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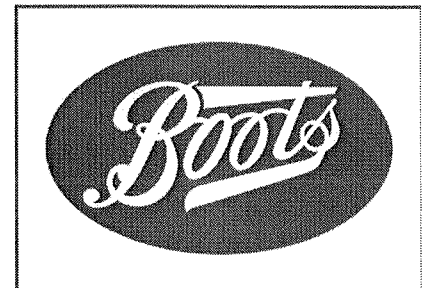
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John McCooke owner of the threatened Good Ship with barstaff Lulu Mullarkey, Stephan O'Neil and James Newmarch Pic credit: Jonathan Goldberg

The Good Ship, on Kilburn High Road, currently allows revellers entry until 2am but a police application to Brent Council's licensing committee may see the doors close at midnight.

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Officers claim the venue has been a hotspot for abusive drunken behaviour and have compiled a report that lists allegations of late night brawls outside the club, fights inside, and the CCTV cameras not operating.

John McCooke, owner of the club, who employs three full time and 12 part-time staff, said if the council accepts the proposals it will "cripple the business".

He said: "We have had various issues with people outside, with lots of them causing us problems, but the police report exaggerates these and is not accurate.

"The vast majority of our problems are people outside and there are plenty of times I have handed over CCTV to the police. It's ridiculous, nonsense.

"Trading used to be open until 4am but I voluntarily changed it to 3am, with last entry at 2am.

"The police want us to close at 2am and suggesting we don't let people in after 12, but closing at 2am will close us down. Seventy per cent of our customers come between 10pm and 2am. We would literally have to close at 12 and it would cripple the business."

He explained the club plays an active role to play within the community and the different groups of people within it.

He said: "We wish to preserve the only place in Brent for new bands to play. We offer free hire of the space to local theatre and OAP groups, countless charities and all that goes if we go.

"It is a massive disaster for Kilburn if the Good Ship goes, a catastrophe that will affect it more than it will affect me. Three music venues, all gone, no theatre for the next two years or so, all the other bars and restaurants affected, this is critical. He added: "They say they are trying to help us but they are not, they are trying to shut us down.

"Licensing in London seems to be going to war on venues, particularly late night venues. It's really sad, it's an attack on the night club economy and I'm not just going to take it lying down."

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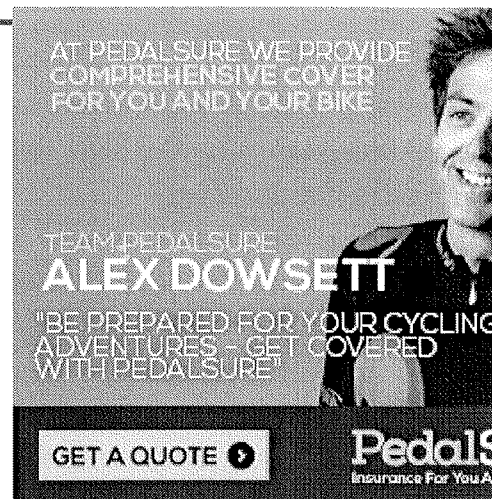
A spokesman for the police said it was due to concerns about public safety at the Good Ship that they made an application for a standards review.

He added: "Officers felt the need to act due to concerns about crime and disorder and the prevention of public nuisance; this follows a number of assaults at the club.

"Officers from the Brent licensing unit continue to liaise with management to resolve issues and ensure public safety.

"London has a world renowned night-time economy and people should be able to enjoy it safely, without concerns of serious crime. The Met is committed to fully playing its part in keeping people safe.


"Brent Council's licensing committee will now review the licence in due course."



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1 comment

I remember John from my days of being involved in a band in London. Venues like these are so important for small bands. John also had a really good common sense attitude to dealing with any anti social element. Hopefully common sense prevails here. Save the ship!

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