



*Chief Superintendent John Martin  
Merseyside Police  
Manor Road Police Station, Manor Road, Wallasey, Wirral CH44 1DA  
Tel: 0151-777-2000 Fax: 0151-777-2010  
Email: John.Martin@merseyside.pnn.police.uk*

Mrs. Margaret O'Donnell  
Licensing Manager  
Dept. of Law, HR & Asset Management  
Wirral Metropolitan Borough Council  
Town Hall  
Brighton Street  
Wallasey  
WIRRAL  
CH44 8ED

Our Ref. JM/ST

Your ref.

Date: 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2013

Dear Mrs. O'Donnell

### **DESIGNATED PUBLIC PLACES ORDER (DPPO)**

In response to your consultation in relation to a DPPO in the New Ferry area, I outline below the nature of the problems experienced and my view on the appropriateness of designating the mapped area.

#### **NATURE OF THE PROBLEM:**

New Ferry is an area of social deprivation and in recent years has suffered an increase in unemployment. The area around the shopping centre has become increasingly run down with a significant number of shop closures on the periphery of the shopping area. New Ferry shopping precinct did, however, remain popular with local people.

In the last couple of years there has been an increase in the amount of street drinking in the New Ferry area, largely unreported to the Police, which is having a negative impact on the shopping area. In May and June 2012 local shop owners and workers from 14 premises were approached by the Police and agreed to provide evidence on this issue. In addition, local people continue to talk to the local Neighbourhood Policing Team and Police incident logs, arrests and crime reports provide supporting evidence.

In their statements shop owners/workers report almost daily issues with street drinkers in the shopping area. The drinkers are noisy, often using offensive language and are regularly abusive to passers-by. They spit on the floor and shop windows and, in their drunken state, they often fall against shop windows as they go through the precinct, scaring staff and causing a risk of damage. They also pester customers for loose change. They have a tendency to gather together.

People who work in the local shops and charities feel intimidated, as do customers who are consequently deterred from using the shops. Shop owners report a decline in customers, particularly the elderly and women. Local people have told Officers that they get the bus into Birkenhead rather than face the street drinkers.



**fighting crime  
protecting communities**

The street drinkers do go in to some of the shops and have caused damage to stock as well as being abusive to staff and customers. Some shop staff allege that the street drinkers steal their stock, although the smaller stores do not report this to the Police. Arrests and convictions relating to shoplifting in the larger shops confirm the involvement of some of the street drinkers in this crime.

From a policing perspective, the street drinkers in New Ferry are a contributor to reports of anti-social behaviour in the area. Whilst I believe it is significantly under-reported, Officers have been called to deal with incidents involving them on a regular basis. They have been arrested for being drunk and disorderly, for Public Order Act offences, for shoplifting and, more rarely, for violence offences. They contribute disproportionately to both crime and the fear of crime in the area. Many incidents and offences occur during the day.

In addition to this there are reports of drinking outside on-licensed premises in the area which increases anxieties.

The Port Sunlight Village Trust reports that the problem of street drinking spills over into their area and directly affects tourists and residents in Port Sunlight. Port Sunlight security staff have had to deal with the street drinkers on occasions and the Trust believe that they have a negative impact on the image of Port Sunlight.


The evidence provided in the original file relates to the May/June 2012 period and since then both the Neighbourhood Policing Team and the Licensing Unit have put a lot of work into reducing the problem, providing a more regular presence in the area and checking licensed premises amongst other measures. Whilst this has had some success, local residents and shop owners continue to raise concerns with Officers and to ask for an alcohol free zone. Incidents continue to be reported both officially and to Officers on patrol and at Meetings.

I believe that a Designated Public Places Order covering the proposed area would be a significant contribution in assisting Officers to deal with the ongoing problems. Currently Officers have no powers to prevent street drinking unless the drinkers are being disorderly in front of Officers or unless they commit a criminal offence and a witness is available and prepared to attend court. Many people in the area feel intimidated by the street drinkers and will not come forward or provide evidence. A DPPO gives Officers the power to confiscate their alcohol and acts as a major deterrent to the street drinkers, particularly those who come in to the area from Birkenhead and elsewhere. An added benefit is that it negates the need to call the various on-licensed premises in for review to change their conditions to prevent customers from drinking on the street.

The areas of greatest concern are: the shopping area; the car park at the rear of the Co-Op Supermarket (Woodhead Street); Grove Street (including the car park) and Grove Square; New Ferry Park; and the routes the street drinkers take to the car park/viewing point on The Esplanade – New Ferry Road & Thorburn Road.

In summary, I fully support the introduction of a DPPO for the proposed area and would like to see it introduced as quickly as possible. I believe it to be a proportionate and necessary measure to deal with ongoing problems suffered by residents and businesses and would assist the policing of the area.

Yours sincerely



**JOHN MARTIN**  
**CHIEF SUPERINTENDENT**  
**WIRRAL AREA COMMANDER**