

Philip Bayliss

APPENDIX
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...ation will be considered in due course.

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Sent: 26 May 2012 11:34
To: Licensing
Subject: Objection to SEV

Dear Madam or Sir

I am writing to object to the renewal of the Sex Entertainment Venue Licence for the Urban Tiger Lap Dancing Club, Wellingborough Road, Northampton, NN1 4AA.

My objections are primarily on the grounds of Inappropriate Location.

The Urban Tiger is situated on one of the main shopping streets heading into the town centre. There are children's shops and women's hairdressers in the locality, there are places of worship nearby and directly behind the club is a residential area.

It is therefore clear that this locality is entirely unsuitable for a premises with a sex entertainment licence given the use to which the other premises in the vicinity are put and the character of the locality, and therefore according to Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 the council must reject this licence application.

I attach a 42 page document explaining my objection in detail.

Please acknowledge receipt.



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Northar
The Gui
St Giles Square
Northampton
NN1 1DE

23rd May 2012

Dear Sir

I understand that the Urban Tiger Lap Dancing Club Wellingborough Road Northampton NN1 4AA has submitted its application for a Sexual Entertainment Licence under the new legislation.

I am primarily objecting to the Sex Entertainment licence for the Urban Tiger on the grounds of **Inappropriate Location**.

In May 2010 Northampton Borough Council decided to adopt the new law relating to lap dancing clubs. This means that lap dancing clubs are now recognised as 'Sex Entertainment Venues' under the Policing and Crime Act 2009 which means that local people and local communities can have much more say on the opening of such clubs.

The Licensing of Sex Entertainment Venues is regulated by Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 which specifically states in section (d) that:

"the grant or renewal of the licence would be inappropriate, having regard—

(i) to the character of the relevant locality; or

(ii) to the use to which any premises in the vicinity are put"

The Urban Tiger is situated on one of the main shopping streets heading into the town centre. The other premises in the vicinity around Abington Square are mainly geared towards women and children as they include a number of hairdressers, and a supermarket. In particular the School Uniform shop is just a couple of doors away from the Urban Tiger on one side, while a couple of doors away on the other side is The Games Workshop where children play warhammer games.

A pedestrian crossing is situated outside the Urban Tiger which means people intending to cross the road have to stand directly in front of the club and its lewd advertisements, and if waiting to cross the road from the other side people have no choice but to stare forwards towards the club.

There are bus stops in the vicinity of the club around Abington Square which are predominantly used by women at night catching buses into and out of town, and parents and children throughout the day.

The Jesus Centre is situated just a few meters further along the road, and the building in which the Urban Tiger is situated was itself originally the Abington Square Mission.

To the rear of the premises the area is almost entirely residential.

It is therefore abundantly clear that this locality is entirely unsuitable for a premises with a sex entertainment licence given the use to which the other premises in the vicinity are put and the character of the locality, and therefore according to Schedule 3 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 the council MUST reject this licence application.

Furthermore lap dance clubs fuel a sexist culture in which women are treated as sex objects, not people. This has clear links to discrimination and violence against women. Areas surrounding lap dancing clubs become 'no-go' areas for women, and research shows that the presence of lap dancing clubs in a locality increases the demand for prostitution services nearby.

This is not about whether the women who 'dance' in the Urban Tiger are happy to do so or not. This is about the impact of Lap Dancing clubs on the wider community.

According to Government statistics, sexual offences in Northamptonshire for the 12 month period up to September 2010 rose by a staggering 11 per cent. Research shows there is a clear connection between the existence of lap dancing clubs in a locality and the increase of sexual offences against women.

Objections to lap dancing clubs are therefore based on issues of equality, not morality.

Under the Gender Equality Duty Northampton Borough Council has a legal requirement to counter gender stereotypes and to promote equality between women and men. Lap Dancing clubs have a clear negative impact on women's equality and women's safety in the wider community so it would therefore be inconsistent for the Council to grant any licences for SEVs.

I would therefore urge the licensing committee to reject the granting of this licence.

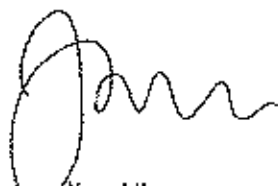
Please note that if the committee chose to reject the Sexual Entertainment Licence, the Urban Tiger would not have to close down as it could continue to operate as a licensed premises but without the element of lap dancing. This would not result in the loss of any jobs, as the Urban Tiger does not employ any lap dancers, but charges the women a fee before they are permitted to dance in the club, and then charges them a percentage for every private dance they perform.

It is very important that Northampton makes a stand against having the sex industry on our high street. Other towns and cities around the UK have been using the new legislation to reject sexual entertainment venues as they have been identified as having a number of detrimental effects including creating no-go areas for women and increasing violent and sexual crime against women in the areas in which they exist. Places such as Wellingborough, Hackney and Cambridge have recently adopted a nil policy with regard to strip clubs. Newquay, Leamington Spa, Henley, Whitley Bay and Dundee have all recently refused licences for existing sex entertainment venues.

I would refer you in particular to the recent decision by Warwick District Council to refuse a licence for an existing lap dancing club in Leamington Spa due to its proximity to residential areas and places of worship. (See Appendix B)

Lap dancing clubs are now recognised as out-dated, sexist establishments and it is important that Northampton Borough Council is not left behind in the cleaning up of our town centres and the abolition of the sex industry.

I look forward to hearing from you



Jacqueline Higgs

Enc:

Appendix A: Further arguments in detail against lap dancing clubs

Appendix B: Press coverage of decisions from other towns and cities rejecting licences for sex entertainment venues or seeking 'nil' policy on sex entertainment venues

Appendix C: Recent press coverage on the realities of lap dancing clubs

Appendix A: Further arguments in detail against lap dancing clubs

1. Lap dancing clubs promote 'sex-object' culture – the mainstreaming of the sex and porn industries

The growth of lap dancing clubs has fed into 'sex-object' culture – the mainstreaming of the sex and porn industries and the ever increasing sexual objectification of women and girls. With lax licensing laws leading to the number of lap dancing clubs doubling over the last five years, and a PR makeover branding lap dancing as glamorous and 'harmless fun', we have found ourselves in a situation in which major retailers sell pole dancing kits along with pink frilly garters and paper money in their 'toys and games section'¹, and leisure centres offer pole dancing lessons to girls as young as twelve². This has led to 25% of teenage girls seeing being a lap dancer as their *ideal* profession³.

2. Lap dancing clubs are linked to wider systems of prostitution

The working practices in lap dancing clubs include a requirement that women pay rent to work and a high performer to customer ratio which leads to intense competition between performers to gain the attention of male customers. It is within this context that women report feeling pressured to provide extra sexual services in private booths in order to earn a wage

As well as the structural conditions in lap dancing clubs which pressure many performers into offering extra sexual services, research further shows that, even if clubs do enforce a no touching rule, and even if there is no sexual contact between dancers and customers, **the presence of strip clubs in a locality increases demand for nearby prostitution services⁴.**

This places lap dancing on a continuum of commercial sexual activity, irrespective of whether the sexual exchange occurs within the club itself.

3. Lap dancing clubs create 'no-go' zones for women in the local vicinity

¹ Eden, I. (2007) *Inappropriate Behaviour: Adult Venues and Licensing in London*, London: The Lilith Project, Eaves Housing for Women.

² BBC News Online (2006), 'Children are Taught Pole Dancing' Tuesday, 12 December 2006, url: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/vars/6173805.stm>

³ http://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/news/161/161338_naked_mobilisation_rubs_off_on_seen_girls.html

⁴ Coy, M, Horvath, M & Kelly, J. (2007) *It's just like going to the supermarket: Men talk about buying sex in East London* London: Child and Woman Abuse Studies Unit

Research undertaken in the London Borough of Camden found a fifty percent increase in sexual assaults in the borough after the rapid expansion of lap dancing clubs⁵. Personal testimony reinforces the idea of a link between the expansion of lap dancing clubs and increased levels of sexual harassment for women in the vicinity.

