the coronavirus, the proprietors have implemented various measures around social distancing, limiting the number of customers inside the pub, hand sanitisation, and other controls. To me, they have actually shown a continuous and diligent REGARD for the issues around coronavirus, rather than any disregard - and have done so throughout the development of the pandemic, with increased measures when they were necessary.

The notice refers to an event where people congregated on the public highway. Whilst it is true that people have stood outside listening to music, it is also true that the proprietors have taken various measures to try to prevent this, including signage, and direct interventions asking people to clear the highway. Furthermore, they asked customers regularly to observe social distancing - more than I have seen in many other pubs and restaurants that I have used in recent months. The proprietors actually should be commended for their efforts. I understand that photographs were taken by a resident of St Peter's Basin, using strange camera angles, to attempt to show that social distancing was not being observed; however the pub's CCTV footage may well show this not to be an accurate account of what happened. I would also note that the residents of St Peter's Basin have made complaints about noise from the music outdoors, suggesting that they had another agenda when taking these photographs.

On the subject of the noise from the outdoor music, I believe the complaints are based on exaggerated reported noise levels in excess of 100dBA, which are clearly false. I have personally checked the noise levels at St Peter's Basin on several occasions when live music was being played outdoors at The Schooner, and the levels were within acceptable limits and way below the alleged levels.

Finally, I believe that The Schooner, as a local business supporting local jobs and creating opportunities for local musicians to make a living, as well as being a valued venue for good food, drink, and live music, should be seen by Gateshead Council as an asset to the town, rather than a liability to be persecuted. The very nature of the wording of your notice raises questions about fairness of treatment, bias, and due process. The proprietors of The Schooner are good people trying to run a good business in a way that brings enjoyment to many, whilst being compliant with regulations and public health and safety. They have my full support and I would ask the Council to reconsider its approach to this valuable local business.

Regards

