

To whom it may concern

I write to support the application for change of use. I am a member of the fitness centre and attend personal training sessions twice a week. The fitness centre has been a great benefit to my fitness, health and confidence and would be a great loss to me and the community if the change of use application was refused.

Melissa Sheldrick

7 Shielswood Court

Tweedbank
Galashiels
TD1 3RH

Dear Sir/Madam,

THE FITNESS REFINERY, CHANGE OF USE APPLICATION

I am writing to support the above business with its application for a Change of Use to a fitness studio in relation to the unit it operates from in Netherdale Industrial Estate, Galashiels.

This is a new Borders business operated by someone in the local community and the Council should be supporting the creation of new businesses and encouraging business activity.

Other fitness centres operate in the Netherdale area and it would be unfair not to allow this new business an opportunity to trade, grow and thrive.

The Fitness Centre operates in a unit which was previously vacant and provides fitness services to a great many customers who benefit from the fitness activity offered.

Fitness Refinery is making a very important contribution to health and well-being and those who have been using it for the past year, since it opened, are benefiting from an improved healthy lifestyle because of the services available.

Securing alternative premises in the Galashiels area is very difficult as there is not an abundance of good quality business space for fitness businesses. The business is operating successfully and has a growing number of clients. The Council should do everything possible to encourage this small business to develop by allowing it to grow without unnecessary restrictions or burdens.

I hope that you will look favourably on this Change of Use application and will ensure that Fitness Refinery is afforded every opportunity to become a well-established and highly successful small local business.

Kind regards

Alison Gibson

To whom it may concern,

I wanted to inform you of my support for change in planning to accommodate the ongoing running of the fitness refinery studio.

I started to attend the studio last July when I starting to see both my physical and mental health suffer due to the pandemic. Using such personalised services at this small studio has given me a sense of community and accountability which has provided benefits both physically (fitter, stronger and half stone lighter) and mentally (improved motivation and focus).

I have previously tried using bigger gyms and not had the same success. This facility in the borders is a very unique one.

Regards
Hilary Shand

To whom this may concern

I have been a member of fitness refinery since the summer and I enjoy Daina classes very much .She motivates and encourages you to get the most out of you .Her classes are targeted for all which I enjoy and offers differentiated exercises so we all feel able .

By going to fitness refinery does not just improve my fitness but also my well being ,meeting a lovely group of individuals we all have a laugh while working out .

Kind regards
Linda Rome

Dear Sir/Madam

Please accept this email in support of the change of use for the excellent facility that is The Fitness Refinery at Netherdale Industrial Estate in Galashiels.

I whole heartedly support and use this safe space for exercising very regularly. I go to maintain physical and mental health and hope that the facility remains so that I can continue to reap the many benefits it offers.

Yours sincerely

Mrs S Howel

The importance of this facility being a gym is of great importance, as a grieving parent and a nurse that has worked throughout covid 19 ,I can honestly say this gym has kept my mental health in check and without it I know myself and many of the group that attend would not be where we are if it was not for Daina ,she goes above and beyond in her constant training to keep the gym up to date with the latest and many courses she has attained ,and always looking to expand for all community users , well done Daina .
Gillian Logan.

To whom it may concern:-

I sincerely hope that planning permission is granted to The Fitness Refinery. This small studio has been exactly what has been needed throughout Covid. Daina has ensured that all Covid regulations are adhered to at every stage, by limiting numbers as well as clear markings on the floor to allow for divisor distancing.

Personally, being able to make use of this facility during this extremely difficult period, has helped my mental health considerably, by allowing me to exercise with others instead of being limited to my own 4 walls.

I look forward to being able to continue utilising the studio on an ongoing basis with confidence that this is essential facility will remain a valued asset to the area.

Yours sincerely,

Angela Nicol

I am writing in support of Daina Macfarlane who is currently using the facility in Netherdale for her fitness classes under the name of The Fitness Refinery.