The Urban Tiger is situated on a main thoroughfare into the town centre, close to shops and bus stops – men visiting the club often heckle and jeer at women on their way into or out of the club, causing women to feel unsafe and intimidated.

“Once I walked past [a local strip club] at closing time, when a stripper tried to discreetly leave the premises and a group of punters stood outside. On recognising her, they erupted into loud whooping and jeering as she ran across the road to get away. I found this behaviour completely intimidating and totally in keeping with the behaviour of the street sexual harassment that makes women feel uncomfortable on a daily basis... Punters are encouraged to engage the very attitudes and behaviour which are seen as disrespectful and intimidating to women outside strip clubs... It is vital that councils take this into account when considering applications, so that they can take appropriate measures to limit the normalisation, exploitation and legitimisation of sexism, in order that women feel safe and entitled to walk their streets without fear of harassment or abuse”.

Sonia, resident who objected to a lap dancing club in Hackney.

In addition, the UK Royal Institute of Town Planning issued a Good Practice Note in December 2007 on the issue of lap dancing clubs and women’s sense of safety⁶: “In relation to the 24-hour economy policy, ensure that the views of women are considered. Evidence shows that in certain locations, lap dancing and exotic dancing clubs make women feel threatened or uncomfortable”

Links between the expansion of lap dancing clubs and increased levels of sexual harassment and assault led the Women’s National Commission to include the need to regulate lap dancing clubs in their submission to the UN Commission on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) 2005: “The use of women in degrading entertainment exacerbates violence against women...lap dancing and similar clubs must be regulated to ensure that local crimes against women do not increase”

4. Lap dancing clubs have a negative impact on women’s safety in wider society

⁵ Eden, I. (2003) *Lilith Report on Lap Dancing and Striptease in the Borough of Camden*, London: The Lilith Project, Eaves Housing for Women

⁶ Royal Town Planning Institute (2007), *Gender and Spatial Planning, Good Practice Note 7*, 10 December 2007

Lap dancing clubs normalise the representation of women as sexual objects who are always sexually available. They make sexual harassment seem normal, as what takes place within the four walls of a lap dancing club would be considered harassment in any other context.

The links between objectification, discrimination and violence against women are recognised at the international level by the legally binding **United Nations Convention to Eliminate Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)**, which has repeatedly called on states – including the British Government - to take action against the objectification of women⁷.

Similarly the UK-based **End Violence Against Women** coalition has called on the UK Government to tackle the sexualisation of women and girls because it provides a 'conducive context' for violence against women⁸.

The links between the expansion of lap dancing clubs and an increase in the levels of sexual violence in society was raised by Glasgow City Council⁹ in response to research it commissioned into the impact of lap dancing clubs on the city:

"Images of women and 'entertainment' which demean and degrade women portraying them as sexual objects plays a part in 'normalising' sexual violence and contributes to male abuse of women being acceptable, tolerated, condoned and excused. Such entertainment runs counter to explicit commitments by a range of private, public and voluntary agencies to promoting women's equality."

5. Gender Equality Duty

Regulating the expansion of lap dancing clubs is an issue of equality, not morality.

Objections to lap dancing clubs are based on issues of equality, not morality.

The need for policy to be scrutinised in relation to gender equality was recognised by the Government in 2007, with the passing of the Gender Equality Duty. The Gender Equality Duty places a legal obligation on public bodies to take out Gender Equality Impact Assessments on all policy decisions to ensure that decisions do not have a negative impact on women's equality. Furthermore, the Gender Equality Duty requires public bodies to actively promote gender equality and work towards countering gender stereotypes.

Lap dancing clubs promote gender stereotypes and attitudes that say it is acceptable to treat women as sexual objects, rather than real people. They are linked to gender

⁷ 1979 Convention on All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) Article 5

⁸ Realising Rights, Fulfilling Obligations: An Integrated Strategy to End Violence Against Women (EVAW) 2008

⁹ Glasgow City Council report on the need for review of licensing legislation in the light of concerns re table dancing <http://www.glasgow.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/0E19236E-808A-4467-9617-6A9508C3C312/0/legtable2.pdf>

discrimination and sexual harassment in the workplace (as demonstrated by recent successes of sexual harassment cases in which use of lap dancing clubs has been recognised as linked to discrimination) as well as the creation of no go areas in the surrounding areas which reduce women's sense of security and entitlement to public space.

Highlighting these issues is not about morality, or 'having an issue with sex', it is about ensuring that local councils abide by their legal requirements to promote equality between women and men.

The NORTHAMPTONSHIRE Licensing Act 2003 draft Statement of Licensing Policy for Regulated Entertainment, Late Night Refreshment and the Sale of Alcohol (which I assume will be updated to incorporate SEV'S?) states the following:-

"Promotion of Equality

7.10 Over the last four decades, discrimination legislation has played an important role in helping to make Britain a more equal society. However, the legislation was complex and, despite the progress that has been made, inequality and discrimination persist and progress on some issues has been stubbornly slow.

7.11 The Equality Act 2010 provides a new cross-cutting legislative framework to protect the rights of individuals and advance equality of opportunity for all; to update, simplify and strengthen the previous legislation; and to deliver a simple, modern and accessible framework of discrimination law which protects individuals from unfair treatment and promotes a fair and more equal society.

7.12 In implementing the Licensing Act 2003, associated legislation and guidance, this Licensing Authority is committed to ensuring that the obligations and duties within this legislation are met."

It would be inconsistent for Northampton Borough Council to grant any licences for Sexual Entertainment Venues as this would not comply with their stated equality duties.

Sexual Encounter Venues are part of an industry that markets women as sexual objects and promotes working practices that implicitly encourage men to expect and seek sexual services.

The **Gender Equality Duty 2007** requires local councils to assess the gendered impact that lap dancing clubs have on society as a whole.

The lap dancing industry is highly gendered, with men paying women to strip for them in the vast majority of lap dancing clubs - otherwise known as 'gentlemen's clubs'. The gendered nature of the industry makes the proliferation of lap dancing clubs relevant to the Gender Equality Duty making gender equality a factor which should be considered during licensing process.

The ever-increasing sexual objectification of women, facilitated by the expansion of lap dancing clubs, runs directly counter to efforts to achieve equality between women and men.

The more it becomes acceptable to view and treat women as sexual objects, the easier it becomes to disrespect women as a group. As stated by Chris Green, Director of the White Ribbon Campaign¹⁰:

Research into male motivations for visiting strip clubs found that men went to strip clubs to meet women who were not 'feminist' and who were willing to act in more 'traditional' ways¹¹.

Male customers also said that they wanted to 'let frustration out' at the ways in which they had been forced to monitor their behaviour towards women in the workplace¹² "With all of this sexual harassment stuff going around these days, men need somewhere to go where they can act like they want"

In this way, lap dancing clubs represent one of the last bastions of male privilege - a place that time forgot in relation to society's efforts to achieve equality between women and men.

Recent sex discrimination law suits against corporate use of lap dancing clubs, and top business women in *The Economist*¹³ blaming corporate strip club culture for the lack of female representation at high levels of business, demonstrate the negative impact that lap dancing clubs have on women's equality in wider society.

The *Sexism in the City* campaign spearheaded by the Fawcett Society, the UK's leading campaign for gender equality, further highlights the links between lap dancing and gender inequality as it calls on government and business to take steps to end commercial sexual exploitation, sexual objectification and sexual stereotypes as crucial measures to achieve equality between women and men in the work place¹⁴.

