

Application - 1469077 - Geshmak - Statement in support of premises license of 6 Clove Street, Caerphilly, CF83 1GE

FOA Committee board members.

Dear committee members,

I am writing this statement to you ahead of the panel scheduled for the 15th of March 2024. The purpose of the panel is to make a decision on the granting of a premises license in relation to Geshmak, Cafe, bar and Bistro.

We are convening here today in order for you to deliberate on the matter of whether to award a premises license, and I believe it will be helpful for you to understand a little about me and the intentions I have for the growth of my business. I would like to start by introducing myself to you all.

I have always had a passion for food. One which springs from my wonderful multicultural food upbringing. My paternal grandmother was a Jewish Austrian refugee to the UK, and my maternal grandmother was an Irish Catholic. I was brought up in London amongst a rich cultural melting pot of flavour. This meant that I was lucky enough to be able to experience a range of genuine and authentic cuisines, not least those from my own heritage. My paternal grandmother, Hilda, was a phenomenal cook and a gentle and generous soul who revelled in feeding her family each Saturday. She loved her grandchildren, and we grew up with a spoon in her mixing bowl and stirring her stock-pots. She taught me about the joy of feeding and how it nourishes not only the body, but also the soul of both the receiver and the provider. I guess I learned a lot from her, and for me, cooking was always about family and friends. As such, I did not actively pursue a career in food. Instead, I decided to teach. I loved teaching and I was good at it. I could have remained a teacher, but it was not where my passion lay.

In 2015, I decided that I would apply for a space on the BBC's MasterChef (amateur) series and was lucky enough not only to be accepted as an applicant, but to make it to the semi-finals. As a teacher, you do not have a lot of spare time, so after leaving MasterChef, instead of making a career change, I went back to planning, marking, teaching. At the back of my mind was always that itch though. That question, 'Could I make a career from my passion?' In 2021 I took the plunge. I left a great career in teaching to go out on a limb, but I had faith that I could make it work, and that is how Geshmak came about. Geshmak is a Yiddish word. Although I am not Jewish, the name is a nod to my heritage. It literally means 'delicious', but also holds a deeper meaning. To describe something as Geshmak indicates you have exceedingly great delight in it.

For me, the name encompasses everything I wish to communicate, I take exceedingly great delight in what I have created. In the two years since I first welcomed diners to Geshmak in Newport, I have held a license. In that time,

I have created an oasis of calm. Diners who visit us invariably return. I would describe the atmosphere as warm and calm. Diners have often compared us to discovering small bistros throughout the South of France, and remark on how warm the welcome is and how the service and food are of an outstanding quality. Many of our patrons have become friends. We have hosted open mike nights, live jazz music evenings and even some wonderfully successful indie craft fayres, bringing together talented crafters, musicians and of course, wonderful cuisine. I am proud of what we have achieved in Newport, and would love to see it thriving in our new location. During our time in Newport, I can honestly say that we have never had cause to refuse service to any individual for any reason commensurate with the licensing objectives and laws. We have a book which we have faithfully retained at the bar area and have yet to have the need to write in it. In Newport, we worked with the authorities, our neighbours, Local residents and business owners to ensure that we were a credit and uplifted the area. We feel that we were a credit to the area. We would not tolerate antisocial behaviour or any activities that could be construed as nuisance in any way. The very idea is abhorrent to me. Bringing Geshmak to Caerphilly would enhance, rather than in any way be detrimental to the area.

During this application process, we have worked with the relevant bodies to ensure that there is a robust agreement in place, with conditions which are clear and offer security for us and everyone else involved. We absolutely dispute that our presence would cause any issues for neighbours and will always seek to take all steps to ensure that this would never be the case. I am a responsible and experienced licensee and will uphold all the licensing objectives. The idea that we are opening an off license is a clear misunderstanding and a reading of our original application would have made this clear. The term 'On and Off sales' was included in order for us to be able to stock some speciality deli offerings for sale, which may be alcoholic and we would not offer any generic or large quantities for off sales. I understand the concerns that have been expressed, but they are associated with other types of business. In fact, our CCTV coverage will make antisocial behaviour around Clive Street less likely, or may even aid in bringing any perpetrators to justice.

Thank you very much for taking the time to read this statement, and I ask that you consider the application favourably and grant the license.

Signed

Francesca Keirle