

Burton Mail

EAST STAFFORDSHIRE AND SOUTH DERBYSHIRE'S BIGGEST SELLING NEWSPAPER

Thursday, December 15, 2005

35p

No. 33,672

Club plans to bring in topless acts

BRING ON THE STRIPTEASE

by DAVID POWLES

CHIEF REPORTER

A BURTON nightclub owner wants to become the first in the town to put on nude and topless acts.

Bosses at Merlin's, in Station Street, have applied under the new licensing laws to bring strippers to the club and to sell alcohol until 4am.

The move comes despite Burton Town Hall twice banning striptease acts of any kind in the past — with Merlin's twice refused permission for nude performances in recent years.

Today, East Staffordshire Borough Council leader Alex Fox confirmed the authority's ruling. Conservative group was still against strip nights in the town centre, but declined to comment any further ahead of a consultation process on the application.

However, Andy Meakin, the owner of Merlin's, which is attached to the Grail Court Hotel, called for bosses to reconsider their view, saying the shows would be 'titillation and fun and not anything degrading or smutty'.

He said: "All we are looking at doing is putting on some form of entertainment in the club, such as the type the Chippendales do or the Page 3 girls."

"The kind of shows that South Derbyshire or any other town has been having for years. We are not

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Bid for strip club submitted

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looking for a lap dancing club or anything like that.

"With these shows we may have some topless performances or the blokes at the end may whip their G-strings off and briefly show everything, which is why we have to call it nudity.

"We have no interest in anything other than a bit of titillation and fun and not anything degrading or smutty.

"I am confident the council will look at it objectively under the new licensing laws."

The application, 'to permit the occasional performance of dance that may involve some element of nudity' has been submitted by Pro Security Development Limited which owns both The Grail Court Hotel and Merlins nightclub. However, bosses say the shows will only be held in the nightclub.

Mr Meakin first tried to put on nude shows in 2000

leading to a storm of protest and a Mail poll in which the majority of readers were against the plans.

Following the poll, council chiefs implemented the ban but said it would consult with the public again in the future should any new applications be made.

Councillor Julia Jessel, the council's deputy leader (environment), said: "Our role in dealing with this application is to process it in accordance with the Licensing Act 2003 which includes our responsibilities for safety and the board consultation on the application.

"If any consultees submit valid objections which relate to the four licensing objectives then the matter will be referred to one of the council's licensing sub-committees for consideration."

People have until Monday, January 9, to write to the council with their views.