

Statement of Lee Collins in relation to the review of the premises licence at The Mariners Rest, Albert Street East Grimsby

My Name is Lees Collins. I am the operator of the Mariners Rest ('the premises'). I make this statement in relation to the review of the premises licence held in the name of Hawthorn Leisure Community Pubs Limited ('the landlords').

I am a tenant at the premises and therefore have day to day responsibility for the operation of the premises. I took on the premises on 28 August 2020. I hired [REDACTED] around shortly thereafter as barman and to help with other responsibilities such as cleaning beer lines. As part of his responsibilities, he was given a key to the premises to allow him to do work as and when needed at the premises in line with the lockdown rules. He was never instructed to open the premises or allow people inside with him and as far as I knew, he fully understood the Covid lockdown rules.

Covid and the operation of the premises

Covid obviously made operating very challenging. Not only were there changes in regulations and guidance at frequent intervals, but also the changes were often made at the last minute and could be difficult to understand and interpret. I tried to ensure that me and my staff were kept up to date and did all we could to enforce the regulations. I will also admit that on occasion we would make mistakes, but then so did lots of people. When we were notified of these, we did our best to correct them as soon as possible and work with the authorities when they pointed out things that we could be doing better.

It has been a very stressful time trying to keep a business going and having to close down at short notice or change how we operate. This has been frustrating for customers as well as us.

Incident on 13 February 2021

On Saturday 13th February me and my partner had an early valentines night together, due to our daughter staying overnight at our support bubble's house. We decided to make the most of a free night and ordered ourselves a takeaway and we had a very nice evening together, which helped relieve a lot of the stress of lockdown. I awoke the next morning to a phone call from [REDACTED] telling me that I needed to get in touch with the police as they came to the pub and took the keys off him whilst doing a line clean. He told me that they had showed up and told him he shouldn't be there. I now know this is not true. I also noticed a few withheld phone calls which I'm guessing would be the police trying to get in contact with myself.

I contacted the police and they told me what happened. [REDACTED] was in the venue with other people, who were seen running away after the police arrived. I was shocked and very disappointed in [REDACTED]. They then told me that the licence would be reviewed. I suggested that the police arrest [REDACTED] but they told me they had dealt with him by giving him a £200 fine. I also spoke to the officer dealing with the case who also had the keys. She stated I would be able to pick the keys up from the station on Birch in way, Grimsby on Monday 15th Feb. I explained I would be at work and asked if my partner pick them up. She said that would be fine.

I contacted [REDACTED] and dismissed him on the spot for what he had done. I can confirm that he no longer works for me.

My partner then went on the Monday to pick up the keys and was told that they won't be released as the matter was still under investigation and only myself would be able to collect them in person. It has taken me over 10 days to get the keys back because the officer dealing with the case had gone on leave according to officers on duty. Also I was trying to find out more about the incident of Saturday from them but the police wouldn't tell you anything and was told I needed to speak to the officer who was dealing with the case, but as stated she was on leave.

EMAIL SENT FROM [REDACTED] TO PIERS WARNE (TLT SOLICITORS) ON 24 MARCH 2021

To whom it may concern

My name is [REDACTED] and I had been working at the Mariners rest when lee Collins took over the business in Aug 2020. I was a bar man and the cellar guy, so my role was to keep the cellar to a sanitised standard, weekly line cleans, general clean of the cellar and stock rotation.

When we closed in the November 2020, I would attend the premises once every fortnight just flush the lines out to keep them clean and ready for when we reopened. I would keep a General eye on the place for lee as he had started a temporary job as a courier during lock down.

I would keep in contact with lee and let him know when I had been, I decided to go to the mariners on the Saturday 13th Feb around 5.30pm to get the lines cleaned. I was in the middle of line clean and decided to pop to the garage for a drink and food when I bumped into some old friends. I said hi then went into pub and around 7.30 there was a knock on the door and it was my friends I bumped into earlier on in the night. There was 6 people at the door, I stupidly invited them in not thinking about the lockdown, we went into the bar but as the pub had been stripped there was nothing for us to drink so we just chatted. There was bottles of lemonade in the fridge but they was mine that I bought from the shop earlier.

The police turned up around 10pm my friends ran out the pub and I let the police in. I got scared and panicked and said that lee allowed me to have friends in the pub. This is not true I took it upon myself to let my friends in and lee wasn't aware that me or my friends were still in the pub at any point. The keys were taken off me and I was issued a £200 fine and they locked all the doors and I left.

I now no longer work for lee or at the Mariners for my stupid actions and I am sorry for the trouble I have caused, I meant no harm in what I did.

Kind regards
[REDACTED]