The facility provides excellent fitness classes and provides a gym facility that is popular with people locally and further afield. She has a loyal following of clients that can access classes in person or remotely on line. Daina has followed all guidelines as recommended by the Scottish Borders Council in providing this amenity in Galashiels that is well supported and of great benefit to the health and well being of all that utilise it.

I hope she is able to apply for retrospective change of use as this was unfortunately identified as being required more than one year following the successful running of this business. The facility provides an excellent environment promoting its success as a fitness studio.

Kind regards

Carol Eccles

9th January 2022

To whom it may concern.

I would like to submit this statement in support of The Fitness Refinery, Unit C, Whinstone Mill, Netherdale, Galashiels that I have attended since it opened in November 2020. This is an important local facility and I regularly recommend it to others.

Daina McFarlane offers a range of classes that promote fitness and general well-being for all and has created a welcoming, safe, and professional environment at the studio and online. I have personally benefited hugely from regular attendance and find that making fitness an important part of my daily routine is important for my physical and mental health, and helps me to get the best out of each day. This has been especially important in the last few years.

Best wishes,

Ruth Magowan

Priors Hill, Gattonside ,Melrose TD69NJ

Hi Daina

I'm very concerned that you are having to apply retrospectively for change of use of the premises you have leased and used as a fitness studio for over a year. Please forward this letter to Scottish Borders Council Planning Department in support of your application.

To Whom It May Concern, Scottish Borders Council Planning Department

The Fitness Refinery, Unit C Whinstone Mill, Netherdale, Galashiels

I am writing as a patron of the above fitness studio operated by Daina McFarlane. I previously attended Daina's classes at Tweedbank Sports Centre run by Live Borders until the pandemic forced its closure. As a nurse working in the NHS I value physical activity highly both in terms of physical and mental health. Daina worked tirelessly to keep her clients motivated and engaged initially through online content and through outdoor classes when this was permitted. I personally do not feel I could have made it through the stressful working conditions caused by the pandemic without her support.

Since she opened the studio just over a year ago, I find that being able to take part in group classes again generates feelings of achievement and camaraderie that help me de-stress. The unit she leased was in a fairly run down condition and she has improved it greatly internally through decoration and re-flooring. Similarly, the exterior ground was aesthetically poor with scrap vehicles etc. and has now been tidied up to provide usable car parking – this visual improvement is one of the advantages in leasing the units to such a business.

I think there are several advantages to having the fitness studio situated where it is:

- Galashiels itself is a convenient location for clients from the central Borders
- That area of Netherdale is not residential so cars coming and going are not inconveniencing or causing disturbance to householders
- Putting businesses in to empty units makes the commercial / industrial sites more vibrant and will encourage other businesses to come
- The visual amenity of the area has been improved as above
- There is already another fitness facility (with a different focus) in the area so a precedent has been set
- There has been a large increase in demand for fitness facilities since lockdown and this facility is well supported so many clients will be inconvenienced if it has to close
- Daina has put in a lot of hard work in setting up this studio. It was a very brave thing to do and a great financial risk in the uncertainty of the pandemic and she should be applauded for this. It would be a very great shame indeed if the studio had to close

I would be grateful if my comments could be taken into consideration when reviewing Daina's application.

Regards
Helen McKendrick
Hillview
14 Ladhope Bank
Galashiels
TD1 2JJ

Dear Sir/Madam,

Having recently heard the news that Daina (The Fitness Refinery) may be required to move out of her property in Netherdale, I felt it necessary to write to you.

Over the past year and a half Daina has provided an essential service to me (and many others) The Fitness Refinery is not just a gym, it is so much more, Daina provides me a safe and secure space to workout, chat and off load.

Without her my mental health would suffer massively, covid has taken so much from people and Daina has been there every step of the way giving us support and encouragement. I am outraged that you could potentially be asking her to close her business, she has worked so hard to get to where she is now and to take that away would be a tragedy. Daina works hard to provide a service for many different people, including cancer referrals, this is such a unique and special service to the Borders so I ask that you reconsider your position on this, don't let this amazing place disappear!

