

STATEMENT OF RODRIGUE TANKEU

MADE ON FRIDAY 9th OCTOBER 2020

My name is Rodrigue Tankeu. I was born on in

I came to the U.K in I am currently studying at ' University.

I am the Premises License holder for PETITE AFRIQUE. I was also the Designated Premises Supervisor for the same premises at the time of the visit by Police Officers on the 26th September 2020

Since re-opening on Saturday 4th July 2020, due to Covid-19 lock down West Midlands Police have visited PETITE AFRIQUE on four occasions. Those visits are as follows:

1. Beginning of August 2020. The officer attending was Police Sergeant Geiss, he came across quite hostile, he made a comment regarding the pool table that we had in a small area off the main room. He told us to not allow anyone to use it as the equipment used, the cues and balls could carry Corona Virus.
2. Second visit, a fortnight after the first visit. The same officer came into the premises. Again, his attitude was hostile. A couple of customers were standing at the bar ordering Food and drinks. The officer remarked about the social distancing, and that it could be improved. The pool table was still in the same place, but no one was using it. The officer told me it would be better if the table was removed. We arranged for the table to be removed the next day. We also removed further tables from the main room to allow better social distancing. The officer asked for me to e-mail him a copy of the COVID – 19 Risk assessment. At no time did he spend a little time explaining what measures we were to have in place.
3. Third visit was about 11pm on Friday 4th September 2020, PC Ben Reader & another officer attended. They did not go round the premises; they stood right at the entrance and then went back out. I went outside to speak to them. PC Reader told me that the music was too loud. I informed him that the sound engineers were on site and were testing the equipment. This was being done because the premises had been decorated and a new sound system had been installed. PC Reader then asked me if the Noise Limiter Device was fitted. I told him that I was unsure if the engineers had refitted the device back on the wall. When I had finished with the officers I went back into the premises and saw that the limiter was in fact back on the wall. If the officers had come into the premises, then they would have seen this for themselves. PC Reader told me that he would return the following week to check if the limiter had been re-fitted. He did not return.

4. The fourth and final visit was about 10.23pm on Saturday 26th September 2020, PC Reader & PC Jevons had attended the premises.

I shall refer to the report submitted by Chief Superintendent Green, which is in the hearing bundle.

- The report states that a large number of vehicles were seen outside the premises.
 - a) These vehicles he refers to were in the side road. Petite Afrique is on a corner. Many of these vehicles belonged to customers who were attending other nearby venues. From CCTV footage we have viewed that most of our customers were picked up by taxi.
- Reference is made to the shutters at the front of the premises which were halfway down covering the front doors.
 - a) The shutters at the front of the premises were partially down. People were still able to get out with ease. The staff at the premises had been attempting to get the customers out of the premises since 9.45pm, the lights were on inside, the bar had stopped serving drinks and the background music had stopped. A number of customers were being very difficult in vacating the premises.
- The report then states that the security staff had left the premises at 22.00hrs.
 - a) I felt that I was able to control the people that were left inside. We do not have any trouble inside our premises all night, everyone knows each other you can see that from the CCTV footage. I hold an SIA registered door badge and took the view that it was best not to be heavy handed with removing these people. I did not want a disorder on my hands. They eventually left peacefully.
- Officers had found approximately 40 people inside the venue.
 - a) At 22.23hrs 32 customers were counted leaving the premises. Those customers panicked when the Police arrived and started to leave immediately.
- Those customers that were leaving the premises were not wearing face masks.
 - a). There were some customers that were not wearing face masks. When customers entered the premises; they were told to wear face masks. They removed them when they were eating & drinking.
- The officer then states that there appears to be no table service.
 - a) There was table service, staff were waiting on tables and cleaning them periodically.

- The officer states that before 10pm I had been seen on CCTV working behind the bar taking payments from people.
- a) This only occurred on one occasion when I am seen talking to a couple who had come up to the bar to pay for their bar tab. They wanted to take with them the champagne they had bought.

- PC Jevons asked me if customers brought their own drinks into the premises, as he had observed cans and bottled beer on the tables.
- a) I have no idea why he made that comment. He must have known we were licensed to sell alcohol.

- The report then goes onto state that I had been seen taking payments from people.
- a). As I have mentioned earlier, I had taken one payment off a couple who were settling their bill. The other times that I am seen at the till is when I am cashing up.

I would like to add that there were customers coming up to the bar to collect their takeaways before leaving to go home. Payments for these would have been made at the time of the order, earlier in the evening.

I also refer to the attached CCTV Document showing times and comments of CCTV footage which Mr Moore has put together, from the premise's CCTV for the night in question and what can be seen. My comments are in red.

I have provided a list of the COVID precautions the premises have in place together with photographs which I shall refer to:

1. Marked out around each table, the front of the bar and the entrance is floor tape stating, 'Please keep a safe distance of 2mtrs'. Each of the tables were measured out to comply with social distancing.
2. Signage on floor indicating entry and exit, In a clockwise direction
3. New NHS track & Trace procedure in place. Those without apps would need to have their details recorded.
4. Hand sanitisers at the entrance on the tables and in the toilets.
5. Temperatures of each customer is taken at the entrance to the venue.
6. The venue has a box of face masks which if the customer wants to come in we will provide them with a face mask free of charge.
7. We have a social media site where people can book before attending the venue. COVID guidelines are mentioned when booking. People who do not book but turn up, are allowed in if there is room at the premises. Details are taken via the track & Trace app or recorded in the Track & trace book.

According to our Track & Trace booking system we had 30 names with mobile numbers. Others would have booked with the app on entering the venue at the entrance.

The capacity in the premises is 150, during COVID however, we try and keep a low number of customers in, which is between 60 and 80 at any one time with social distancing

With regards to the comment that the venue was ignoring the guidance, that is not true. It is very difficult to operate licensed premises during the COVID pandemic, apart from having to comply with the conditions on your license, we are being told by word of mouth about conditions that the government are coming out with and imposing on businesses. We have no assistance from anyone in relation to keeping us up to date with these conditions. When I e-mailed the officer a copy of our COVID Risk Assessment I had no feedback that there was a problem. I just feel that the premises were an easy target.

We feel that we have been unfairly treated, we know how sever COVID is, we have taken all precautions available since we have been open. We have had no guidance or help from anyone since opening, we just monitor the news. We have visited other venues to gain some knowledge, but they do not appear to have much in place.

It can be difficult towards the end of an evening when people have consumed alcohol, for them to accept that they have to leave when asked. I have an SIA badge which I understand I cannot use force to remove people from a premise.

The report mentions the 4 E's principle, Engage, Explain, Encourage and Enforce. The only E's that I believe have taken place is to engage, which was the first visit where we were told about the Pool Table and level of music. No one from any of the authorities have explained to us what the guidance or regulations are, and there certainly have been no encouragement.

Name: _____

Signed: _____

Date: 09/10/2020