6. The current coalition government supports moves to tackle businesses which promote the sexual objectification of women,

¹⁰ The White Ribbon Campaign works with men to end violence against women

¹¹ Frank, K. (2005) 'Exploring the Motivations and Fantasies of Strip Club Customers in Relation to Legal Regulations', *Sexual Behavior*, Vol. 34 (5), pp. 487 – 504

¹² Frank, K. (2005) 'Exploring the Motivations and Fantasies of Strip Club Customers in Relation to Legal Regulations', *Sexual Behavior*, Vol. 34 (5), pp. 487 – 504

¹³ Jeffreys, S. (2008b) 'The Sex Industry and Business Practice', Seminar: School of Business, Ballara University, 21 May 2008

¹⁴ <http://www.fawcettsociety.org.uk/documents/SATC%20manifesto%20public.pdf>

including lap dancing clubs, as part of their work on violence against women.

The current Home Secretary, Theresa May, sent a powerful message to councils to take a bold stance against businesses which promote the sexual objectification of women when, in July 2010 at the Women's Aid Conference, she stated:

"It is only when businesses appreciate their responsibility to end the sexualisation of women that some people will stop treating women like objects. And it's only when our communities stand up and say violence against women is unacceptable – that attitudes will really begin to change".

The Conservative Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy for London (2010 - 2013) explicitly refers to the links between lap dancing clubs, prostitution, trafficking and other forms of violence against women¹⁵.

7 Northampton's Central Area Action Plan

The Urban Tiger falls within the boundaries of Northampton's Central Area Action Plan. This plan presents a vision for the development of the centre of Northampton to 2026. An essential part of the overall strategy for the area should refer to the Gender Equality Duty which affects all decisions made by the Council. To this end surely an essential part of the area plan should be to eliminate all Sexual Encounter Venues within the area. The Urban Tiger lap dancing club is situated on the main road into Northampton town centre and is surrounded by shops, pubs and other local businesses. Women and children have to pass this club together with its offensive posters and publicity material in order to gain access to the central shopping area of town. This does not provide a good impression of Northampton to tourists and visitors to the town. The club is also situated close to the main bus stops for services into and out of the town centre - it is therefore very difficult to avoid or ignore it.

I would hope that the Central Area Action plan will provide an ideal opportunity to clean up the centre of Northampton by ensuring a zero policy towards Sexual Encounter Venues and would urge the council to ensure that this forms an essential part of the policy.

8. Rejection of the Sexual Entertainment Venue Licence would not lead to the Urban Tiger closing down.

In these difficult times no-one wants to see an established business having to close down. However, if the Urban Tiger had its application for an SEV licence refused, it would not have to close down, but could continue to operate on its premises licence

¹⁵ <http://www.london.gov.uk/sites/default/files/The%20Way%20Forward%20Final%20Strategy.pdf>

as a licensed premises but without the element of lap dancing. **This would not lead to the loss of any jobs, as the Urban Tiger does not employ its dancers, but charges them a fee for the opportunity to dance in the club.**

Standard Licence Conditions

If Northampton Borough Council decides that it will issue a Sexual Entertainment Licence to the Urban Tiger or to any other lap dancing clubs then it is essential that standard conditions are imposed on those licences for the safety of the women performing in the clubs and for the prevention of crime. Other councils around the UK all impose conditions on SEV licences. Those standard conditions should include the following:-

1. Restriction of opening times to evenings only
2. The use of CCTV monitoring equipment throughout
3. Any external advertising of adult entertainment shall not include:
 - a) Any depiction of full nudity.
 - b) Any images of breasts, buttocks or genitalia.
 - c) Any depiction of overtly sexual or violent images or any other images which may give rise to concerns in respect of public decency or protection of children from harm.
 - d) Any overt wording such as 'striptease' 'credit crotch' or similar
4. Prohibition of advertising in public spaces, including on billboards, telephone booth boards, and leafleting. Advertising will only be permitted on the interior and exterior of the premises. The use of ad-vans to advertise sexual entertainment venues is prohibited for public decency. No advertising allowed in media that is not exclusively aimed at adults – this would exclude local 'family' newspapers for example.
5.
 - a) No persons under the age of 18 will be permitted on the premises.
 - b) Proof of age will be required from anyone appearing to be under the age of 25.
 - c) No performer or employee will be under the age of 18 and an employment record will be held on the premises. Adequate checks will be made to ensure compliance.
6.
 - a) No full nudity will be permitted.
 - b) There shall be no physical contact between the customers and performers.
 - c) Performers are to keep a minimum distance of 3 feet away from the customers. Notices outlining these conditions must be clearly displayed on the premises.

- d) Performers will stop immediately and move away from any customer who is offensive or attempts to touch them and shall report such behaviour and any other inappropriate behaviour or breach of house rules to the management.
- e) Performers will not take or give telephone numbers or business cards or in any way solicit themselves.
- f) No dancing or entertainment shall be provided in dedicated private booths within the premises.
- g) All performers will at the conclusion of their last performance, leave the premises and not return that day.

These conditions would go some way to protecting women working in lap dancing clubs and women in the wider community.

Appendix B:
**Press coverage of decisions from other towns and cities rejecting
licences for sex entertainment venues or seeking 'nil' policy on sex
entertainment venues**

Wellingborough

Wellingborough: BBC Website 22/02/12

Lap dancing clubs banned in Northamptonshire town

Lap dancing clubs and other types of sexual entertainment venues have been banned in a Northamptonshire town.

Licences will be not given to any business in Wellingborough planning to run shows that include nudity to "sexually stimulate".

The decision follows a six-week public consultation during which no opposition was lodged. While the consultation went ahead a temporary ban was put in place.

Council leader Paul Bell said: "It goes to show we made the right decision."

Amanda Wilcox, principal health protection manager at the council, said that appeals against a decision to turn down a licence would go to the magistrates' court.

The council also plans to try to reduce the number of nights which establishments can stage nude shows without a licence - currently the government allows venues to stage 12 nights a year without requiring a licence.

Councillor Peter Morrill, who chaired the Community Committee meeting on Monday night, said that if a number of establishments took advantage of the allowance then it could negate the new law.

Council leader Paul Bell proposed that the committee write to the county's MPs to try to reduce the figure.

Cambridge

Lap dancing clubs 'not welcome' in Cambridge

Cambridgenews.co.uk

06/06/11

Lap dancing clubs should not be allowed in Cambridge, licensing chiefs ruled today. The decision puts the district in a pioneering position alongside the London borough of Hackney and was welcomed by Cambridge Rape Crisis Centre which, as the *News* reported, warned the venues increased the risk of females being assaulted.

Norah Al-Ani, the organisation's development officer, said afterwards: "I'm really pleased with the outcome because Cambridge City Council is sending out a really clear message that there isn't anywhere appropriate to have establishments that degrade women and promote the sex object culture."

The resolution by the licensing committee, which is subject to further consultation, does not ban lap dancing clubs from trading and applications will still have to be considered on their own merits.

Requests could still be approved if there are "exceptional" circumstances but members, having been told they could name the number of sexual entertainment venues they thought was appropriate in a "relevant locality", listed all of the wards in the city and selected the maximum as zero.

Leamington Spa

Lap dancing is 'inappropriate' near temple and homes

Published on Thursday 30 June 2011 16:31 in the Leamington Spa Courier

CAMPAIGNERS against a lap dancing club in Leamington are 'delighted' that it can no longer offer regular adult entertainment.

As the *Courier* reported last week, Shades in High Street was refused by Warwick District Council an application for lap dancing and other sexual entertainment to take place on a regular basis. The council's regulatory committee came to its decision after concluding that the club, which has been operating for three years, was inappropriate given how close it is to people's homes and the town's Hindu Temple.

