

Licensing Act 2003

Reference: 25/02920/PREMLI

Representations by Worcestershire Trading Standards, objecting to the granting of a Premise Licence for Mini Market, 209 Mount Pleasant, Redditch, B97 4JG by the applicant Majeed Haider SALEM

Licensing objective representations are made under:

The prevention of crime and disorder

Worcestershire Trading Standards, a responsible authority under the Licensing Act 2003, wish to make representations, objecting to the granting of a premise licence for Mini Market, 209 Mount Pleasant, Redditch B97 4JG, by the applicant Majeed Haider SALEM.

The reason for the objection is that the retail premise is engaged in the supply of illicit tobacco products which is criminal activity and therefore cannot promote the licensing objective of the prevention of crime and disorder.

Illicit tobacco is the term give to cigarettes and hand rolling tobacco (HRT) which contravene the following criminal legislation.

- Trade Marks Act 1994 – section 92

It is a criminal offence to sell or have in possession in the course of a business, goods to which a registered trade mark has been applied, without the authority of permission of the trade mark holder. These products are commonly known as counterfeit or fake products, where the tobacco products have not been made by the business whose registered trade mark appears on the packaging or cigarette.

- The Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Products Regulations 2015

It is a criminal offence under the above regulations to sell or have in possession for sale cigarettes and HRT, where the colour of the packaging is anything other than Pantone 448 C, which is a drab dull brown colour

- Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016

It is criminal offence under the above regulations to not display the statutory combined health warnings, which consist of a written health warning and a photograph, referred to as a graphic health warning

- Tobacco Products Duty Act 1979

It is an offence to sell tobacco products which do not have a fiscal mark, indicating they have been UK Duty Paid. This includes tobacco products that are genuine but intended for the Duty Free only market, or genuine tobacco products,

legally sold in another country, but imported into the UK, without any UK duty having been paid.

All illicit tobacco products are duty evaded. The Tobacco Products (Traceability and Security Features) Regulations 2019, as amended, require tobacco products to have unique track and trace information to each pack of cigarettes or HRT. Trading Standards Officers have access to database of all UK duty paid products to determine if a tobacco product is UK duty paid or not.

- Licensing Act 2003 section 144

It is an offence under section 144 of the above Act to keep goods on a licensed premises, which have been imported without duty or which otherwise have been illegally imported. All illicit tobacco products are duty evaded.

In March 2024, data from the Office for National Statistics, had the price of a pack of king size cigarettes as £15.50. A typical packet of illicit cigarettes sold in Worcestershire is £5. The duty and VAT on a pack of UK Duty Paid cigarettes exceeds £5.

Background to ownership and licensing history of 209 Mount Pleasant, Redditch B97 4JG

On 30 August 2022, a Premises Licence reference 13/01385/PREMLI was issued to UK International Goods, 209 Mount Pleasant, Redditch B97 4JG. The premise licence holder (PLH) was MHD Premier Limited, and the designated premises supervisor was Mr Majeed Haider SALEM.

Company House records indicate that the sole director of MHD Premier Limited, registered office address 209 Mount Pleasant, Redditch B97 4JG was Majeed Haider SALEM.

Company House records also show that MHD Premier Limited voluntarily applied to be struck off the Company Register and was dissolved on 6 May 2025.

On 12 June 2025, an application was made by the licensing agent, Absolute Licence Solutions Ltd, for the granting of the premise licence for 209 Mount Pleasant, Redditch B97 4JG, with the applicant being Mr Majeed Haider SALEM.

It is therefore evidenced that since 30 August 2022, Mr Majeed Haider SALEM has been in control of the running of the retail premises of 209 Mount Pleasant, Redditch either in a capacity of sole director of the limited company or as a sole trader, following MHD Premier Limited being dissolved.

Evidence of illicit tobacco products being supplied from 209 Mount Pleasant, Redditch B97 4JG

- On 20 December 2024, West Mercia Police officer visited the shop premises and discovered illegal vapes, which contravened the Tobacco and Related Products Regulation 2016 on display in the shop. Illicit tobacco products were present in the back room of the shop. These were seized by police officers as they were suspected of being counterfeit and duty evaded. I took possession of these items from the police and my subsequent examination found there were 1820 illicit cigarettes. The majority were counterfeit packs of Richmond, Lambert & Butler, Marlboro Gold, and Marlboro Red, which also failed to comply The Standardised Packaging of Tobacco Products Regulations 2015, and The Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016. There were a number of other brands of cigarettes which were genuine but UK duty evaded and there was a smaller number of cigarettes, known as cheap whites, made specifically for the illicit tobacco market. These cheap whites have no registered trade mark, fail to comply with the packaging and health warning requirements and are duty evaded.

A total of 109 illegal vapes, contravening the Tobacco and Related Products Regulations 2016 had been seized.