Yours Sincerely,
Nicola Middleton

Dear whom it may concern,

I have been a member with The Fitness Refinery Limited (TFRL) since it founded. Like many others, I find TFRL useful for various reasons and rely heavily on it for body and mental health reasons. With funding limited for mental health in the Scottish Borders in comparison to the city areas, TFRL is a vital part of my routine having two personal training sessions a week alongside full support from Daina and access to a wide variety of classes integrating with others. Since starting my journey with TFRL I have met many personal targets, not only physically but mentally and have noticed a massive difference managing my depression with reducing the way I view exercise. Without personal training and the support I receive I would be back to my unhappy, unhealthy and depressed self. These classes are fundamental and should be fully supported given mental health is so widely discussed and has detrimental side effects long term.

Yours Faithfully,

Katt Maxwell
Member of The Fitness Refinery (TFR)

To whom it may concern,

I am writing to you in support of Daina McFarlane's application for change of use for the premises she currently runs her fitness studio "The Fitness Refinery" from. My experience with The Fitness Refinery started when I approached Daina for some guidance and advice as to how best to go about improving my overall fitness. As someone who was part of the shielding group due to underlying medical issues, I had grown increasingly concerned as to the impact Covid might have on me if I was to catch it. As so I decided I wanted to do all I could to improve my chances of surviving it should I become infected but didn't know where to start, which is where Daina came in. After contacting Daina I arranged to meet with her at the studio which she had recently opened for a 1:1 session. The Studio offered a welcoming, safe yet private space for me to discuss my issues and explain what I was hoping to achieve. I was also able to try out some of the gym equipment following Daina's expert guidance and under her watchful eye. As someone who was a complete novice to fitness and gym equipment, being able to do this in a private and safe space made what was initially a daunting experience much easier.

I was initially extremely nervous about embarking on my fitness journey, as this was something I had always shied away from due to being extremely self-conscious and having very low confidence in my abilities due in part to the limitations caused by my medical issue. However Daina was able to offer me a private space to meet with her and I found her to be extremely kind, patient and very supportive, she encouraged me to focus on what I was able to do and not on what I hadn't yet managed. Being able to attend her studio meant that I was able to receive this support in a professional but private environment which helped greatly in encouraging me to overcome my fears. After a few 1:1 sessions Daina mentioned that she also ran classes again within the studio space and asked me if I would like to attend. Again I felt that this was something I wouldn't be able to as my low confidence in myself and limitation in my abilities would be exposed for others to see, however with a little encouragement I attended my first studio session where I was greeted and welcomed by some of the other gym members. No one was judging me or my novice attempts to complete the workouts instead they like Daina offered words of encouragement and support. In attending the studio I became part of a community who welcomed me and possibly without knowing it have had such a positive impact on my life.

I can honestly say that Daina and The Fitness Refinery have changed my life forever in ways that I will be forever grateful for. Not only have my fitness levels improved, I have lost weight and the constant pain which I have endured for years as a result of my Fibromyalgia is better managed now that it ever has been in all the years I have taken pain killers to try to alleviate it. In addition to that it has had a huge lasting positive effect on my mental health. For years I have always hid how self-conscious and low I have felt behind a smile. The truth is I have struggled with managing my pain levels and the limitations my condition and its subsequent side effects placed upon me which in turn had a profound effect on my mood. However I can now say that I feel as though I am back in control of my life again. I feel I am the most physically, emotionally and mentally strong than I have ever been in my life and I can honestly say that this is due to Daina and the impact of attending her studio, which I now attend 5 nights a week. What Daina offers is far more than just a gym or a place to work out, she has nurtured and provides a safe, secure, welcoming space where you become part of a community where people are supportive of each other and don't judge. Daina continually encourages and motivates people to achieve their best whilst continuing to support them to improve and achieve their personal goals.

In short like many others I would be absolutely devastated if the studio was forced to close. What Daina offers and provides at The fitness Refinery is unique and invaluable. I can honestly say that I would struggle to find somewhere else that has the same values and ethos which Daina has worked hard to nurture and in her studio.