Janet Aity, a member of the Green Party which campaigned against the club and the chairman of the former Old Town Regeneration Group, said "We are delighted. The general public regards this type of entertainment as seedy. It gives a seedy feeling to the town. It's not what people want to see when they enter Leamington from the train station."

Fellow Green Party member Ian Davidson said: "Sex clubs increase sexual desire without satisfying it and where studies have been done, this has been shown to increase the levels of sexual assault.

"Why inflict this upon Leamington? Brunswick ward already has an above average level of violence for the district."

In a report detailing the committee's decision, district council licensing manager David Davies pointed out that members had taken into account the fact that the club had received no complaints in its three-year history, that 50 per cent of its customers were regulars and that, because it was expensive to go there, it attracted a clientele which reflected this.

But speaking after the hearing, Mr Davies explained: "The licence was refused because of the proximity to residential areas, schools and places of worship. While morality and religion cannot be taken into account, the character of the area can be.

"This is purely and simply a decision made by the Government that the Licensing Act 2003 did not give enough scope for limiting the number of sexual establishments. So the law was changed to require lap dancing and other establishments offering sexual entertainments to have a licence to do so, rather than just sex shops and sex cinemas as was previously the case."

The club has until October to run as it currently does, but from then on it will only be allowed to offer adult entertainment 11 times a year and no more than once a month. While the law does not allow for Shades to appeal against the council's decision, it can apply for a judicial review.

Shades licensee Lisa Ransford declined to comment.

Henley

Lap-dance club forced to shut

HENLEY'S lapdancing club has been closed down for good.

Diamonds and Pearls in Greys Road car park had its licence revoked in April after police revealed that 106 crimes were reported at the premises in two years.

The club was allowed to remain open after lodging an appeal but this has now been withdrawn ahead of a hearing scheduled for next week.

Owners Leno Borg and Andy Mags have walked away from the business and a new owner has taken over the premises.

South Oxfordshire District Council will seek to recoup £8,400 in costs in preparing for the appeal at Oxford Magistrates Court.

Mr Mags claimed that the strip club had been "unfairly targeted".

He said: "I believe that it was just a few people who didn't want the club there. It is a political thing. The club itself didn't draw criminals, it drew the opposite. A lot of the incidents didn't deal directly with the club."

Mr Mags claimed that despite its reputation, the club had been doing well and was visited by more than 600 people each week.

New owner Martin Fox will re-open the upstairs, formerly Latinos nightclub, as a jazz club and turn the downstairs lap-dancing club into a champagne bar under the name of Henley's Bar and Nightclub. It will open next Friday.

He has been given permission by the district council to trade for 13 days between now and the end of the year.

Rob Draper, of the council's licensing department, said: "It is no longer a licensed premises but they have applied for temporary event notices and can legally trade with these for a limited time. The only people who can object are the police and if they don't object, we issue a licence — we don't have a choice."

Mr Draper said the new management had agreed with the police that there would be no sexual entertainment and to abide by the conditions of the previous owners' revoked licence.

It is believed that the number of reported crimes at the premises has fallen since the licence was revoked and so the police were unlikely to object to the temporary event

notices.

A spokesman for Thames Valley Police said: "We are aware of the temporary event notices and we are working with the new management of the club."

In March, the police moved to shut down Diamonds and Pearls.

They presented the council's licensing panel with evidence of drug-taking, prostitution and assaults by staff on customers. The offences included 18 assaults, nine incidents involving drugs, 12 cases of fraud, six thefts, one affray and an alleged rape.

Mr Fox, who is teetotal and runs a security company called Frontline Protection UK, says there will be no repeat of these problems at the premises.

The 39-year-old said: "I have been in the nightclub business for more than 20 years. I will be at the club every single night overseeing the place.

"I have made lots of changes just to make it safe for people to use. I have already taken out the booths so it is more open plan and I have written new policies.

"I have had letters from the police saying it is drug-free."

Mr Fox said that he had scrapped the club's credit card machines and installed cash machines after complaints of card fraud at the old club.

He will apply for a new licence and if this is approved the nightclub will be open from Wednesday to Sunday.

Mr Fox added: "I think Henley is an affluent town and it has lots of people visiting, especially in the summer.

"The club will be a place where people can come to chill out and relax. We are trying to aim for an older generation."

In September, Mr Borg sent a letter to the council offering to shut down the lap-dancing club if it agreed to allow the premises to be a nightclub and wine bar instead.

He said he had been considering the idea following the furore that greeted the club when it opened in 2009.

At that time, then town councillor Barry Wood threatened to hold a protest march unless the council reversed its decision to grant the licence.

He said: "It will encourage undesirable people and the seedier elements of life into the town. I'm not a prude or a puritan - I have been to strip clubs and enjoyed them - but I don't want my face rubbed in it."

Mr Mags replied: "It is not like places you get in Soho. Yobs won't be able to afford to come in and there will be security on the door that won't let anybody in unless they are dressed smartly."

In November 2009, the Policing and Crime Act came into force, rebranding lap-dancing and strip clubs "sex establishments" instead of entertainment venues.

In February this year Mr Borg was condemned for holding a children's party above the lap-dancing club.

Published on 05 December 2011 in the Henley Standard

Whitley Bay

Sex shows to be banned as town bids to clean up act

Published on Saturday 29 January 2011 13:30 Newsguardian.co.uk

LAP-dancing shows look set to be banned in Whitley Bay.

North Tyneside Council has agreed new regulations designating bars staging lap-dancing shows as sexual entertainment venues, clearing the way for a blanket ban next year.

The move gives the authority more control over the number of sex show venues and their locations.

A full council meeting last Thursday was asked to agree to a proposal limiting the number of sex show venues in the town to eight, but decided to go further and adopt a zero-tolerance policy instead in a bid to clean up the resort's image.

Bars and clubs hosting lap-dancing shows or similar events will be able to carry on for the remainder of their licence term or until the new powers come in at the end of February next year.

If they want to continue after then, they will have to apply to the council for a new licence, explaining why they think they should be the exception to the rule.

The rule applies to an area bounded by Whitley Road, Park Avenue, the Promenade and the Esplanade.

Last year, the council held a 12-week consultation, receiving 34 responses, most of them calling for fewer lap-dancing venues in the town.

The police are also backing the move to make Whitley Bay a more family-friendly destination after years of having its image tarnished by stag night revelry and sleazy sex shows.

One of the first venues to fall foul of the ongoing moves to clean up the town was South Parade's Caprice Hotel.

It was shown the licensing equivalent of a yellow card and put on probation for six months after dancers there were caught offering to perform explicit sex acts for undercover police officers.

A council spokesperson said: "The council will formally adopt these new powers from Sunday, February 27.

"Venues which currently provide sexual entertainment under the terms of their existing licence can continue to do so for 12 months following that date." Chief

Superintendent Gary Calvert, of North Tyneside police's area command, said:
"Northumbria Police support North Tyneside Council in wishing to make Whitley Bay a family-friendly and cultural centre for the members of the community to both enjoy and be safe.

"Following a consultation period, it was the view of North Tyneside police officers that no sexual entertainment venues should operate within Whitley Bay.

"This is based on a likelihood for added crime and disorder linked to these and other premises."

Karen Goldfinch, chairman of Whitley Bay Chamber of Trade, said that although the move would impact on some businesses in the town, she welcomed it.

She said: "This will hopefully further improve the image of the town as being somewhere you can come, enjoy the many individual and bespoke shops, the vast array of different cafés and restaurants, bars and the coastal area in general.

