

Proposed Planning Change

Please find attached planning request to change the current opening hours of Argo Fitness to:

5am-9pm/7 days/week with silent hour 5am-7am each day

To ensure we do not impact the surrounding areas we will be putting in operating procedures on how Argo will run during its *silent hours of 5am – 7am

*Silent hours mean there will be no music played within the gym during these hours. If members would like to listen to music during these hours, they will be required to wear headphones. Furthermore, all training will be contained to the gym only and not surrounding car parks etc.

Reason for change

We all know the difficulties that the past few years has had on business worldwide. As a small business we were affected by the pandemic in a big way as during this we lost nearly 50% of our members and are still trying to recover that loss today. Also, the new increases to energy prices and property rental are starting to have an impact on the business that since the pandemic has a smaller turnover to try and mitigate this increase.

We feel to give our business an equal chance of surviving the challenges ahead, we need to make our business more accessible for people in the surrounding areas. We are the only Strength and Conditioning facility in Whitehaven, so our services are unique. We feel by extending our opening hours we can have bigger impact on the area's health and wellbeing. It's a well-known fact that exercise alone helps people reduce stress, enhance wellbeing and boost energy levels, we would like to think we play an important part in making a positive impact on people's lives. We understand that not everybody likes to train at peak times when the gym is busy, and we feel the added flexibility of longer opening times we can reach more people who struggle with social anxiety or with confidence training in a busy gym.

Within Argo we have created a community of people who want to better themselves and help each other along the way. We have held many Charity Fridays where the gym comes together to raise money for good causes. On most occasions these causes are suggested by the members as it's usually very personal to some of them. Every time the gym comes together to support.

Addressing concerns

Following our initial submission, we had a visit from the Environment team who raised some concerns.

Below are our comments and actions from this visit:

Control of the music:

May 2021, we installed a brand-new sound system in the gym. Originally, we had one large speaker that was used to play music from. The new sound system has 8 speakers positioned around the gym, allowing us to play background music at a lower level and still be heard from all areas of the gym. The speakers have been set to a level so that music cannot be heard from the boundary of the premises.

The sound system is located in a locked area of the gym and cannot be accessed by members at any time. As secondary precaution the sound system will also have a timer on the power supply and will only have power outside of silent hours.

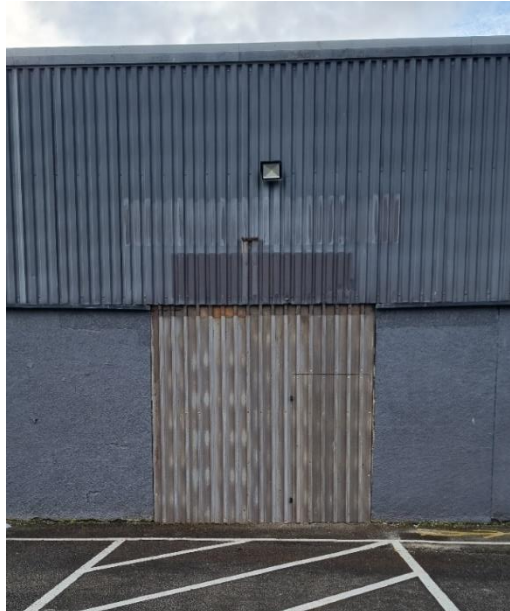
Concerns that the side door of the building is a weak point

The side door has now been fully cladded using the same materials as the rest of the building. (As Detailed in pic below). This further reduces the risk of music being heard from outside the boundary of the property during hours outside of silent hours.

BEFORE



AFTER



Further improvements

We are planning to or have already made the below improvements following a review of the previous application:

- *We have purchased additional running machines to allow members to run inside early morning.*
- *We plan to install cycle park stands at the gym and encourage members to bike to the gym, when possible, to help reduce traffic.*
- *Policies will be in place to outline the standards and expectations for being a member of Argo and respecting the local community. Failure to uphold these policies may lead to cancellation of membership.*
- *We own a defibrillator that is located on site, we plan to offer all residence of Woodstock Lane Emergency contact details so in the case of an emergency they could access the defibrillator. Extending our opening hours means they would have access during these extended times.*

Some previous comments that were raised from our surrounding area were not directly relevant to this planning application. However, they have still been taken into consideration as we endeavour to work with the surrounding areas not against them.

If you have any questions or would like any clarifications, please feel free to get in touch.

Regards

Dan