Daina is someone who has changed the lives of so many and strives to continue to do so every day. Having a studio space is pivotal to that as it enables her to offer 1:1 sessions in a safe, secure and private space, it is also somewhere that people can gather to enjoy the studio classes she runs. I think that whoever is lucky enough to have Daina as a tenant is in a very fortunate position as I feel she will continue to grow and go from strength to strength. I know I have recommended her to many of my friends and I will continue to support and attend her studio for as long as I can.

In conclusion I would therefore I would ask that you consider her proposal favourably.

Yours sincerely

Dawn Cook

8 Lauder Road
Stow
Galashiels
Scottish Borders
TD1 2QW
10/01/2022

The Fitness Refinery Planning Application

Dear Sir or Madam,

I am writing in support of the Fitness Refinery's planning application for a change of use from industrial (Class 4,5,6) to a gym (Class 11). My wife and I are both members and attend several classes every week. The gym has been of great benefit to us both since it opened especially with it being of such a size that classes are very well matched to the clientele and this creates a very supportive atmosphere for those who attend. This has not always been my experience of larger gyms where there is often a "take it or leave it" mentality that comes with increased scale.

There does seem to be a shortage of available units, especially of this size which are in the available for rental which are currently Class 11. There would appear to be a genuine, persistent demand for gym space on this scale in the Borders and as such I would hope that the considerable benefits which the gym provides would provide sufficient reason for the proposed change of use to be granted.

Yours sincerely,
Stewart Henderson

Nicola Farrell

8 Tweedbank Avenue
Tweedbank
Galashiels
TD1 3SP

To whom it may concern,

Change of Use Application: Unit C, Whinstone Mill, Netherdale, Galashiels, TD13EY

I write in full support of Ms Daina McFarlane's retrospective application for the "Change of Use" of the Unit currently occupied by The Fitness Refinery: Unit C, Whinstone Mill, Netherdale, Galashiels, TD13EY.

Ms McFarlane has been successfully running 'The Fitness Refinery' from the above address for just over one year, having rented the unit in good faith from which to operate her new business.

The Fitness Refinery is a great success, as evidenced by membership numbers. The business has provided an invaluable service and support for members, both in terms of physical health, which is undoubtedly important, but also in terms of the mental health benefits which results from exercise, which for some suffered over the extended periods of lockdown in 2020/21.

The geographic location of the unit is ideally situated for a fitness studio, especially given the removal of fitness classes from the Tweedbank Gym by Live Borders. The Fitness Refinery attracts members from Tweedbank,

Galashiels, Melrose and other surrounding areas. Ms McFarlane has made no structural changes to the unit/building, with only minor cosmetic enhancements needed/made. The Unit therefore lends itself well for use as a Fitness Studio.

I can't thank Ms McFarlane enough for the fitness service she has provided from the above unit over the last year. Not only is important to support local businesses, especially after the extreme difficulties of the last 20 plus months but supporting local ventures like Fitness Studios/Gyms is essential in promoting the physical and mental wellbeing of the local community given the health benefits they bring.

I do hope Ms McFarlane's application is viewed favourably for the above reasons.

Should you require anything further please don't hesitate to contact me.
Yours faithfully

Nicola Farrell

6 Shielswood Court

Tweedbank
Galashiels
TD1 3RH

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THE FITNESS REFINERY, CHANGE OF USE APPLICATION

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Other fitness centres operate in the Netherdale area and it would be unfair not to allow this new business an opportunity to trade, grow and thrive.

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Securing alternative premises in the Galashiels area is very difficult as there is not an abundance of good quality business space for fitness businesses. The business is operating successfully and has a growing number of clients. The Council should do everything possible to encourage this small business to develop by allowing it to grow without unnecessary restrictions or burdens.

I hope that you will look favourably on this Change of Use application and will ensure that Fitness Refinery is afforded every opportunity to become a well-established and highly successful small local business.

Kind regards

Ruth Parker