



[Featured image] Boss Mart 3, Stratford Road, Shirley (Image: Leslie Kerwin / Solihull Nub News)

Fight to end Solihull's 'phoenix shops' rises to Parliament

A Solihull Council petition to crack down on so-called 'phoenix shops' has arrived at Parliament – and will be considered from mid-May.

It follows a council meeting held earlier this month, where Cllr Karen Grinsell called for more powers for councils to prevent shops that had been shut down for breaking the law from reopening under new names.

“Premises often continue the same unlawful activity, including the sale of illicit or counterfeit vapes, tobacco, or other illegal goods,” she said.

“Such activity undermines legitimate local traders. It deprives people of their income, deprives the public purse, and it does contribute to wider criminality while also harming the health and wellbeing of residents. Quite often, some of those will be children.

“We need to enhance the local regulatory powers necessary to prevent these rogue operators exploiting the loopholes, and to support local businesses that are fully complying with the law.”

‘Phoenix shops’ have been labelled a nuisance across the borough, but remain a particular problem in Shirley.

In late February, the Boss Mart 3 vape shop on Stratford Road was shut down after police found thousands of packets of fake tobacco, alongside illegal vapes, illegal fireworks, and fake Labubu dolls.

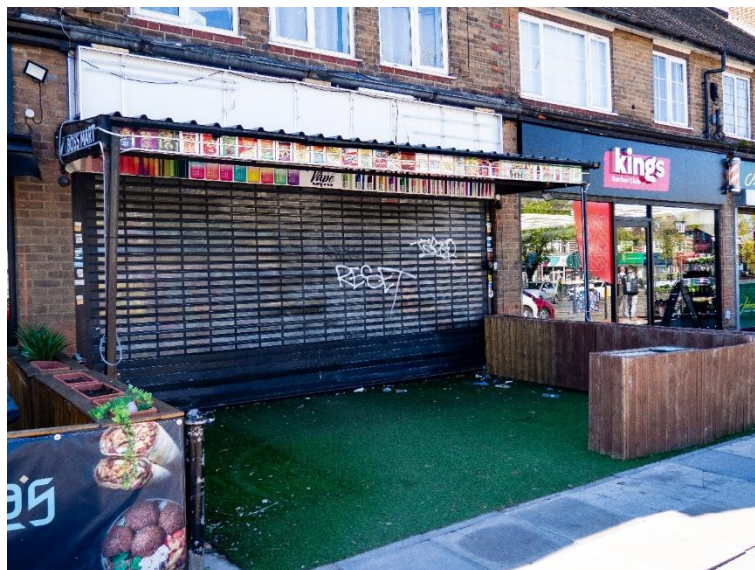


A stash of fake cigarettes seized by police (Image: West Midlands Police)

It had previously operated as Boss Mart 4, before the company dissolved in October for failing to submit its accounts.

Before that, it had once again been Boss Mart 3, which itself had been shut down after police seized illegal vapes in 2024. Local residents alleged these had been sold to children.

The shop's owner, Dawood Khan Kharoty, was sentenced for selling illegal vapes and fined almost £7,000 in March – but failed to show up to Birmingham Magistrates Court.



The former Boss Mart 3 shop (Image: Leslie Kerwin / Solihull Nub News)

According to local shop workers, it's an issue with no end in sight.

“It got shut down [...] but then he just opened up another one,” said a member of a nearby charity shop, who wished to remain anonymous. “Then, [someone got stabbed outside it](#).

“I’ve been here for six years, and it’s only got worse: the butchers got shut down, the Shoe Zone on Parkway is closing down. There’s nothing opening.

“There’s no police around here at all – it’s only getting worse and worse.”



Right, the now-closed Stratford Road butchers. Left, the Parkway Shoe Zone (Image: Leslie Kerwin / Solihull Nub News)

Members of Solihull’s Conservative Party have since launched a [petition](#), which last week reached the House of Commons.

It calls for police and councils to be given “tougher permanent closure powers” to prevent owners from reopening shuttered businesses under new names, and to prevent antisocial behaviour in the area.

Solihull mayor Annette Mackenzie told Solihull Nub News she hoped the issue would be taken seriously by ministers. “[Boss Mart 3] closed down because the police raided it, and they had illegal cigarettes and everything in there. And the biggest problem is, they shut them down, and then they were back open again.

“It’s just such a shame.”



Stratford Road, Shirley (Image: Leslie Kerwin / Solihull Nub News)

But Shirley MP Neil Shastri-Hurst, who presented the issue to Parliament, said the response turned out better than he could have hoped.

“Realistically, we have to look at where we are in the Parliamentary cycle,” he said. “The next Parliamentary session won’t happen until 13 May, when the King’s Speech starts and the government sets out its agenda.

“I think having these sort of stores that tend to attract unwanted activity is deeply detrimental to the fabric of society. It makes the high street a much less pleasant place to go, and means people are less likely to go out and contribute to the local economy.

“If there were stronger legislation around the enforcement of [company] directors, and greater statutory powers for local authorities on allowing, or not allowing, these shops to be granted a licence, I think that would have a really positive effect on our high street.

“It was a warmer response than I was anticipating, and the leader certainly didn’t seem to bat it away. The fact he’s open to granting time after the King’s Speech is as good an outcome as I could have hoped.”