

From: golfie [REDACTED]
Sent: 27 January 2016 17:00
To: Cochrane, Judith
Subject: RE: Licensing Bill

Hi Judith,

I agree totally with what you have set out below.

Of course you may refer to this correspondence,

Regards

Golfie.

From: Cochrane, Judith [<mailto:judith.cochrane@mla.niassembly.gov.uk>]
Sent: 27 January 2016 10:57
To: golfie <[REDACTED]>
Cc: Cochrane, Judith <judith.cochrane@mla.niassembly.gov.uk>
Subject: Re: Licensing Bill

Hi 'Golfie',

Thank you for your email. Your points are consistent with some other residents that I have spoken with.

Throughout the process of my Bill I have sought to engage with residents to hear their thoughts and indeed removed the option to allow the stadium to apply for a permanent licence until 1am (something they can currently do under the occasional licence).

I believe I have acted in a fair and balanced manner and whilst I understand the parking issues (which are not related to the sale of alcohol), and the small number of incidents referred to by the 'steering group', I do not think they warrant a restriction to 10pm on the licence or prevention of functions which make use of the Mount Merrion entrance.

I am in front of the committee tomorrow morning again to respond to the issues raised and to provide information on any amendments to the Bill that I might propose. I would be grateful if you would allow me to refer to your correspondence during this process?

Best regards,

Judith

Sent from my iPhone

On 26 Jan 2016, at 22:23, golfie <[REDACTED]> wrote:

Hi Judith,

I just wanted to drop you a note on the submissions to the above bill which I viewed online on niassembly.tv from the 21st January 2016.

First I should say that I have lived within a stone's throw of Kingspan/Ravenhill Rugby Grounds in Ravenhill Park off and on for over 40 Years and my father has lived here for closer to 70. In addition we have family connections to Ulster Rugby.

I am supportive of the bill you have proposed as it brings clarity and a greater degree of certainty to a rather odd process and as such felt no need to make any submission. I see no need for a 10:00pm shutdown nor to restrict the ability of Ulster Rugby to run a few supplementary events a year.

My main concern however is over the submission from the Ravenhill Steering Group. I only became aware of them from an anonymous, bar an email address, leaflet dropped through the door. I responded to them and asked for clarifications of their intent as I did not either have knowledge of nor agreement with what their motivation or standing was. I was assured by a return email from Jamie Delargy as below (in full). As he has already been in contact with you I did not see a reason to redact his name.

"Hi golfie

Understand your concerns and I will deal with them in turn.

The main reason why I didn't identify myself to all but will do so to you is that I am not seeking to lead a residents' movement.

My name is Jamie Delargy. I thought residents might be interested in hearing about developments at Kingspan and might want to put concerns if they had any to MLAs who are considering a plan to change the licensing arrangements at the stadium.

As you will have noticed I pointed out how you and others could submit your own thoughts. If you feel the reform is positive, you are free to let the MLAs know. Others may take a different view. I will be making my own submission. It will be a personal one. I will not be attempting to speak on behalf of others.

It is true that I am inviting other residents to set up a group which might for example negotiate with Ulster Rugby. If there is sufficient support, the group can democratically decide their collective viewpoint. Mine will be only one voice in that.

Incidentally I would prefer to take a backseat in all this. I just thought an initiative would be helpful. If it's not I assure you I will not be leading any personal crusade.

By the way, Judith Cochrane already knows my position in some detail as a result of a fairly lengthy conversation we had. Subsequently I sent her a copy of the circular I proposed to distribute to residents. As a result of her comments, I made two significant changes to the letter you have received. She has the final document.

I hope I have addressed at least some of your issues. Please let me know if that is the case.

Regards

Jamie”

This is the only communications we have had with this “group”

Please note the section *“I will be making my own submission. It will be a personal one. I will not be attempting to speak on behalf of others.”*

I was most surprised therefore to see and hear from some Ravenhill Steering Group who have not openly canvassed my opinion on anything, do not speak for me or my parents and had assured me that they would not be attempting to speak on behalf of others speaking on behalf of residents at the recent committee session on the Licensing Bill. In addition there is written submission from them as individuals and as this self-appointed steering group.

People have the right to submit their own personal concerns to any consultation but surely they have to show some evidence of standing or real effort to gain a consensus of opinion from the people they name themselves after when they infer they are a steering group for a residential area. Not having enough time is not a valid excuse for assuming other people’s acquiescence.

I know that there are isolated incidents on matchdays and that parking is a real issue for us as residents and I think the PSNI could look into those issues but to use those issues, which I have sympathy with, to pursue another unrelated agenda in my name which I do not agree with is not something I can support.

In short I am not aware of there being any group set up who can claim to represent Ravenhill or who have *democratically decide(d) their collective viewpoint* and I and a few others I have spoken to certainly have not given any indication to this group that we either agree with them on the restrictions to the licencing bill they propose or wish them to express their opinions on our behalf. We may well be in the minority on this but in truth there is no way to know as there has been no attempt to find out and as I said earlier – lack of time is no excuse. If they did not have time to ask then they should not infer they have a mandate. If they had expressed a personal opinion only I would have had no issue with it.

I have no wish to get into a spat with the neighbours but inferring that they speak for me when they do not is not something that I cannot let slide without comment – hence my note to you. I have signed this with the same name I used when communicating with Jamie not because I am trying to hide but as I said I don’t want a spat.

Apologies if I have overstepped the mark in writing to you but as the sponsor of the bill I was not sure who else to contact to provide this information and I also want to thank you for your time.

Golfie.