



Northern Ireland
Assembly

Committee for Social Development

OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Licensing Bill: Ravenhill Steering Group

21 January 2016

NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY

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Members present for all or part of the proceedings:

Mr Alex Maskey (Chairperson)
Mr Fra McCann (Deputy Chairperson)
Mr Jim Allister
Mr Roy Beggs
Ms Paula Bradley
Mr Gregory Campbell
Mr Sammy Douglas
Mrs Dolores Kelly
Mr Adrian McQuillan

Witnesses:

Ms Patricia Baxter	Ravenhill Steering Group
Ms Clare Delargy	Ravenhill Steering Group

The Chairperson (Mr Maskey): I welcome Ms Clare Delargy and Ms Patricia Baxter from the Ravenhill Steering Group to this evidence session on the Licensing Bill, which is sponsored by Mrs Judith Cochrane. We have had a number of sessions on the Bill already. We had the PSNI in this morning. I will hand over to you to present your case to the Committee. I have already advised members that your submission is included in the tabled papers.

Ms Clare Delargy (Ravenhill Steering Group): Thank you very much indeed for inviting us here today. We are grateful for the opportunity to address you on the Licensing Bill. Our comments reflect the views of the newly-formed Ravenhill Steering Group, which is made up of residents who have concerns about the impact of the proposed changes to the stadium on the local neighbourhood. As residents of Ravenhill, our chief focus is on the Kingspan Stadium, but we believe that our suggestions would offer protection to residents who live around other stadia, namely Windsor Park and Casement Park.

The vast majority of Kingspan fans are well behaved, but a number, fuelled by drink, engage in antisocial behaviour. Purely by accident, members of my household have witnessed two separate occasions recently on match days, during which a total of five individuals urinated either on the street or in neighbours' property. One of these events took place in broad daylight. There are reports of other incidents that were noted by residents, which we will tell you about very soon. It is important to point that out, because you may be under the impression that this sort of activity does not really happen. By the way, urinating on the street is an offence punishable by a fine.

We have also seen evidence that strongly suggests that some fans have been able to carry drink out of the ground in plastic glasses. I have submitted photographs of glasses, embossed with the names

of drink brands lying outside the Kingspan Stadium. This is not just about litter; this practice is also indicative of drink being taken out of the stadium. Put it like this: why would fans carry empty glasses out of the ground? Is it not more likely that they drain their glasses on the street and then toss them into gardens? These actions breach the by-laws.

Given the behaviour I have described, our group believes that there is a case for curbing the hours during which alcohol can be bought. In our view, there should be no sale of drink beyond 10.00pm. This would still allow fans to have a celebratory drink before, during and even after the game and allow the area, which, after all, is a residential area, to return to normal. If they want to drink on, there are many bars that are only too anxious to welcome them.

While it may be beyond the scope of the Bill, our group recommends that there should be tighter controls to prevent anyone leaving the ground carrying drink. There should also be patrols along the streets that fan out from the ground to ensure that there is no antisocial behaviour of the type that I have described. All three stadia should each set up a body or monitoring committee along the lines of the Aviva Stadium community committee at Lansdowne Road in Dublin, on which sit two local councillors and one local resident.

I have one last point about Judith Cochrane's presentation on 7 January. I was disappointed that Judith did not fully explain that we have engaged with her. She was consulted about a key circular before it was issued to the residents in the run-up to the new year. As a result of her response, two significant changes were made to the document. You can judge for yourselves, but I argue that that approach demonstrates that we have pursued our case in a mature and reasonable way.

Before we go any further, we will read out a sample of the experiences that we have come across. These submissions are with you at the moment. We are surprised at the attempt to suggest that there really is not much of an issue about fans urinating in gardens and on the street. I will quote an email that we received from a local resident. It was not sent to you as a submission, but she is desperately concerned. Patricia will read it out. I will read out the second one.

Ms Patricia Baxter (Ravenhill Steering Group): It says:

"We aren't anti-rugby and we are Ulster Rugby season ticket holders, but we've had a few incidents of antisocial behaviour following matches, people urinating outside our home. This ranges from the young to the middle-aged."

