

Firstly, I would like to apologise for not providing more detailed information in support of the planning permission application.

I would like to take this opportunity to explain the reasons behind the application, including the benefits it will bring to our customers, as well as addressing important health and safety considerations.

Our primary concern is the safety of our patrons, particularly families, who make up a significant proportion of our visitors. At present, customers purchasing drinks for the garden must walk from the bar, navigating several steps and passing through the car park. This has, on numerous occasions, resulted in drinks being dropped and glass breaking outside. This poses a clear hazard not only to customers—including children—but also to dogs, wildlife, and anyone using the car park or accessing the adjacent alleyway.

In addition, the distance between the bar and the garden detracts from the overall customer experience, and some visitors are discouraged from using the outdoor space altogether. As a parent myself, I am particularly aware that it is far from ideal for families to leave children unattended in the garden while returning inside to order and collect drinks, especially given the lack of visibility between the two areas.

The proposed bar servery will also incorporate a small kitchen area, enabling us to serve food more efficiently. This is necessary both for the safety reasons outlined above and because our existing kitchen facilities are not sufficient to meet demand during the busier, warmer months.

It is worth noting that a pizza hut previously operated in the garden prior to my tenure at The Rose & Crown, without issue under a previous tenant. We are also proud to be the smallest and oldest pub in Ashwell and have worked diligently to provide a safe, welcoming space for the community, supporting a wide range of activities including dining, social gatherings, charity events and committee meetings.

The intention is for the outdoor bar to operate only during warmer months, primarily at weekends and during school holidays, rather than year-round. We will apply for the appropriate licence and fully adhere to all relevant regulations. In practice, we intend to close the outdoor bar earlier than the main pub—at 9:00pm on Fridays and Saturdays, and 5:00pm on Sundays.

This proposal does not involve any increase in outdoor music events. We currently host two events per year: a charity fundraising weekend and the Ashwell Show after-party, both of which are well-established and supported by the local community.

The proposed tent structure will be used solely for seating. Due to the number of trees in the garden, bird droppings frequently affect benches and discourage customers from

using these areas. The covered seating will help maintain a clean and more appealing environment.

Overall, our aim is to create a safer, more accessible, and more inviting outdoor space for all customers, with particular consideration for families. We remain mindful of our neighbours and potential noise concerns, which is why we have committed to closing the outdoor bar earlier than the main premises.

The other two pubs in the village are also situated in close proximity to neighbouring properties and provide covered seating areas for customers, which have not given rise to any issues.

We are proud to be part of the Ashwell community and continue to actively support local events and initiatives wherever possible. In the current climate, and given the ongoing uncertainty, we are seeking to enhance the facilities available at the pub to ensure they can be enjoyed by all.