

Proposal for Conversion of Meze Lounge Dancefloor Area into Kitchen and Café Area

To: Newport City Council

From: Ali Boksh, Director of Events, Festival and Premises - Urban Circle Newport

Date: 30th October 2024

1. Introduction

Urban Circle Newport seeks approval to convert and expand the downstairs back area of the current Meze Lounge into a multi-functional space, incorporating a fully equipped kitchen, Cafe with dining/seating, and an expanded toilet/WC area. This proposal will allow us to better serve our community by offering diverse dining options, training opportunities, and improved facilities to accommodate all patrons comfortably.

In addition, the new design will allow for continued late-night event hosting while respecting licensing regulations and ensuring that the updated facilities meet all health and accessibility requirements.

2. Proposed Changes

Kitchen and Restaurant Conversion

- **Current Dancefloor Area:** The existing dancefloor area will be converted into a kitchen and Cafe area, providing a welcoming space for dine-in guests and eventually serving delivery orders through platforms like Uber Eats and Deliveroo.
- **Dining and Seating Arrangements:** The dining area will include a mix of seating configurations for various group sizes, creating a flexible and comfortable space for guests.

Expanded Toilet/WC Area

- **Expansion and Modernisation:** We propose to expand and modernise the toilet/WC area, ensuring it accommodates our expected increase in patron capacity and adheres to current health and safety standards.
 - **Accessibility Compliance:** The new WC facilities will be fully accessible, incorporating gender-neutral and accessible stalls that meet the needs of all guests, including those with disabilities.
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3. Operating Hours and Licensing Compliance

Food Service Hours

- **Proposed Food Service Hours:** 11:00 AM - 10:00 PM, Monday through Sunday, in accordance with our current license.
 - **Late-Night Operations:** After 10:00 PM, the kitchen will close, but we will continue serving alcohol in line with our late-night refreshment license, utilising the space for evening events.
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4. Benefits of the Proposed Changes

- **Enhanced Guest Experience:** With expanded and modernized toilet/WC facilities, patrons will have access to clean, accessible amenities that accommodate larger crowds.
 - **Increased Revenue and Sustainability:** By converting the space into a kitchen and Cafe area, we can generate steady income through food service, contributing to our operational sustainability and community initiatives.
 - **Community Training and Employment:** The kitchen & Café will also function as a training hub, equipping young people (16+) with culinary and hospitality skills and creating employment pathways.
 - **Flexible Space Utilisation:** This design maintains flexibility, allowing us to transform the area for late-night events and community programs while keeping the kitchen, dining, and WC facilities fully separate to meet licensing and operational requirements.
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4. Considerations for Health, Safety, and Community Impact

To ensure a smooth transition and continued compliance:

- **Noise Reduction:** The kitchen and WC areas will be constructed with soundproofing measures to minimise noise disruption.
 - **Accessibility Compliance:** The WC facilities will include accessible stalls and family-friendly options, and all construction will comply with local regulations for safety and accessibility.
 - **Minimal Impact on Local Community:** As food service will end by 10:00 PM daily, we aim to minimise any potential disruptions. Post-10:00 PM activities will be limited to beverage service and events within our existing late-night license parameters.
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5. Conclusion

By converting the back area of Meze Lounge into a multi-functional kitchen, cafe, and expanded toilet/WC space, Urban Circle Newport will enhance its ability to serve the Newport community, offering dining options, improved amenities, and a comfortable, accessible environment for all guests. We are confident that these changes align with our mission to provide inclusive community services while respecting all licensing and operational requirements.

Thank you for considering our proposal. We look forward to discussing the potential for this transformation.

Sincerely,

Ali Boksh

Director of Events, Festival and Premises
Urban Circle Newport