Ms Delargy: Another resident says:

"In the past I have witnessed supporters urinating on the street after games. Most recently I saw one man urinating into a hedge at the top of Ravenhill Park Gardens after the Edinburgh game on Friday December 4th."

Ms Baxter: Another — a next-door neighbour of mine — said:

"Unsupervised, some members of the leaving supports have engaged in anti-social behaviour, such as urinating in gardens."

Ms Delargy: I referred to two incidents that I experienced, which were really appalling. Nobody should have to endure that. Patricia has her own experience, which, I am sure, she wishes to share with you.

Ms Baxter: We moved to Ravenhill Park seven years ago. I have a young family. We live four doors away from the ground, so we are at the forefront of much of what happens. Without fail, after every match, we have half-full pint glasses left in our front garden, on the wall or on top of the car, which, obviously, is a bit of craic for somebody. People urinate in the garden. On one awful occasion, somebody defecated at the side of our house. That is not acceptable behaviour. No matter where you live, that is not acceptable behaviour in this day and age.

Ms Delargy: You have to understand that there are in excess of 16,000 supporters, many of whom have drunk pints of beer and so on. At the end of the day, we do not want to spoil anybody's fun; we do not want to rain on anybody's parade. However, it is about responsibility. After people leave the stadium, they cannot get back in, so there are no toilet facilities. They are walking down the park and

they have nowhere to go. We have high hedges and privacy, and they disappear down people's driveways. That is hardly surprising. You might dismiss it, but urinating in public is an offence. It should never happen. We would like someone to take responsibility for it and not pretend that it is not a problem.

Ms Baxter: I am not sure whether you are familiar with the area. Ravenhill Park is a wholly residential area. Our house is about 100 years old. Most of the houses on the street are about the same. The rugby ground opened in 1923, so the area, first and foremost, was residential. I will quote from the blurb from the most recent house to go on sale:

"Ravenhill Park is one of the most popular residential addresses in South East Belfast. Mature trees line the Park, complementing the properties in this quiet leafy suburb."

I am glad that the estate agent did not write that on a match day: it would not have been true.

We appreciate that, for fans and the IRFU, Kingspan is the home of Ulster Rugby, but, for us — the residents of the 90-odd houses in the street — Ravenhill Park is our home. We raise our families there. We take pride in our properties, and we are just trying to get on with our lives. It is very much a mix of families and older residents, most of whom were not formally informed of the proposed change to their street. Most people heard about it by chance over Christmas, which, as you can imagine, is probably the worst time to try to get people to engage in written submissions and all that that entails.

Ms Delargy: We should also remember, of course, Patricia, that the Bill has been trundling its way through the Assembly since the middle of October, and we only got to find out about this on 13 December. That was not through any official means; we came across it just by chance. We were wholly alarmed by what we were seeing. We felt that we needed to let other people know what was going on and invite them to state their opinion. As a result, in the month of Christmas, we began to try to find out what other people thought. We are not properly resourced; we are not MLAs at the end of the day. We were coming up to Christmas and trying to organise our Christmas parties and whatever. People have worries about money and whatever it happens to be, and then we had to deal with this. So, we dealt with it and we leafleted in excess of 100 houses on Ravenhill Park to get some sort of response. About a quarter of the residents responded in some way, either by meeting us in the street or through sending in submissions. Not all the submissions, I understand, are actually online. People in Ravenhill Park tend to try to just get on with things. We do not want to spoil anybody's fun, but you reach a point that is your toleration level.

I just want to add to what we have already said about taking drinks out of the ground. One young woman — my heart went out to her — said:

"I have experience of being harassed by drunk men and I have had my property damaged by drunk rugby fans. These people are exceptions but the longer the stadium serves alcohol in a day, the more exceptions there will be."

Another resident said:

"People are regularly seen drinking openly on the street after the game. These glasses end up in residents' gardens."

Another resident stated:

"On match nights, I have been woken at around mid-night on a number of occasions by the sound of groups of people singing Rugby songs and generally making a nuisance of themselves, something that as a resident for the past 38 years, I do not remember happening before."