- On 7 January 2025, a trading standards covert test purchase of 2 packs of Richmond cigarettes was made from UK International, 209 Mount Pleasant, Redditch. The cigarettes were sold for £4.50 per pack. I have examined the cigarettes and they are of a known counterfeit design, have a blue coloured pack, have no combined health warning, have no track and trace information and are UK duty evaded. The cigarettes contravene all illicit tobacco legislation named above.
- On 21 January 2025, a trading standards covert test purchase of 2 packs of Richmond cigarettes was made from UK International, 209 Mount Pleasant, Redditch. The cigarettes were sold for £4.50 per pack. I have examined the cigarettes and they are of a known counterfeit design, have a blue coloured pack, have no combined health warning, have no track and trace information and are UK duty evaded. The cigarettes contravene all illicit tobacco legislation named above.
- On 26 February 2025, a trading standards covert test purchase of 2 packs of Richmond cigarettes was made from UK International, 209 Mount Pleasant, Redditch. The cigarettes were sold for £4.50 per pack. I have examined the

cigarettes and they are of a known counterfeit design, have a blue coloured pack, have no combined health warning, have no track and trace information and are UK duty evaded. The cigarettes contravene all the illicit tobacco legislation named above.

- On 26 March 2025, a trading standards covert test purchase of 2 packs of Richmond cigarettes was made from UK International, 209 Mount Pleasant, Redditch. The cigarettes were sold for £4.50 per pack. I have examined the cigarettes and they are of a known counterfeit design, have a blue coloured pack, have no combined health warning, have no track and trace information and are UK duty evaded. The cigarettes contravene all the illicit tobacco legislation named above.
- On 7 April 2025, a trading standards enforcement visit was made to UK International 209 Mount Pleasant, Redditch. A single pack of Richmond cigarettes was found under the sales counter. The pack was new, sealed in cellophane wrap and was of the same blue coloured pack, counterfeit design to the previous test purchases. The shop worker present in the shop stated that the pack of cigarettes were for his personal use. The cigarettes were seized, together with 4 illegal vapes, which were on display.
- On 15th May 2025, a trading standards covert test purchase of a single pack of Richmond cigarettes and a single pack of Lambert & Butler cigarettes was made from UK International, 209 Mount Pleasant, Redditch. The cigarettes were sold for £4.50 per pack. I have examined the cigarettes and both brands are of a known counterfeit design, The Richmond pack is blue coloured, and the Lambert & Butler pack is silver coloured. Neither have combined health warning nor, have valid track and trace information and are UK duty evaded.
- On 3 June 2025, a trading standards covert test purchase of a single pack of Guri I Z 30g HRT was made from UK International, 209 Mount Pleasant, Redditch. The pack is yellow in colour, contravening the standardised packaging requirements, there is no statutory combined health warning and the packaging states duty free. There is no track and trace information on the packaging, and it is confirmed as UK duty evaded
- On 4 July 2025, a trading standards covert test purchase of 2 packs of Richmond cigarettes was made from UK International, 209 Mount Pleasant, Redditch. The cigarettes were sold for £4.50 per pack. I have examined the cigarettes, and they are of a known counterfeit design, have a blue coloured pack, have no combined health warning, have no track and trace information and are UK duty evaded. The cigarettes contravene all the illicit tobacco legislation named above.

- Photographs of the seizures and test purchases are shown in document CWC/1.

Nationally, HMRC estimates that £1.9 billion per year is lost from UK Treasury due to illicit tobacco sales.

The availability of cheap tobacco undermines government and Public Health policies aimed at reducing the cost to the NHS of treating diseases caused by smoking. Illicit cigarettes are sold at half the price of legitimate cigarettes and the cheap prices make it affordable to children, enabling them to become hooked at a young age.

These dishonest traders are making large profits by selling cheap and potentially dangerous counterfeit products without any regards to public safety in respect of the counterfeit tobacco. Although all tobacco is harmful, but with counterfeit tobacco it's even more dangerous as there are no health warnings, no quality or safety control on the content and self-extinguishing requirements of an ignited, discarded cigarette.

National intelligence suggests that the trade in illegal tobacco is often linked to more serious crime such as terrorism, human trafficking, prostitution and modern day slavery. The trade in illegal tobacco is believed to be seen as a low risk way of making money to help fund more serious crime. Local shopkeepers who sell illegal tobacco encourage the supply of further illegal products and help to provide funding for more serious crimes.

The section 182 guidance states that the Licensing Authorities sole role is to 'determine what steps should be taken in connection with the premises licence, for the promotion of the crime prevention objective'. In addition, it is the Licensing Authority's duty to take such steps which are in the interests of the wider community and not those of the individual licence holder. The guidance identifies certain criminal activity which should be treated as being particularly serious. The criminal activity listed in that paragraph includes the use of licensed premises for the sale of smuggled tobacco. Where reviews arise and the licensing authority determines that the crime prevention objective is being undermined it is expected that revocation of the licence-even in the first instance should be seriously considered.

Whilst this is not a premise licence review, Worcestershire Trading Standards feel that the same advice is appropriate, when determining an application to grant a premise licence.

In the case of Crown (Bassetlaw District Council) v Worksop Magistrates' Court 2008 case, it was held that the powers under section 52 of the Licensing Act 2003 to revoke an alcohol licence can be used as a deterrent when criminal offences have been committed.

Worcestershire County Council Trading Standards have formed the opinion that the evidence of the seizures and test purchases between December 2024 and July 2025 shows the applicant and proposed DPS, is involved in the supply of illicit tobacco

from 209 Mount Pleasant and has a total disregard for the Crime and Disorder licensing objective.

Worcestershire Trading Standards requests that the premise licence is not granted.

Chris Coxon

Trading Standards Officer

Worcestershire County Council