

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Statutory Licensing Sub-Committee

Wednesday, 8 May 2024

Dear Councillor

STATUTORY LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE - WEDNESDAY, 8TH MAY, 2024

I am now able to enclose, for consideration at next Wednesday, 8th May, 2024 meeting of the Statutory Licensing Sub-Committee, the following witness statement that was unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda No Item

- 3 **Licensing Act 2003 - Application for a Review of a Premises Licence in respect of European Mini Market, 94 Prestwood Road, Wolverhampton, WV11 1RA (Pages 3 - 6)**

If you have any queries about this meeting, please contact Democratic Services:

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STATEMENT OF WITNESS

Agenda Item No: 3

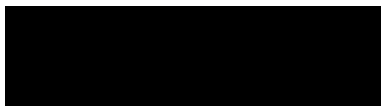
(Criminal Procedure Rules r16, Criminal Justice Act 1967 s 9)

STATEMENT OF Dianne Slack

AGE Over 18 years

OCCUPATION Tobacco Control Officer – Trading Standards

This statement, consists of 4 pages signed by me, is true to the best of my knowledge and belief and I make it knowing that, if it is tendered in evidence, I shall be liable to prosecution if I have wilfully stated in it anything which I know to be false or do not believe to be true.



Date 29 April 2024

Signed

1. I am employed by the City of Wolverhampton Council as a Tobacco Control Officer in Trading Standards. I am also the lead officer for underage sales. I hold an LLB (Hons) law degree and a Diploma in Consumer Affairs; I am a Chartered Trading Standards Practitioner and a full member of the Chartered Trading Standards Institute. I am an authorised officer for a variety of consumer protection and fair-trading legislation. I have been employed by the City of Wolverhampton Council since 1990.



Signed

Date 29 April 2024

Continuation Sheet: _____

2. On the 9 November 2023 and 30 January 2024, Wolverhampton Trading Standards received concerns against the licenced premises European Mini Market, 94 Prestwood Road, Wednesfield, Wolverhampton, WV11 1RA, regarding the display of illicit e-cigarettes in the shop.
3. On the 14 March 2024, as part of Operation CECE, I organised an inspection at European Mini Market. At approximately 12:10 I joined colleagues, District Officers Lauren Kendrick and Gurdip Gill who had already entered the premises. Also present was Andy Atkinson, a licensing compliance investigator. They are all employed by the City of Wolverhampton Council. Officers from West Midlands Police were also on the premises but talking to a resident.
4. When I entered, Mrs. Kendrick was speaking to a white, tall, stocky, blond lady with a number of tattoos on her arms, chest, neck and face. This lady whom I now know to be [REDACTED] informed me she did not work in the shop and was just helping the owner. Mrs. Kendrick took her details and wrote them in a search/exhibits book.
5. I was informed by Mr Gill that he had discovered suspected illicit cigarettes and hand rolling tobacco in a white Micky Mouse patterned hold-all behind the counter. I examined the products and believed they were in breach of the Tobacco and Related Product Regulations 2016 and Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Regulations 2015. The cigarettes were not in plain packaging, and/or had foreign health warnings.

[REDACTED]

Signed

Continuation Sheet: _____

6. On the shelf behind the counter were e-cigarettes which appeared due to its labelling to have tank sizes in excess of the regulations and/ or were incorrectly labelled, contrary to the Tobacco and Related Product Regulations 2016.
7. Behind the counter in a cupboard, were two plastic bags containing cash. I estimated that there was £2000.00 in total in twenty and ten pound notes. I suspected the cash was the proceeds of illicit transactions of cigarettes, tobacco and e-cigarettes, otherwise it would have been in the till.
8. I asked [REDACTED] if she could contact the owner of the shop to return to the business. She used her mobile and spoke to a person she referred to as 'Dar.' The phone was handed to me, and I spoke to a man who claimed he was the owner of the shop, but I could not make out what he said his name was. I believe it is now Mr Diar ABDOLRAHMANPOUR. When asked, he claimed he knew nothing about the cigarettes in the hold-all and was unhappy about me wishing to seize the e-cigarettes because he could return them to the wholesalers. I asked him about the cash that was not in the till. He claimed it was for a delivery due that day.
9. At this point I was informed by Mrs. Kendrick and Mr Atkinson that a delivery driver had been to the shop before I had arrived but had not asked for payment after unloading goods. I was shown a delivery note marked '£1415.30 not paid'. I asked [REDACTED] if she had been asked to pay the delivery driver by the owner but she said she wasn't.
10. A male who was living [REDACTED] appeared with the police. He also denied being asked to pay a delivery driver.

[REDACTED]

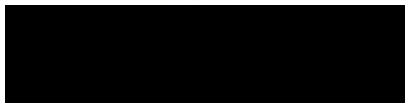
Signed

Continuation Sheet: _____

11. I informed the 'owner' I would be seizing the cigarettes, e-cigarettes and cash for further investigation and terminated the phone call.

12. I asked Mrs. Kendrick as exhibits officer to seize the identified items and note them in a search book.

13. We then left the premises on or around 13:00 hours.



Signed