Another lady writes of late-night noise, as groups of people still drinking move down the park. I know that they try to stop that, but a couple of people at the gate, policing it against the surge of the crowd, is very difficult. I think that the police are doing the best they can in the circumstances and they have always been very courteous to us and are very sympathetic to our concerns. We thank them for that and we will work with them, but we would like others to work with them too.

Ms Baxter: We all watched and read Judith Cochrane's and Shane Logan's evidence to the Committee. Mr Logan said that Ulster Rugby had a great relationship with the residents and engaged with them frequently. That was news to us. We used to engage with them until they got their planning

permission for the extension and, after that, the residents were dropped like snow off a ditch. There has been no interaction since. I regularly email them with comments about what is going on at our front door on match nights, and there is never a response.

Mr Logan also said some headline-grabbing things such as that Ireland's bid for the Rugby World Cup is not going to stand a chance without this licensing law being changed. I do not know whether he has visited the Stade de France in Paris; I am sure that he has. France hosted the Rugby World Cup in 2007 and the final was held in the Stade de France. There are rugby games there regularly. The Stade de France does not have a licence; it does not serve alcohol. He said that it was part of the condition; it is not. It is not part of the requirement.

We all just generally feel that this is a major change to legislation that will affect residents not just in our part of Belfast but in other areas. It is being rushed through at the behest of a corporate giant, and they are trying to push the Assembly into making this decision, which will impact on a lot of lives.

Ms Delargy: There was something that Mr Allister picked up on during the session with Ulster Rugby about the Kingspan Stadium that I am intrigued about. Ulster Rugby, during its presentation last week, suggested that its participation agreement for competitions required them to sell drink for up to two hours after a game is over. I believe that the Committee is trying to secure evidence that that is the case. It seems quite extraordinary to me. We have done our own research, as best we can, on the Internet and so on, to try to find out exactly who might be influencing these contracts.

Ulster Rugby is participating in two major competitions, the Guinness PRO12 and the European Champions Cup. The European Champions Cup is organised by European Professional Club Rugby (EPCR). EPCR is based not in a country that hosts one of the teams that plays in the league but in Neuchâtel, Switzerland, which, by the way, describes itself as having one of the world's most competitive tax rates. The money that EPCR brings in is split three ways — between French LNR clubs, premiership rugby clubs and PRO12 clubs. I take it that the latter includes Ulster Rugby but perhaps it could confirm that and, if so, let us know how it benefits from the deal with EPCR. The Guinness PRO12 is operated and administered by a company based in Dublin called Celtic Rugby. That company is apparently owned by several rugby football unions, including the IRFU, of which Ulster Rugby is part.

In theory, because of its connections with the competition organisers, Ulster Rugby should be able to exert some influence over the contracts it enters into. However, assuming that it cannot, any discussion here on early closure of the bar is totally academic. You have no choice but to go along with at least an 11.00 pm time. In fact, what we are talking about here are faceless corporate bureaucrats in Neuchâtel in Switzerland or in Dublin telling Ulster Rugby, "This is what we require", and Ulster Rugby telling us, and our MLAs, what they have to do. I think that, before we go any further, you have to bring Ulster Rugby and Kingspan Stadium back to answer more questions on this, because these are very murky waters. There is a lot of money being made. This is not about Ulster Rugby or about sport; it is about making loads of money for some people. Questions are already being asked on the Internet. There is a blizzard of conversations going on in other regions of the UK about where all this money is going.

Ultimately, what we are saying is let us be reasonable about this. All we are looking for is some prohibition. Yes, let them have their licence; we understand the logic of that, but respect and understand our viewpoint. Have the licence, but let us have a prohibition after 10.00 pm. They can drink up and leave quietly at 10.30 pm, so everybody can settle down for the evening. After they leave, there is the whole business of tidying up. We have people driving their vans out and so on, and some of those vans actually drive down Ravenhill Park, despite what some people might say. I have an elderly neighbour whose husband is not well, and she says that they are constantly being woken up at midnight.

Ms Baxter: There is another important consideration from the point of view of local residents. I was looking at the Northern Ireland Planning Service portal and, if planning permission were sought today for a pub on the site of Kingspan Stadium, it would probably not be granted due to paragraph 9 of 'DCAN 7: Public Houses', which says:

"a public house will not generally be acceptable within a wholly residential area. This is because of loss of amenity, including the problems of noise and disturbance which may arise".

