

Landlord bans village bobby

A landlord in Wheatley has barred his local policeman from off-duty drinking at his pub.

The ban comes within days of Thames Valley Police objecting to an all-afternoon extension for the pub during next month's festival in the village.

But Mr Derek Margetts, the landlord of the pub, the Sandpiper, in High Street, Wheatley, has denied that the two events are connected. He said the ban was

imposed for personal reasons.

PC Robin Hutton, became the village policeman earlier this year and was an occasional drinker in the Sandpiper until last week, when he was told he had been barred. He is on holiday with his wife in France this week and not available for comment.

Mr Margetts said: "Mr Hutton was asked not to drink on the premises in civilian clothes. This is very personal."

Last week Bullingdon magistrates adjourned an

application from the Sandpiper for a licence from 2.30 to 6.30 pm on Monday, May 25 — the last day of the Wheatley Festival.

But Mr Margetts already has a licence — issued to him by mistake.

A clerk at Bullingdon magistrates court said: "He is in possession of a licence for that day. It was issued in error. He is well aware that it is not valid. His solicitor has been told."

Both the police and Wheatley parish council have said they will object to any pub in the village being given an afternoon extension this year.

Parish clerk Mr Jack Bowring said: "After last year's festival there was considerable upset in the village. There were objections over language and behaviour from people who had nothing to do with the festival but had come here to drink. The police had to be called."

The chairman of the parish council, Mr John Brooks, said: "Wheatley Festival is very much a village event and is very much for families. What happened last year was an unfortunate intrusion. Large numbers of people congregated in the High Street and it led to an awkward-looking situation."

Action

After the festival some residents asked the council to take action.

Mr Margetts said: "I have an extension here in black and white. It has been granted. I don't know what all the fuss is about."

"The festival starts with a pram race through the village run by the Young Conservatives for the International Year of the Disabled. If it wasn't for us licensees giving away about 60 pints of beer there wouldn't be a race."