

APPENDIX J



LAST ORDERS Landlord David Welford with the list of police demands

Calling time on late night pub

by Stuart Pike

TIME could be called on a Rawtenstall town centre bar if its late night licence is revoked, says its landlord.

The Queens Arms, which currently serves until 3am, could be forced to close at midnight from early in the new year.

Landlord David Welford says the change would kill off business, and blames the problem on 'stupid' policing.

A licensing review notice on the Bank Street pub cites up to 44 incidents of disorder and reports of underage drinking on Friday and Saturday nights over the past year.

Recorded crimes over the period include grievous bodily harm, three incidents of actual bodily harm, a minor assault, public order offences, criminal damage and thefts.

But Mr Welford said: "There's only 11 alleged crimes, and four of them are mobile phones left unattended. They want us to shut at midnight, but we don't get anyone in until quarter past midnight. We wouldn't be able to pay the rent or rates. All the regu-

lar punters are absolutely disgusted."

Police claim that groups of up to 100 customers regularly gather in the car park after last orders drinking, throwing bottles, intimidating people and causing a disturbance.

The review notice also criticises 'poor management and lack of control by door supervisors' as well as claims drunk 15-year-olds have caused disorder on the premises.

But Mr Welford said all drinkers who look underage are asked for identification - unless they are known regulars - and he added that he would accept changes to door staff arrangements.

"They're basically saying that we have a dispersal problem at the end of the night, but if there wasn't a takeaway outside everybody would go home.

"If you go to Manchester or Burnley at kicking out time you have got a police presence. The police here just don't want to be bothered. They turn up at 10.30 when we have approximately 10 people in

the pub and bang on 3am they go home, which is a rather stupid thing to do considering that's the same time as last orders."

Licensing officer PC Mark Driver said the number of incidents was more than double the amount at the nearby Rhythm Station, and could actually be much higher if some were going unreported.

"It's both the quantity and the seriousness of the incidents. Unfortunately the nature of the Queens Arms is that it's the last stop. As a late night venue it doesn't get busy until after midnight and unfortunately it attracts people who are well inebriated," he said.

He added: "One police shift does finish at 3am, but that's not the reason for the review. We cannot ask for reviews based on police resourcing and there's nothing to suggest that is the grounds for the review. Local residents have a right to comment and make representations either for or against the review."

A licensing hearing will be heard by the end of January, following a 28-day public consultation.