That is important as well.

The Chairperson (Mr Maskey): OK. We appreciate that. I want to make two points for the record. The two submissions that you referred to, Clare, are not yet online, but they will be. I think that they were only received on Monday. One was an email. They will be online very shortly. Secondly, we have asked Ulster Rugby for evidence on the contractual business around the need to have a licence.

Ms Delargy: I am pleased that you are doing that.

The Chairperson (Mr Maskey): As with all evidence sessions, you are putting points, some of which are directly in response either to what Judith Cochrane or Ulster Rugby have said. The police were here this morning to give evidence. We take all the evidence in the round and, ultimately, we will have to consider what we do with that, and some of that will involve going back to other people who have made submissions or presented arguments and challenging them or seeking clarification. We will do that as a matter of course. Several members have questions.

Mr Douglas: Thank you very much for your presentation. I live on the Castlereagh Road so I am aware of some of the situations and the stuff that you have raised, Clare. Kingspan told us that, in the past, it had discussions with local residents through a residents' group. I think that had fallen through. Just for clarification, are you now the official group representing the residents?

Ms Delargy: We have set up a steering committee as one of the building blocks to begin putting a residents' committee together. As we explained, we are responding to the Bill and we are playing catch-up. The objective is to set up a proper and substantive residents' committee, and I think there would be substantial support for that. We cannot speak on behalf of other committees that fell by the wayside. Ulster Rugby paints a rosy picture that there is a good relationship between it and the residents of Ravenhill Park. I have to say that we do not recognise that description at all. We would not recognise Shane Logan if he walked down our street. When did he last call a meeting that involved a substantial proportion of the residents of Ravenhill Park? I would like to know the answer to that.

Mr Douglas: In its representation on Kingspan, Ulster Rugby agreed that there were problems from time to time. I think that someone asked, "What about the PSNI? Have there been any complaints?" I think there was a suggestion that there were not any complaints. However, I noticed in your written submission and in some of what Patricia said that there have been complaints to the police.

Ms Delargy: Yes, there have. I certainly have lodged complaints. It is really just to make sure that our voice is heard. Most people try to get by and to get on with their lives and not make a fuss. They do not want to waste people's time and we do not want to waste your time, but, ultimately, these things are happening. It is not logged in any book. People in Ravenhill Park pull their curtains and hope that everything goes away. In this day and age, that is not right. That is not the way to treat the residents of that area.

I cannot speak on behalf of the Cregagh estate but I have friends who live in the Cregagh estate. When my father came out of the navy after the war, his first home was in the Cregagh estate. We know the estate very well and are getting feedback from people on the estate that they are not happy. They feel quite helpless about the situation and that it is about time that our MLAs sat up and started listening to us. We have reached a point, as Mr Maskey pointed out, that this will be discussed in some detail because it has huge ramifications not just for Ulster Rugby and the residents of Ravenhill Park but for the Casement and Windsor stadiums. If you think about Windsor stadium, UEFA rules do not allow drink to be taken at games. We need to think about that. I am very pleased that we have had this opportunity to explain these things from our perspective.

Ms Baxter: This is a good opportunity for formal interaction between residents' groups, councillors, community groups and Kingspan. That needs to be done. We are all neighbours. We all have to live there and to live together. We have to get on with it, but a bit of compromise is needed from both sides. We need to be able to sit down with them and not have this faceless corporate giant at the end of the street that will not engage with the residents. We just want that to change and improve.

The Chairperson (Mr Maskey): It is fairly safe to say that everybody wants to see some formalised structure. It is not good enough to have just an ad hoc relationship. Everything may be hunky-dory but there probably will always be problems when you have crowds gathering. Some of the issues that you talked about are clearly antisocial behaviour. They are against the law, so there needs to be a raft

of arrangements around making sure that those things do not happen or there is enforcement when they do. You are right in saying that people's quality of life has to be protected.

