

## **Objection to the Application for Licence Variation at the Aysgarth Falls Hotel, July 2025**

The Aysgarth Falls Hotel, DL8 3SR, through their agents have submitted an application to vary their licence conditions. The Hotel has posted notices which states that they want to be permitted to sell alcohol and late-night refreshments to hotel residents and their bona fide guests 24 hours a day (between 11pm-5am in respect of late-night refreshment).

This objection is based on the notice, the application by the Hotel through their agents and the North Yorkshire Council Statement of Licensing Policy Licensing Act 2003, effective from 25 May 2025.

We **OBJECT** to this licence variation for the following reasons:

### • **Terms of licence application**

1. The licence application refers to extending the licence to the grounds of the Hotel and "proposed chalets". The Hotel is currently constructing 14 "serviced hotel rooms" (as defined in their planning permissions) in the field immediately north of the hotel.

#### **The Hotel does not have planning permission for chalets in the Hotel grounds.<sup>1</sup>**

2. The application does not define what is meant by "the grounds of the hotel". The applicant has recently purchased 2 properties adjacent to the Hotel (Church Bank House and The Falls Cafe which includes a large function room). These properties are on the opposite side of Church Bank east of Aysgarth Falls Hotel. Church Bank leads downhill to the River Ure and access to the world-famous Aysgarth Falls and is the main thoroughfare for pedestrians to reach the waterfalls. We understand that the applicant intends to convert the previously residential Church Bank House into an AIR B&B. Are these properties included in this application?
3. Further to the previous point, does the application area include the pavement and tables area at the front of the Hotel? The pavement immediately in front of the existing hotel building is not owned by the Hotel and consists entirely of public footpath access.
4. The application refers to the sales of alcohol to hotel residents and the "bona fide guests". In practice there will be no control over who are the "bona fide guests". Bona fide guests can include people who attend functions at the Hotel as well as guests who arrive by coach to "have a good time". It is of course in the commercial interest of the Hotel to sell as much alcohol as possible and to ignore the consequences!
5. The application refers to both alcohol, and 'late night refreshment', but does not define or explain the difference between these two.

### • **Health and public safety**

6. Aysgarth Falls Hotel is located in a rural location, not a town or city. Consequently, the area accepts that it takes some time for police and other emergency services to attend incidents. Granting this licence will add strain on limited resources when incidents occur in and around the Hotel.
7. Unlike in towns or cities, there are virtually no taxis available during the night to be called on to take guests home. There is no Uber service in Aysgarth! There is a risk of intoxicated guests driving vehicles to leave the Hotel site onto A684 at all times of day and night. This is a 40 mph road and is the major route used by emergency vehicles to access the entire length of Wensleydale. There is a limited view of oncoming eastbound traffic, providing very short reaction times to motorists exiting the hotel site.

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<sup>1</sup> Aysgarth Falls Hotel applied for and received planning permission (R/51/25L) for lodges to be used as "serviced hotel rooms". Changing the lodges to chalets implies a potentially different use, for example, with cooking facilities which was specifically disallowed in the planning permission that was granted.

8. There is a high risk of intoxicated guests straying dangerously onto A684 and Church Bank, particularly at night and early morning, when street lighting is limited due to it being a dark skies area. The roads surrounding Aysgarth Falls Hotel are used during these times by farm and other rural traffic (e.g: tractors, grain lorries and quadbikes) and there are often cattle being driven between farm premises and grazing fields.

