

## 'Escort' Councillor has a say on Sheffield Strip Club Policy

**ESCORTS R US LIMITED**  
Company number 10211854

Campaigners have just learnt that a Councillor seemingly linked to an Escort agency has a say in Sheffield's strip club policy. Is this why the Council recently decided not to put any limit on strip club numbers whatsoever? A decision which was successfully challenged in the High Court. A decision which, along with previous rubber stamping of Sheffield's one current strip club, Spearmint Rhino, has cost Sheffield's tax payers £130,000 and counting.

**Cllr Neale Gibson** is listed as a ['person of significant interest'](#) for [Mowbray Accounting](#) – a firm that does the books for 'Escorts R Us Ltd'. He is also a Sheffield Councillor sitting on the [Council's licensing committee](#) – the same committee that oversees licensing policy on strip clubs.

In fact, **Cllr Gibson** seems to be involved in countless arenas – linked to a possible dozen businesses and organisations (*where does he find the time*). Amongst these he is named as a director of LGBT Sheffield. LGBT Sheffield are fans of the Council's discredited policy that places no limit on the number of strip clubs that can operate in the tiny city of Sheffield. This is despite the fact that organisers of local LGBT events have had to relocate because of the harassment they know their vulnerable members will experience from the local strip joint:



We recently took the decision not to host a party at Showroom Cinema for LGBT History month because we were worried about vulnerable audience members walking through town past locations like Spearmint Rhino

Witness statement from licensing renewal objections in 2017 to Sheffield Spearmint Rhino

**Cllr Gibson** has also been accused of tweeting abuse using a [fake twitter account](#) against the City's Lord Mayor and those protesting against tree-felling (with a Council investigation proving 'inconclusive'); of calling a rival Councillor an '[arrogant little sh\\*t](#)' amongst other things (for which a mild reprimand was received, despite this being a clear breach of Councillors' code of conduct) and of making highly insensitive remarks about a teenage girl who tragically died after an allergic reaction to a Pret sandwich.

Although Cllr Gibson is perhaps the least savoury of Sheffield's Councillors (*or, at least, we hope so*) he is not the only Councillor with some dubious pro-sexploitation credentials. **Cllr Sophie Wilson** is an outspoken fan of the strip industry even demonstrating in support of Spearmint Rhino outside Sheffield Town Hall at its most recent licensing hearing. The protest, led by Sheffield Labour Students, was promoted like this:



Perhaps it is not surprising to learn that Cllr Wilson is fresh out of University herself.

Given these connections, it also hardly seems surprising that Sheffield University Labour students knew about last year's decision to re-license Sheffield's Spearmint Rhino – and were bragging about it – long before the 145 individuals and groups who objected to the license were told.

**Wilson** also tweeted derogatory and highly unprofessional messages to protestors of the strip club – calling them TERFS, amongst other things (*not to mention the use of atrocious grammer*).



TERF is an abusive term used to suggest someone is transphobic. And it's not just a slur it is incendiary – as it frequently leads to wholesale abuse of that individual on social media and even physical assault. At least Wilson was investigated and found not to be adhering to Council members' codes. Perhaps the greatest irony of this was that one of the objectors she was hurling abuse at was transgender *and* has been deliberately and repeatedly mis-gendered by the strip club's own legal representative. Not a peep to be heard from Ms Wilson there though.

Now both **Wilson and Gibson** have teamed up in a '[Terf war](#)' against a local business - claiming it has tweeted hatred against trans people, with not a tweet of evidence in support. This is not only libelous, it has resulted in high levels of social media abuse for the owners and a potential loss in profit, all at a time when small businesses are already in financial straits. We await the outcome of complaints.

But it doesn't end there. A few weeks ago **Councillor Mohammad Maroof** 'accidentally' sent '[Page 3'-style pics](#)' to a group of women during a Council meeting.

It almost started to feel like a break from tradition when **Councillor Jack Scott** took a stand last year against local burger joint, 'Randy's Hardcore Burgers', selling 'Weinstein', 'Casting Couch' and 'Fake Taxi' burgers. He described this as "[promoting a toxic culture which objectifies women .. a violation of the Council's licensing objectives](#)".

It is a welcome move that Cllr Maroof has been suspended, Cllr Gibson has been 'cautioned' and Cllr Scott understands the harm of hamburger names. But how then can the Council not understand the far greater harm of the strip industry and how can it allow a man who appears to be enabling prostitution have a say in how the Council deals with the strip trade?

**ENDS**

#### **Contacts For Comments**

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