The last meeting that I attended there was with the residents, the PSNI and Ravenhill management people. It did not have a satisfactory outcome. In fact, I think it was suggested that it was deferred until people had a proper discussion. It only annoyed the residents at the meeting all the more, as well as local representatives. I do understand the concerns that you raised, particularly around antisocial behaviour and parking problems. However, we have to deal with the content of this piece of legislation as proposed and then take on board all the concerns from everybody.

Mr Allister: You are telling us that there has been no engagement from Ulster Rugby towards you. Have you sought engagement with Ulster Rugby?

Ms Delargy: As I said earlier, we are simply reacting. We have tried to get on with our lives, make things work and get on with things. We did not think that we could make a change and make a difference, and we feel that this is the first opportunity we have had to actually begin to engage with the power brokers who make these decisions, and also with Ulster Rugby. There has not been a residents' committee; we are responding to this Bill.

Mr Allister: I think that Patricia referred to unanswered emails.

Ms Baxter: Yes, I have emailed on match nights. One night, I went out and took photographs. We live opposite the corner of Ravenhill Park Gardens, and there was a car parked on the corner the wrong way on a one-way street. If I did that somewhere, I would get a ticket. I took a picture and emailed it to the police sergeant who looks after the beat there, and to Ulster Rugby. The police sergeant called to the house within the hour, but I never heard anything from Ulster Rugby. That was one occasion when I sent a photograph and said that this is happening 200 yards from the ground.

Ms Delargy: There were occasions when I got in touch with the PSNI and there was no response from Ulster Rugby either. As we say, we just try to make things work. We have got to the stage where it is not working and we have to do something about it.

Mr Allister: Evening matches finish at what time? Is it about 9.30 pm?

Ms Delargy: Yes, it is 9.00 pm to 9.30 pm.

Mr Allister: At what time are you saying that you encounter the disturbances?

Ms Baxter: After that. We just close the curtains; we are not sitting and watching any more.

Mr Allister: You described instances of people coming onto property and urinating etc. Is that at 10.00pm, 11.00 pm or midnight?

Ms Delargy: The incidents that I referred to happened almost immediately after the match. With large crowds of people walking down the park, there is anonymity. I was pulling my curtains and I looked out the window and saw two or three gentlemen standing there. I thought that they were my neighbour's friends popping into the house, but they were not. I suddenly realised, "Oh my God, they are actually relieving themselves in my neighbour's garden". I went out and told them, "You should be ashamed of yourselves", at which they ran off. That happened directly after the match.

Mr Allister: One would expect a surge of people leaving shortly after the match ends. On that point, thinking this through, how would a 10.00 pm alcohol limit affect the surge of people leaving?

Ms Delargy: That is only one incident. There were other incidents later on at night that I did not witness but which my neighbours did, and there were incidents before the match as well.

Ms Baxter: We are saying that the proposed time of 11.00 pm would elongate the whole evening, whereas, if we were to contain it to 10.00 pm and have the ground clear by 10.30 pm, things could start to get back to normal and it would curtail that. We are not saying that the licence should not be given; we are just saying that it would be nice to have some conditions.

Mr Allister: Do the matches habitually take place on Friday evenings?

Ms Baxter: The matches tend to be on a Friday or Saturday evening.

Mr Allister: How many matches take place a year?

Ms Baxter: I think that there are 19 PRO12 matches. There are a lot of junior matches, and there is the Schools' Cup final on St Patrick's Day. I do not know how many matches there are in total.

Ms Delargy: We cannot say how many there are in total.

Ms Baxter: It is roughly every other week during the season.

Ms Delargy: They are dotted throughout each month.

Ms Baxter: We call them match days but our children refer to them as "misery days" because they are not allowed out. We cannot let the kids go up the street to visit their friends because it is too intimidating when all those people are walking down the road. There is a lock-in and we cannot get in or out for 20 minutes before and after matches. They are known as misery days to us.

Mr McQuillan: I have a great deal of sympathy with what you are saying, but some of the stuff that you have said is a matter for operational policing rather than Ulster Rugby. You talked about parking and people behaving badly when they come out of the ground. It is down to the police to stamp that out. That is out of the control of Ulster Rugby. We were told last week that Ulster Rugby had a very good relationship with the residents, and surely you do not need a community group or a residents' group to have a talk with the people at Ulster Rugby. Should they not talk to you just as residents of the area and show you some courtesy?

