

# Cheshire police slammed for 'disgraceful' evidence in licence reviews

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**Publicans in Warrington, Cheshire, have escaped revocations of their licences after it was found police presented contradictory and misleading evidence at review hearings.**

Warrington Borough Council reviewed the licences of both Shenanigans and Voodoo Lounge due to alleged problems at the bars, but in both cases the licensees were left with just a few minor conditions after the council ruled that there were “discrepancies” and “contradictions” from police throughout the hearings.

Earlier this year licensees in the town told the *Publican's Morning Advertiser* that they would no longer call police to incidents at their premises for fear it would be used as evidence against them in reviews.

## 'Disgraceful'

Paul Douglas, who represented both bars at the hearings, said: “The police evidence was disgraceful. Their own logs and reports completely contradicted what was in their application.

“Police wanted revocation of the premises licences. If not revocation, then they wanted suspension for three months, removal of DPS and a reduction in hours. They got nothing other than a couple of minor conditions.”

In the case of Shenanigans, Douglas identified 14 pieces of evidence submitted by Cheshire Constabulary that contradicted statements made by individual police officers.

In the case of Voodoo Lounge, Douglas said police claimed a group of drunk men were served alcohol and then ejected, despite the fact they had never entered the premises and the actions of

the door supervisors had earlier been praised by police and shown to the local security forum as a model of best practice.

### **'Tainting applications'**

Barrister Sarah Clover of King's Chambers, who represented Voodoo, said during the hearing that Cheshire Constabulary should "go back to the drawing board" in relation to reviews "as they are tainting their applications and the licensing authority's process".

Peter Astley, assistant director for regulation and protection at Warrington council stated in the determination notice for Shenanigans: "The Panel had concerns regarding evidence not being clear with respect to the discrepancies/contradictions as highlighted throughout the hearing."

Superintendent Martin Cleworth of Cheshire Constabulary said: "During both hearings there was extensive debate and a number of different views were presented to the committee. It is our view that this does not mean the police evidence was conflicting, but rather that a number of different views were expressed during the course of the proceedings."

He added that the police are in the process of appealing one of the decisions.

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