"The nightlife in Whitley Bay has changed over the years, and work is being done to again improve the profile of, in particular, South Parade.

"There are successful bars and venues working hard to help with this, such as the Avalon Hotel and Trojan Rooms.

"This kind of attitude towards business and the greater good of the whole town can only be a good thing, bringing more people in to see what's on offer, often staying locally in our hotels.

"A joint approach between the chamber, police, pubwatch scheme members and council, working with residents' groups, must be a positive thing in making Whitley Bay the successful town we all want it to be."

Dundee

Crime fears scupper plans for new lap dancing bar in Dundee

A fresh bid for a new lap dancing club in central Dundee has been thrown out by councillors over fears it could increase crime in the area.

- By Craig McManamon
- Published in the Courier : 17.01.12
- Published online : 17.01.12 @ 05.33pm

The application, spearheaded by Stars Sports Bar, run by local businessman Jimmy Marr, wanted to change the use of Mangos Nightclub in the Seagate into an adult entertainment venue.

However, Katherine Sharp of the action group Dundee Violence Against Women Partnership voiced her strong opposition to the "undesirable" development.

In a statement delivered to Dundee City Council's development management committee she warned the move would result in an over-provision of adult entertainment venues in the city and could create a problem with prostitution in the surrounding area.

She continued: "Lap dancing is harmful to the women involved. They are often verbally abused by men and propositioned for sex. Support of this application would be contrary to the council's duty to protect women and goes against its equality policy as it would support one gender over another."

Ms Sharp said research had shown crime, or fear of crime, increases in areas in which lap dancing clubs exist.

She added: "The ready stock of alcohol at these clubs can make it very unsafe for women. Afterwards many men use public transport and cause problems to women on their way home.

"If approved this application would set an undesirable precedent that goes against the public interest."

Stars Sports Bar proposed operating a public house on the ground floor and a separate adult entertainment venue run out of the basement from 10pm until 2.30am with both male and female performers.

The council's director of city development, Mike Galloway, warned the committee that although a number of moral issues had been raised it was the duty of members to make a decision based only on planning considerations.

He said the fear of increased crime, as mentioned by Ms Sharp, could be taken into account as this was not a moral issue but material consideration.

Maryfield councillor Ken Lynn moved to refuse the application, adding that he viewed the plans with genuine distaste.

He was seconded by Richard McCready, who said: "We have to consider the vision for our city centre and ask is this something that we want?"

All councillors agreed to the motion that went against the recommendation made to them by city planners. The Courier was unable to contact the applicant for reaction.

Hackney

Hackney Council's 'nil' sex policy approved by licensing committee

The revised proposal will, however, allow existing strip clubs and sex shops to continue trading

The Hackney Citizen

Wednesday 12 January 2011

Hackney Council's licensing committee this evening voted to approve a new 'nil' policy on sex establishments. If approved by full council later this month (26 January), it will mean that no new strip clubs or sex shops will be allowed to open in any of the borough's 19 wards (localities). Following a protracted debate, an amended version of the originally-proposed policy was approved by a narrow majority of committee members.

The policy as originally drafted would have threatened Hackney's five existing 'sex establishments'.

Hackney currently has one licensed sex shop and four premises (strip clubs) that are "licensed to provide live performances or displays of nudity solely or mainly to sexually stimulate audience members."

A public consultation on the proposed new measures showed that over two-thirds of respondents were against the complete ban on sex shops and clubs from the borough; the committee nevertheless approved the 'nil' policy, with amendments designed to protect establishments that are "longstanding" and "well run".

This will mean that if any of the five existing premises closes, no new establishment can be expected to be allowed to take its place. If the council decides for whatever reason that one of the establishments is no longer "well run", it can be closed down.

Commenting on the borough-wide policy which proposes to still allow the existing strip clubs and sex shop in Haggerston ward to continue trading, Cllr Brian Bell (vice-chair of the licensing committee) said: "If you go outside this room and say ...[this]... is a 'nil' policy, they'd laugh at you."

Councillors Brian Bell and Rick Muir said they did not think the proposed policy should include sex shops, the latter saying he had not realised that it does in fact include them.

Another of the dissenting committee members, Cllr Geoff Taylor, described the policy as "not a 'nil' policy upfront but a 'nil' policy by stealth."

“What is being hoped for by somebody – and I don’t know who it is – is that the clubs that we’re talking about will wither on the vine, and we will finish up with what the people of Hackney in the consultation have said they don’t want: a nil policy,” he said.

“Because once one closes, anything coming along cannot by definition be a long-standing club, therefore it can’t open...

“So as they close, they will stay closed – despite the fact that two thirds of residents said that wasn’t what they wanted to happen. What was consulted on was either a ‘nil’ policy or no policy, and I don’t approve of the policy... and I don’t approve of the method.”

Cllr Emma Pflouviez said that she thought that the proposed ‘nil’ policy is right: “When we had the application for a new establishment in the borough it did provoke more opposition than anything else,” she explained, “that’s where this policy came from, this policy wasn’t dreamed up by a bunch of mad, rabid feminists.”

Campaign group Object have been vociferous in their support of the ‘nil’ policy, while Hackney trade unionists have opposed it.

Newquay

20 October 2011 Last updated at 16:27 BBC website

Lap dancing banned at Newquay nightclub

A nightclub in Newquay has been told it must stop its lap dancing after breaking rules. Cornwall Council refused to renew an adult entertainment licence held by Halos Gentlemen's Club after complaints that dancers were getting closer than the 3ft (1m) allowed. The club's owner said he was considering an appeal.

Two years ago another Newquay nightclub, Divas, also lost its adult entertainment licence.

Denise Mutton, chairman of the licensing sub-committee, who saw CCTV footage of the lap dancers, said: "We saw several incidents of dancers crossing the line over a two day period."

Tougher guidelines. Tracy Earnshaw, who has campaigned against this part of Newquay's night-time economy for several years, said: "Let's be clear, neither Halos nor Divas lost their licence for lap dancing because myself and a few others don't like lap dancing.

"Halos licence was removed by Cornwall Council because of CCTV evidence which was provided by the police which showed serious, repeated blatant breaches of Halos licence."

The owner of the club told BBC News he planned to continue trading as an ordinary nightclub.

Insp Ian Drummond-Smith of Newquay police said: "We had received intelligence that the licensing condition relating to the 3ft rule was being breached and officers visited the premises to investigate in July 2011.

"They observed a breach and a subsequent check of the premises own CCTV showed multiple breaches over that weekend.

"We therefore asked the licensing panel to review the licence and we are happy with the outcome."

A separate application by Halos, for a sexual entertainments venue licence, is due to be heard next week. The licences were brought in by the government earlier this year, introducing tougher guidelines for lap dancing clubs.

Tower Hamlets

November 2011 Last updated at 19:27 BBC Website

Could the East End become a strip-club free zone? By Ayshea Buksh BBC News, London

Tower Hamlets Council may ban lap-dancing clubs

Tower Hamlets wants to be the first council in London to ban lap-dancing clubs and it has just finishing asking its residents if they feel the same.

The east London Labour-led borough is one of the capital's most deprived as well as being the playground of the City and that clash, for many in the council, is uncomfortable.

Officially there are 11 lap-dancing clubs in the borough. Some are in dense residential areas around Whitechapel and Bow, others in trendy Shoreditch, the East End's alternative to Soho, or the financial district of Canary Wharf.

Independent councillor Rania Khan, who has been leading the campaign to shut the clubs, said: "You see a lot of the city workers coming into the borough because Tower Hamlets is on the city borders.

"It's really unfair on residents, these venues are in the heart of the community."

Last year, the law on lap-dancing clubs in England and Wales changed, with any venue that had lap-dancing, pole-dancing or strip tease being reclassified as a sex encounter venue.