Ms Delargy: We would love the opportunity to talk to Ulster Rugby, and the best way to do that is to have some sort of formalised committee, similar to what happens at the Aviva Stadium. The people who are actually coming from the stadium have been drinking. They have had a good time, and that is fine, but some of them — it is a minority, but it only takes a minority to spoil everybody's fun — are doing that.

Mr McQuillan: Do you not think that having a Bill like this would give you slightly more protection than you have at the minute, with temporary licences being applied for and no input from the residents? You will have an input now and, hopefully, get something fixed.

Ms Delargy: We welcome it. We think that it is a step forward, which is really engaging us and is why we wanted to be here today. We are happy about the licence that Ulster Rugby can now secure, and we give it our support, but there has to be a prohibition written into the legislation. Otherwise, it will have a lot of ramifications, not just for us but for Casement and Windsor.

Ms Baxter: On the PSNI side, on many nights when we have had parking issues outside or whatever, I have spoken to the PSNI officers, and they have always adamantly said to me, "It is not our problem; it's Ulster Rugby". There seems to be some breakdown in communications there, which I am obviously not privy to, but they are saying that they cannot enforce the parking or the cones, and Ulster Rugby will not pay for additional. There is obviously a bit of a battle going on there, and we are all suffering as a result.

Mr McQuillan: That should be part of the temporary licence.

Ms Delargy: Exactly. At the end of the day, it is not the PSNI that is offering drink to the spectators.

Mr McQuillan: It is not the PSNI offering drink to spectators or people anywhere, but when people come out of the ground, it is up to the PSNI to enforce the law. It is not up to Kingspan or anybody else to do that. Once they leave the stadium, it is into the hands of the PSNI, and it should be doing that.

Ms Delargy: Exactly, but, at the end of the day, there has to be some sort of cut-off point at a reasonable time so that life can get back to normal. It would certainly nail the problem from the start.

Mr McQuillan: Can I just take you back to what you were saying about a cut-off point, say at 10.00 pm. I think that that would make it worse, because that would mean a greater surge of people coming out at 9.30 pm or 9.45 pm, whereas, if you had it until 11.00 pm, they would filter out more. You might get an initial surge, but then it would slow off.

Ms Delargy: Adrian, I think that is a debating point, honestly. I really do. That is a fact. Ultimately, it is about bringing the neighbourhood back to normality as quickly as possible. Later drink-up times would prolong the issues that we face during the evening. Late licences are fairly regular too, up until 1.00 am. That location is not a bar, at the end of the day.

Mr McQuillan: I think that, under the legislation, unless I am wrong, it could happen six times per year or per season.

Ms Delargy: Yes, and maybe that will change again. Who knows? We cannot prescribe for that at the minute. We cannot look into the future. Maybe they will want more than six.

Mr McQuillan: I think the law states that it is six. You can only have six.

Ms Baxter: It is our street. We just want some input to safeguard it for the next people who come along as well.

Mr McQuillan: I think I understand where you are coming from.

Mr Beggs: I can see particular risks with getting late licences on match days. It could apply to a large number of distributing points and could have an influence on the amount of alcohol consumed after the match, causing problems. If the late licence applied to, perhaps, a hospitality area, and they were having a dinner to celebrate Willie John McBride, the fortieth anniversary of a match or whatever, and it was a dinner for a relatively small number at an indoor venue part of their facilities, would that cause a problem, or are match days your particular focus?

Ms Baxter: In Judith Cochrane's original submission, she likened it to the SSE Arena and said that that is the template she would like to work from. That is a big entertainment venue on reclaimed land away from residential areas. It has its own issues, obviously. She was talking about the investment in Kingspan Stadium and the tourism potential, so I do not think it would stop at small, corporate dinners. It opens it to larger entertainment events that are going to bring tourism into the area or whatever, so it is not going to stop at small, corporate dinners.

Ms Delargy: Let us face it: what has that got to do with rugby?

