

Objection to – Application for Licence Variation at the Aysgarth Falls Hotel, July 2025 Premises Licence No. 12/00568/PREM

An application has been submitted to North Yorkshire Council to vary the existing licence to allow the Aysgarth Falls Hotel (post code DL8 3SR) to sell alcohol and late-night refreshments to hotel and lodge residents 24 hours a day (between 11 pm – 5 am in respect of late-night refreshment).

We wish to object to the granting of this licence variation, our reasons are outlined below -

Background

The Aysgarth Falls Hotel is located within the parish of Aysgarth, a rural village in the in the Yorkshire Dales National Park and therefore within a protected environment. The Hotel grounds are bounded by an SSSI to the north (Aysgarth Upper Falls), immediately to the east by Aysgarth church and graveyard and the A684 road to the south elevation. The hotel sits within an area of domestic housing.

The “current” owners applied for planning permission to construct 14 hotel lodges in the field adjacent to the main building which was granted on the basis that they would be used as “serviced hotel rooms”. The “serviced hotel rooms” include 2 family lodges and a lodge appropriate for guests with disabilities.

The Hotel, through its consultants, in support of its planning application protecting the residential amenity, stated that the current operating arrangements and opening hours associated with the profile of arrival and departure for the lodges and services times of the restaurant and public house, will remain as existing, containing all impacts within the current opening hours.

The “Chalets” that are referred to in the licence variation do not have planning permission. By re-purposing the serviced hotel rooms as chalets indicates alternative uses for these properties including the opportunities for hiring out as individual venues for parties, “hen do’s/stag do’s”, etc., or selling outright.

Our Reasons for objecting to the Application

In its planning application, the Aysgarth Falls Hotel submitted a “Guest Management Plan”. This plan spells out how they will “ensure the site and surrounding environment are not adversely affected by guests and staff, the hotel has provided a sympathetic guest management plan that takes a conservation led approach to the preservation and enhancement of the site and surrounding environment”. The plan goes on to say “The hotel is committed to ensuring that all servicing is conducted in a sustainable manner, reflecting the strong environmentally friendly vision at the heart of the management plan”.

Operating a 24-hour alcohol licence is not consistent with the Guest Management Plan that was part of the original planning approval. This is contrary to the assurances given by the hotel representatives when they attended the parish council meeting to explain their planning application. In this application permission is sought for showing films, live and recorded music, dancing, late night alcohol and food consumption to include non-residents. This will result in the hotel becoming an all night drinking/night club which will inevitably spread outside the main building which would be unacceptable within a residential area.

Through social media, word of mouth and advertising, the Hotel will become a destination for “guests” to enjoy all night drinking. Although the application refers to “bona fide guests”, in

practice staff will be unable to differentiate between so called “bona fide guests” and any other guests who have arrived at the Hotel to drink.

There will be limited numbers of staff through the night available to deal with noise, anti-social behaviours, drunkenness, disagreements, and accidents and injuries that will likely arise. There is nothing in the application on effective measures that promotes public safety, not only for the hotel guests and staff, but also for local residents and visiting families with children.

It should also be noted that, with Aysgarth being a very rural community, police and other emergency services cannot attend the Hotel quickly. It can take nearly an hour for an ambulance to attend a local site. Within the application there is no provision for numbers of on-site security staff and first aiders. Being in a rural location, the majority of the visiting guests (as opposed to hotel residents) to the Hotel will arrive by car. Taxi services in the area are very limited – there is no Uber or similar. There is therefore a significant risk that visiting guests will take to their car to drive home whilst being over the safe alcohol limit.

Currently there is outdoor seating at the front of the hotel close to the road. Farm traffic, heavy goods vehicles and livestock movements along the A684 start very early such and as such there is a risk that guests who have been drinking all night will wander into the road which will be a danger to themselves and the public. The licence if granted must restrict the all-night activities to within the hotel building itself.

Extending the area of the licence would allow a bar to be set up anywhere, not just within the main hotel building. The terms of this change would allow an all-night disco and associated bar not only in the newly built function room, but anywhere in the grounds of the Hotel. Although the playing of music will be indoors, it would be expected that doors and windows will be left open so that the music can be heard across the Hotel site. Similarly, any marquee that is set up in the grounds may also be classified as indoors. Restrictions must be placed within the Licence “if granted” to enforce that windows and doors must be closed after 10.00pm to minimise the disturbance to the surrounding properties. This type of restriction was previously placed on the “Falls Motel” which is adjacent to this site (now known as the “Falls Café”).

To summarise, the application to vary the licence conditions should be rejected as it is contrary to what the Hotel and its agents have previously stated, it will bring harm and risk to the local community and visitors, will put additional strain on the emergency services, and is inconsistent with the protected landscape of the Yorkshire Dales National Park plan and the International Dark Sky initiative.

Such a venture may gather support in a busy coastal resort, but in this very different protected location it would seriously detract from the peaceful tranquillity of a rural area and have an adverse impact on wildlife and the Yorkshire Dales International Dark Sky initiative.

Based on the number of hotel rooms and serviced hotel rooms (chalets) the maximum number of residents will number approximately 80 which we do not believe makes this a viable proposition for a “night club” and suggests the management’s intention is to create a night club open to non-residents and a restriction limiting the numbers to residents only should be part of any licence granted.