- **Impact on protected environment**

9. The Yorkshire Dales National Park is a protected landscape. Increased artificial light levels at the rear and frontage of the site will negatively affect the dark skies status of the Yorkshire Dales, as well as the capacity for nocturnal animals to thrive. This will particularly affect the owl and bat populations, as well as night flying insects, which currently thrive in the area. These species are vital to the biodiversity of the area.
10. The application allows for bars to be set up anywhere on the Hotel grounds which will increase noise and disturbance levels.
11. Increased noise levels on the open aspects of the site will disturb other guests of the Hotel, as well as visitors to the area and local residents. Despite stating that music will only be played indoors, sound will escape from any frequently opened windows or doors. Noise will also be produced as Hotel guests move around the site, particularly if they have consumed alcohol.
12. Increased levels of littering, particularly on the main road (A684), along Church Bank and downhill from the site, pose a danger to people and wildlife and damages the overall appearance of this world-renowned, protected area. There is a real danger that bottles and glasses taken from inside the hotel might be broken whilst being transported around the site.

- **Impact on local residents and visitors to the area**

13. Wensleydale is a beautiful rural area, internationally renowned for peace and tranquillity which is not accessible in town and city areas. Aysgarth residents and visiting families staying in local accommodation should be entitled to enjoy the area, which is situated within the Yorkshire Dales National Park. The proposed introduction of a 24-hour alcohol licence will destroy this protected, peaceful environment and would be totally inappropriate for the location. Indeed, the grounds of the hotel would become a site for partying with potentially excess alcohol consumption – entirely out of keeping with the locale. The rear boundary of the hotel site lies directly above an SSSI site as well as the River Ure and Aysgarth Upper Falls, and can be seen by anyone visiting the Falls area (which is amongst the most visited attractions within the Yorkshire Dales National Park)
14. Aysgarth Falls Hotel is surrounded by residences of local people, including ourselves, as well as visitors in holiday accommodation, who would be impacted negatively by this proposal of 24-hour alcohol sales/consumption. We have a right to live in our own homes, free from disruptive noise and anti-social behaviour which would inevitably result should this application be granted. We should not have to keep our doors and windows closed 52 weeks of the year, nor avoid enjoying time in our own gardens, merely to satisfy the monetary ambitions of the applicant's business. We strongly believe that our quality of life will be negatively affected if this licence extension is granted.
15. Well recognised anti-social behavioural issues that will arise will include:
  - a. Noise pollution
  - b. Light pollution
  - c. Public disorder, including urinating in the street
  - d. Disturbing residents and holidaying families with loud disruptive gatherings late into the night
  - e. Threatening behaviour
  - f. Vandalism (such as breaking bottles, damaging property or graffiti)
  - g. Inconsiderate littering
  - h. Drink-fuelled incidents, including driving under the influence of alcohol

Such anti-social behaviour adds to a strain on the police and ambulance services. Any one of these potential consequences of granting a licence raises concerns with public safety and will also divert resources from other priorities.

- **Impact on local businesses**

16. There are two public houses in Aysgarth. Although the George and Dragon Inn is currently closed, granting a 24-hour licence to the Aysgarth Falls Hotel will likely have a commercial impact on the viability of the George and Dragon Inn re-opening and therefore reducing competition in the area. In addition, two other hotels, in the nearby villages of Carperby and West Burton, also rely on visitors to this area for a good deal of their trade, and would be adversely affected if Aysgarth Falls Hotel offered round-the-clock alcohol sales.

- **Proximity of site to St Andrew's Parish Church**

17. The main entrance to St. Andrew's Parish Church is directly opposite the public footpath entrance to the site of the "serviced hotel rooms". Worshippers, funerals and weddings could be subjected to raucous behaviour and noise levels which are wholly out of keeping for the religious nature of the church and grounds. Any raised voices, dog barking etc from the hotel grounds can be heard within the churchyard by family members visiting graves and visitors seeking a space for reflective thought.

## **Summary**

The document raises significant concerns about granting a 24-hour licence to Aysgarth Falls Hotel, highlighting issues such as noise disturbances, vandalism, threatening behaviour, and drink-related incidents that could strain emergency services and affect public safety. It also notes the potential negative impact on local businesses and fair competition, as well as the risk of disruptive behaviour affecting the peaceful atmosphere of the nearby St Andrew's Parish Church and its grounds.

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4<sup>th</sup> August 2025