Mr Beggs: It could be about entertaining sponsors or a special occasion. My question is this: do you have a problem with it being in a confined space rather than the whole stadium being available?

Ms Delargy: The prohibition should be at 10:00 pm across the board.

Mrs D Kelly: I completely understand what you say, particularly if you have young families, and the disillusionment and anger that you feel, particularly about the urinating in the street and that sort of behaviour. However, it strikes me that it is very much a policing matter. It is a pity that we did not hear from you before we heard from the police, because we could have challenged the police on some of those issues. Perhaps it is something that we could look at, but I am not sure whether stadium staff have powers to prevent people leaving the stadium with glasses etc. There will always be those who will get through that, and it would be very difficult to police. As well as the police response, I think that Belfast City Council has antisocial behaviour officers. Has the residents' steering group made any submissions to the Belfast policing partnerships, for example —

Ms Baxter: Not at this point, because we were just focusing on this issue, and we have had a very short time span in which to do it.

Ms Delargy: I would also like to point out that these are symptoms. The cause is the drinking in the stadium, and that is the core of it. In any solution, you have to look at the reason for it. It is symptomatic. The people who are involved in the antisocial behaviour and so on are there because of the drink. The drink is not being poured by anybody else; it is coming from Kingspan Stadium. We

have an opportunity now to look at the laws to do with the licensing times and so on, and that, ultimately, is what you should be focusing on. As a group, we feel that that is what you should be focusing on.

The Chairperson (Mr Maskey): There are no further questions from members. I will just make a point as a general response to what you have said. All of us, as representatives, deal with these issues on an ongoing basis. I have dealt with the rugby people and some residents in your area, and particularly with the PSNI, on a number of occasions over a number of years. Very often, whether it is to do with parking or other issues, there are strict letters of the law. What frustrates all of us, and particularly those who live with these particular circumstances, is that when you apply the strict letter of the law, it often leaves you short, because you are not getting a service. Some agency will say that the legislation is not available to take a certain course of action. I said to the PSNI to put the cones out at Ravenhill every now and again. Who said that you do not have the legal right to do it? Who is going to challenge you?

Ms Baxter: People respect them.

The Chairperson (Mr Maskey): It is down to resources. Once you put them up for a while, people get the message, and they go and park somewhere else, which gives you a wee bit of relief. You have a right to expect that Ulster Rugby, which has a stadium facility there, respects you as neighbours, so it has to go above and beyond. It says that it does. I am just making the point that you have a right to expect that it should go over and above what it is legally obliged to do, as, in my opinion, should the PSNI and anybody else, for that matter. A bit of common sense can often be applied to resolve these issues.

Ms Delargy: To go the half mile.

The Chairperson (Mr Maskey): The Bill is a private Member's Bill, not an Assembly Bill or a departmental Bill, and it did not have to go through the normal consultation process, which would have meant that it would have been more publicly advertised. The Bill has probably re-energised you, as local residents, to take another opportunity to resolve some of the issues, and I totally respect your willingness and your ability to do it and your passion around your arguments. It is about protecting your quality of life and your homes, which you obviously value tremendously.

We will take on board your concerns, but we have to take them in the context of the Bill that we have been asked to deal with. As I say, however, even if we are limited to that legislation, it does not stop us from making strong recommendations or other observations, if we so choose, on the basis of the evidence that we have heard so far. We will take your evidence on board, as we will for other people who have made submissions, and, if need be, we will get back to you for further clarification.

Are there any other final points that you wish to make this morning? If not, feel free to come back to us at some point after today. Is there anything that you want to round up?

Ms Baxter: Any public event that has 18,000 people attending needs effective stewarding before, during and afterwards and not just in the confines of the ground. That needs to spill out into all the surrounding areas. If it is a huge public event, there are a lot of issues of health and safety, antisocial behaviour etc that all need to be looked at.

Ms Delargy: We would also welcome the opportunity to have a monitoring committee established that includes local councillors and local residents, as they do for the Aviva in Dublin. That should be available for Casement, Windsor and Ravenhill.

The Chairperson (Mr Maskey): I very much appreciate that. Thanks again for being here this morning and helping the Committee with our deliberations.