Stag nights

The aim of the legislation was to give more power to local residents and local councils could also put a limit on the number of clubs they felt were appropriate.

"My vision would be for the UK to have absolutely no lap dancing clubs" Jennifer Hayashi Danns Author and former lap dancer

BBC London has learned the majority of London councils have implemented some part of the legislation.

Nearby Hackney, in east London, had wanted to ban the clubs, but it compromised and agreed to a limit on the existing seven establishments.

According to the Tower Hamlets consultation document, the council "has adopted the government's new legislation and to implement it we have produced a draft policy which says there is no location within Tower Hamlets suitable to have sex establishments".

A group of residents in Bow, who live near to a licensed lap-dancing pub, said they agreed with the plans.

One mother, who wanted to remain anonymous, said: "I don't think it's safe, especially with the posters that are around. My children are looking at them and asking questions 'What is this? What's a lap dance?'"

Another resident, Kobir Ali, said: "I've got friends who've got younger daughters and men who come out of the pub are looking at them.

"They've just seen the show, what are they looking at? They're looking at her."

However stripper Edie, who has worked in East London for more than 10 years, said strip tease was an art form that should be celebrated and kept safe.

"It's really better if this thing is overground and controlled," she said.

Safety concerns

Inside The Beehive pub, on Empson Street, Bow, the landlord said it had not had lap dancing for some time but kept the licence in case of stag nights.

One of the regulars said: "It's a bit of insult really, It's a working mans pub. You have a couple of pints on the way home from work and that's it.

"People have got to make a living. There was no sex just people dancing."

Several local club owners also told the BBC they would fight any plans in court.

"We are legitimate businesses and have good relations with the people who live and work near our clubs," said Dave Stewart, a spokesman for nine of the eleven clubs in the borough.

There are 11 lap-dancing clubs in Tower Hamlets

Jennifer Hayashi Danns, from west London, spent two years lap dancing in clubs in London and north-east England while studying for her degree.

She has recently published a book called Stripped, which she says is an anthology of women's experiences of the clubs

She said: "My vision would be for the UK to have absolutely no lap-dancing clubs however I would be careful about just banning them and using prohibition to achieve that.

"If you ban the clubs, that disrespect of women and objectification will just manifest itself in another form."

London

12 November 2010 Last updated at 02:36 BBC.co.uk

Too much sex in the city, say London's councils

By Andy Dangerfield BBC News, London

The capital has more than 60 venues that offer stripping or lap dancing
A battle is being declared on London's strip clubs, with many council leaders insisting that no more should be allowed to open.

Since the start of the century, London's adult entertainment industry has been booming.

The number of lap-dancing clubs in the UK has doubled to more than 300 since 2004, according to Home Office figures, with nearly a quarter of these clubs in the capital.

Until earlier this year, strip clubs did not need to apply for a specific sex establishment licence, making it difficult for councils to prevent new ones opening.

But in April, new powers were granted to local authorities in England and Wales to license strip clubs as sex venues.

And many London councils are planning to take advantage of the change in law to stop any new strip joints opening.

Of 32 London councils, 10 said they were currently reviewing their policy on strip clubs.

A further eight are proposing a "nil" policy to the public, which would mean that no licence would normally be granted to new venues.

'Endless sleaze'

Conservative-led Hammersmith and Fulham, in west London, is one of the first councils in London to adopt the nil policy, following public consultation.

"We want to make sure that no more sex establishments can open in the borough," said Tory Councillor Greg Smith.

"If a club is illegal, the owners are not going to care about safety"

End Quote Peter Stringfellow Nightclub owner

"Residents have told us they do not want them to open in inappropriate places."

Meanwhile, along with neighbouring north London boroughs of Hackney and Camden, Labour-run Islington Council is consulting its residents on the nil policy.

"We're on the side of residents and don't want endless sleaze swamping our communities," said Labour Councillor Paul Smith.

"We think there are enough so-called sex encounter venues in Islington. We don't need any more."

Chris Knight, vice chairman of the Lap Dancing Association, thinks "it is possible for towns and cities to reach saturation point for this type of club".

But he added: "It is important not to penalise any business that are out there.

"Some 30,000 young women work in our industry and contribute billions to the economy."

Feminist journalist Laurie Penny believes that more fundamental issues need to be addressed in the sex industry and banning lap-dancing clubs will not resolve these.

'Great danger'

"We're not going bring down the patriarchy just by preventing new lap-dancing clubs," she said.

"Even in the legal clubs, women are subjected to ridiculously exploitative working practices and are in great danger.

"Rather than just banning them, there should be a proper investigation into the working practices that take place there," she suggested.

Westminster, in central London, which contains 27 venues licensed to put on strip shows, is one borough that has no plans to change its licensing policy.

London boroughs with most strip clubs

- Westminster: 27
- Camden: 9
- Islington: 5
- Hillingdon: 5
- Hackney: 4
- Source: London's councils

"Our focus is cracking down on illegal sex establishments," says Conservative-run Westminster's head of licensing Andy Ralph.

"We're working with police and landlords to achieve this."

Peter Stringfellow, who owns two table-dancing clubs in Westminster said councils who were proposing the nil policy, were in "panic-mode".

Bexley

Zero quota for lap dancing clubs in Bexley MP demands

Marina Soterliou , Reporter Friday, May 20, 2011

10:04 AM Bexley Times

An MP is starting a petition to get Bexley council to set the number of lap dancing clubs in the borough to zero.

Erith and Thamesmead MP Teresa Pearce launched the petition today in a bid for Bexley council to set a 'sex policy' where councillors could set the quota to zero, to ensure the borough remains a lap dancing-free zone.

She said: "Lap dancing clubs fuel a sexist culture in which it is acceptable to treat women as sex objects, not people, and areas surrounding the clubs can become 'no-go' areas for women. So it's time for Bexley to use its new powers and take action: introduce a 'zero' policy on sexual entertainment venues and ensure our community stays a lap dancing club-free zone."

This comes after the council dropped the granting of a sex establishment licence from £22,537 to £8,995 on March 29 this year after they carried out a study into how much fees for a new type of category - a sexual venue such as lap dancing bars - should be. Now both licences for lap dancing clubs and sex shops are the same in Bexley. In Greenwich, a sex shop licence costs £20,360 while in Westminster it is £29,102.

The European's Union Services Directive which came into affect on December 28, 2009, means councils can only charge for the cost of the licence and the required inspections and not the enforcement work carried out on unlicensed businesses, carried out by both local authorities and the police.

There is currently only one sex shop in the whole of the borough - Private Shop in 14 Bourne Road, Bexley Village and the council has not received any applications for a new one for at least seven years.

A spokesperson for Bexley council said: "To set a 'nil quota' the authority must have a 'sex policy'. Bexley has decided at present not to have a policy. Setting a nil policy does not prevent applications being made or authorities having to consider such applications."

Appendix C: Recent press coverage on the realities of lap dancing clubs

The truth about life as a lap-dancer

guardian.co.uk, Thursday 10 November 2011 21.00 GMT

Popularised by stars such as Rihanna, lap-dancing clubs have doubled in number in less than a decade. Yet, the reality is degrading and psychologically damaging, says one former dancer

In the two years Jennifer Hayashi Danns worked as a lap-dancer, she never met a woman who danced sober. Some took cocaine, the rest drank – whether they drove to work or not. At her worst point, Danns would have a bottle of wine before work, half a bottle while getting ready, and drink steadily through her shift. How else, she asks, could she walk up to strangers and ask if they wanted her to take her clothes off?

"One of the biggest misunderstandings is that to look good is enough – I don't think people have any idea how much you need to hustle," she says. "The men can say yes or no, and one of the extraordinary things is they will list the reasons why. So, they will go: 'No, your tits aren't big enough.'"

The rise of lap-dancing clubs has, at times, seemed unstoppable. A veneer of respectability had been created by well known figures such as Stephen Hawking, and recently, Rihanna visiting them – along with reports of an increasing number of female customers. Pole-dancing has become a hen night staple, and made frequent appearances in pop concerts by stars such as Miley Cyrus and Britney Spears.

The number of lap-dancing clubs has doubled since 2004 to 300, according to estimates by campaign group Object, who link this to them being licensed like other pubs or clubs – making it hard for local people to prevent their opening. But Dr Kate Hardy from the University of Leeds says their prevalence, and high-street presence, is possible only because the dancers "pay" to work there through "house fees" and commissions on each dance; effectively taking on the financial risks. Even if demand drops therefore, the clubs are still viable.

Her recent study of 300 lap-dancers found a third were students (including undergraduates, vocational course students and graduate students). And she says the increase in university tuition fees will "undoubtedly" mean more women turn to lap-dancing. Female youth unemployment is at a high, and with cuts in the public sector that hit women hardest, finding alternative jobs is increasingly difficult.

Since April this year there had been a fightback from councils after new legislation re-classified the clubs as "sex entertainment venues". Around 11 councils have brought in a "nil policy" – saying sex entertainment venues are unsuitable in their borough; others have brought in restrictions on numbers. In "nil policy" areas with existing clubs, owners will have to apply for new licenses that are unlikely to be granted – effectively closing them down. Eight clubs in North Tyneside may close after the policy comes into force in February, while in Tower Hamlets councillors are awaiting the results of a public consultation that could determine the future of their 11 clubs.

Despite their prevalence, Danns says, few understand what happens behind their doors. Now she has written a book, collecting stories from other women with campaigner Sandrine Levêque to offer a glimpse into a murky industry.

Sitting at a kitchen table in the cosy London flat the 27-year-old insists she is not calling for a ban, because it would not challenge the underlying sexist culture that allows them to flourish. But she does want to explode some myths. In her strong Liverpool accent she says: "People think it's charming and cheeky – men chasing topless girls around like in a Carry On film." Instead, she says, there is a ruthless competition – with women resorting to masturbating for the customers or ignoring no-touching rules to earn enough to pay the fees. Others tell of security staff and managers turning a blind eye to men groping, insulting or even threatening the women.

Danns started lap-dancing in her early 20s. She shifts in her chair uneasily as she admits that, despite her family's emphasis on education and intellect, she was more influenced by the racism she had experienced growing up as a mixed-race child in a white area of Merseyside. "Because the way our culture is set up, as a girl you want to be thought of as beautiful. But when I was young, I wasn't perceived as attractive because I was black ... so when I became older and people were praising me for my looks it was an extraordinary feeling."

Keen to go to university, she saw lap-dancing as flexible and easy money, and because it was one of the few places which did not allow full nudity, she started dancing topless in Blackpool. "It was only a tiny thong but it was important to me because it meant I wasn't fully nude," she says.

Naively, she believed the dancing would be fun, glamorous and she would be able to pick her customers, which was not true. "Sometimes I was really repulsed because they had been drinking so heavily, but also it was age. When it was for someone 45 and above I would have in the back of my head: 'You probably have a daughter.' I would make a moral judgment on them, but I would still dance for them. And I think this can be psychologically damaging because it becomes a question of what you will do for money."

It was just one of the compromises she found herself making. "It's like an abusive relationship where you get worn down slowly – your morality gets worn down, your self esteem gets worn down. But you are there because you have put yourself there. That's what can be damaging."

Then she found herself struggling to make a profit after her £80 house fee. "When the money dropped," she writes, "so did my personal standards ... I went to other clubs where I performed full strip. The first time I pulled my knickers down I felt my soul fall out."

Other dancers in her book report club rules being cast aside. In fully nude clubs, one former lap-dancer says, women would do handstands while spreading their legs, or allow customers to touch them .

The often-rehearsed idea that lap-dancing can be empowering, or make women feel beautiful is nonsense, says Danns, when explicit insults are common. Nearly half of lap-dancers in the Leeds study reported frequent verbal harrassment and unwanted touching. "They call you names, comment on your body, or your cellulite, and certainly [I know] from other women's experiences, comment on your genitalia saying 'that's big'," Danns says. "How can you raise your self esteem through that? If you are going to take the compliments you have to take the insults."

She became a commodity. "In my personal life if men said to me, 'I'm really into black girls,' I would think, 'what an arsehole,' because they are treating you as a species and as though all black women are identical. But in a lap-dancing club it's almost inevitable – you are reduced to your component parts." Her confident relationship with her body crumbled too. Nine months into her lap-dancing career, Danns had a breast enlargement.

Much of her custom was rowdy young groups of men keen to show off to friends. "There's something psychologically unhealthy about it ... All you have done is picked the woman you think is the most attractive and paid her – but now you want a round of applause, isn't that strange?"

In one of the more disturbing chapters, a sex worker describes punters who came straight from lap-dancing clubs as unwilling to acknowledge that women were "human or individual": "There was a very aggressive 'pack mentality' and they would ... make very degrading comments about the way that women looked ... they invariably asked for group sex – it seemed important for them to have sex in front of their friends."

Danns says the emphasis was always on women's submission and anything that marked her as an equal, from education to age, would be hidden. "It's about power and you play into that."

Finally, she says, she decided that: "putting myself in that situation was disrespecting myself, and undervaluing the contribution I could make to life". Yet it was not until she left that she realised how damaging lap-dancing could be. "While you are dancing you don't talk about it – because if you are not going to stop, what possible value is there in letting [those thoughts] fester? That's why I would question research which only talks to people who are still working."

Danns hopes her book will persuade others that this industry harms men and women alike. "There's something uncomfortable and unbalanced in a fully clothed man paying a woman to strip naked."

The clubs that strip women of their dignity

Rosamund Urwin

31 Aug 2011

The Evening Standard

"Girls: you do know what type of establishment this is, don't you?" asked the bouncer, as my friend and I walked into Secrets lapdancing club in Euston. Clearly, my attempt at nonchalance had given the impression that we had taken a wrong turn on the way to Pizza Express.

This was actually trip two to Tits R Us for me. Somewhat strangely, I had been invited by the PR for the chain - in an email with words like "post-feminism" and a lot of exclamation marks - to witness their first ladies-only night.

Now, asking a self-declared strident feminist to a strip club seemed to me like offering a member of Greenpeace a trip to an oil rig. But they must have been operating on an "any publicity..." principle. So, on my own "know thine enemy" principle, I agreed. How can you criticise something that you haven't seen?

The first time I got the sanitised version: a tour of Secrets' Covent Garden club, cocktails and a chat with some dancers. The nudity was behind a curtain so what we saw - a woman in a dress slashed to the navel and exposing her thong - could just have been an average night in Dukes nightclub in Chelmsford. With the PR sitting there, trying to sell me the female empowerment line, I didn't feel free to investigate fully.

So, dragging another poor friend, I went back. The women we spoke to - both attractive and funny - explained why they were lapdancers. One had used the money to buy a flat, the other was doing it to support her daughter because the father wouldn't.

Essentially then, they were fixing two social ills: the ludicrous cost of housing and absent fathers. That doesn't sound very empowering.

As for the dance, it was about as erotic as taking out the rubbish. And not just because my friend was in embarrassed hysterics next to me. As a man-fancier, I know I am not the target market, but I can't see what anybody gets out of it. The dancers look bored and everything about the club is joyless. It is surely sex with everything enjoyable edited out: from real intimacy to simple satisfaction.

What surprised me most - having got the no-touching memo - was how much she touched me. My face was grabbed, I was asked to use my teeth to pull off her top and at one point I could feel her leg stubble. And it is really crude: it could be the beginning of a personalised porn flick with vaginal views aplenty.

I don't want to judge these women; I suspect I had many more options in life than they did. But nor do they need patronising. If your best option is to show your clitoris for cash, the rest of your choices frankly suck. I asked one of the dancers if she would want her daughter to copy her: "I'd rather she became a heart surgeon." Well, quite.

These clubs aren't aiding gender relations, either. The dancers told us that none of them has a boyfriend - "we're not seen as girlfriend material" - and did the "all-men-are-shits" moan. Although occasionally dubbed a "man-hater" (I'm not) - I stuck up for the Y-chromosome. I wanted to persuade these ladies that for every sleazy, coked-up banker (their words), there is a Guardian-reading liberal who would never set foot in these dens of misogyny. But then, as they pointed out, if all men were like that, they would be out of a job.

Strip clubs: where the men hate the women and the women hate the men. There's nothing sexy about that.

Women respond with 143 comments to back cap on lap dancing

Wednesday, November 17, 2010 thisiscornwall.co.uk

ATTEMPTED rape, vicious beatings and sexual harassment – these are just some of the responses given by women to Cornwall Council as reasons for imposing a zero cap on town lap-dancing bars.

Overall, 143 comments were submitted to Cornwall Council with respondents being given a name to protect their true identity.

One response, from a Mrs B, said: "In 2008 a Royal Marine down in Newquay for the weekend to visit Divas tried to rape me and when I fought back he stamped on and kicked my head and face so brutally that he broke my jaw, nose and eye socket. The police said it was the worst attack they had seen in 20 years. "I don't want the people that these bars attract in this county, let alone the town.

"There are statistics which prove that in areas where these bars open, violent crimes like sexual assault and rape increase by approximately 80 per cent.

"Newquay police force can have as little as two officers on at one time during summer or winter, with a summer population of 120,000-plus. It doesn't bode well."

Another, Ms C, said: "I have two teenage daughters, aged 19 and 13, and my eldest daughter has been subject to unwanted sexual advances by many men on stag party nights out in Newquay. "My youngest has also been leered at in the town centre while out shopping with me on a Saturday afternoon.

"I feel very strongly that we are encouraging young men to come to Newquay for a weekend of booze and sex by continually advertising stag events and sex-orientated nights out in clubs such as the lap-dancing ones in Newquay.

"Newquay should be focussing solely on attracting the family and surf pound. At the moment it is the easy option to go for the stag pound. I would like to back the zero cap on lap-dancing clubs as I feel this is a step forward in reclaiming a family-orientated Newquay."

And a Mrs P, added: "Last Christmas, my four-year-old granddaughter was climbing up on the tractor and trailer ride provided by the Rotary Club of Newquay.

"She saw the angel in the upstairs window opposite the old Woolworth's building and asked if she could go there. It is in fact Halos, a nightclub with adult entertainment. Obviously I couldn't give her the real reason why it was not a suitable place to visit but it should not be on the high street."Please put a stop to these in our town."

Kat Banyard – The Equality Illusion

"The term 'lap dancing' has come to encompass a variety of routines, including table dancing, erotic dancing, stripping and strip tease. Another term sometimes used to aptly describe it is 'live pornography'."

Lap dancers are not employed by the clubs, but pay a fee for the right to dance there and then a percentage of money from each private dance. They have no rights. They can be fired for no reason. There is no sick pay or pension.

A study of erotic dancers by Jennifer Wesley at the University of Central Florida found nearly half of them had been molested or raped as children or teenagers. (J.K. Wesley 'Growing up Sexualised: Issues of Power and Violence in the Lives of Female Exotic Dancers')

"Lap dancing clubs... implicitly normalise and legitimise the practice (of prostitution) more widely. Research into men who pay for sex acts has found that the mainstreaming of lap dancing clubs and the sexualisation of culture more widely plays a key role in their motivation to pay for sex acts. This led researchers at the Child and Women Abuse Studies Unit to conclude that 'where there are clubs in which women perform sexualised dance in order to titillate men, nearby premises offering sexual services will benefit.'" (M. Coy et al 'Its Just Like Going to the Supermarket: Men Buying Sex in East London' Child and Women Abuse Studies for Safe Exit a Toyndee Hall 2007)

"Kelly Holsopple... conducted research into women's experiences of violence in strip clubs. (K. Holsopple 'Strip Club Testimony' Freedom and Justice Centre for Prostitution Resources 1998) She found 100% of the women she surveyed had experienced physical abuse while working in a lap dancing club, which variously included being bitten, slapped, pinched or punched. All of the women had also been sexually abused in a club. This ranged from having their breasts grabbed to men attempting to and succeeding to penetrate them vaginally with fingers and bottles. Every woman had been verbally harassed, frequently being called names such as cunt, whore, bitch and slut, and every single one had been propositioned for sex. The women surveyed also reported that almost all of the perpetrators had suffered no consequences for these behaviours."

Breaking News:

Lap-dance venue plan dismissed by council

www.thisisdevon.co.uk

Saturday, May 26, 2012

Campaigners reacted with delight yesterday after plans for a lap-dancing club in the heart of a town were rejected.

Tracy Earnshaw, who has led a vociferous protest against plans for Kiss Gentleman's Club and other lap-dancing venues in the Cornish town of Newquay, said the decision by Cornwall Council's licensing committee "sent a clear message" that such clubs were unwelcome in the town centre.

She said: "Newquay has tried to turn itself around and create a better image and this goes some way towards achieving that. It gives a clear message that we don't want sexual entertainment venues as part of our night time entertainment and we will continue to object to these sorts of things in the future."

St Austell and Newquay MP Stephen Gilbert praised the committee's decision as "a victory for Newquay".

He said: "What consenting adults do in private is down to them, but to position a lap-dancing club on Newquay's main shopping street is, I believe, a matter for public debate and concern." The applicant, Margaret Jane Hawkey, who is proprietor of five clubs and bars in Newquay, left the meeting without comment after councillors rejected her bid for a Sexual Entertainment Venue (SEV) licence 9-2, saying the town centre location in Bank Street was unsuitable.

Earlier, ten protesters were allowed to address the meeting, many describing how they suffered sexual harassment on the streets of the resort at the hands of drunken louts.

One woman said: "I feel that in effect we are having a curfew put on us, that we are made to go home before 9pm because the sex establishments are going to be opening their doors – that's not a good feeling in your home town."

Matt Timms, a minister at Newquay Christian Centre, just a few metres from the proposed club, said it would "undermine and undo" all the good work they did with young people and would enforce a negative image of the town as a venue for stag parties.

The proposed location of Kiss club was on the site of the former Halo nightclub, which had the SEV element of its licence withdrawn after concerns about the way that it operated.

During a tetchy meeting in St Austell yesterday, the police's solicitor, Christopher Rendle, accused the applicant of perpetrating an "elaborate deception" about who was actually going to be involved in running the club.

He questioned whether Mrs Hawkey – a former Truro public school pupil – was actually fronting Kiss on behalf of the owner of Halo, something she flatly rejected.

He said: "This has been a dishonest application from the start and there are not enough conditions on the licence to ensure the protection of those who enter and work on the premises."

But James Finlay QC, for Mrs Hawkey, accused the police of indulging in "innuendo" and "smear tactics" and pointed to written evidence by Newquay Inspector Ian Drummond-Smith, which, he said, implied a link between crimes and the proximity of lap dancing clubs.

"It's smear tactics – there is no evidence that these crimes have anything to do with Halo or similar clubs," he said.