MTJ GROUP LTD TEMPORARY EVENT NOTICE SUB-COMMITTEE 11th April 2024

I, Thomas Glover, am a director of MTJ Group Ltd and have worked in hospitality for the last 15 years. Along with my business partners James Glover and Michael Mason we have over 50 years' experience working in the industry. We have a wealth of experience and now operate a portfolio with 11 venues ranging from high end cocktail bars, nightclubs, and food-led pubs.

We took over the venue known as Bar 44 on 1st of November 2022 and have invested heavily in the venue, making it a venue that patrons in St Helens come to regularly and enjoy. We have never been invited in to discuss ongoing trouble at the venue or been in receipt of any warnings due to the nature of our professional operating at the venue.

Since taking over at Bar 44 we have successfully and safely applied for 52 Temporary Event Notices along with a further 27 'Special Days' allowing the venue to operate until 5AM. We have done this continuously since 2022 and it appears the venue has been operated in the exact same manner since at least 2009 which is the first TEN recorded on St Helens Public Register (Exhibit 1A).

Allowing Bar 44 to utilise it's TENs meant that it could compete with neighbouring venues in a 5AM economy, which had been created over the years with various premises across the town regularly operating until this time. Chris Kenny, Principal Licensing Officer, also confirmed in a witness statement (Exhibit 1B) that the majority of venues (58%) across the town operate until 5AM, and anywhere between 2-4 venues operate until 5AM on any particular weekend.

Given that we were (along with many other venues) operating so frequently until 5AM on a temporary basis, MTJ Group applied for a licence variation to make the operating schedule permanent, which was due to be heard in January of this year but has been adjourned until June of 2024 and it is at this point there has been a change in how Temporary Event Notices are Bar 44 at viewed.

Bar 44 applied for a temporary event notice on 1st February 2024, which was objected to by Craig Carmichael of Merseyside Police due to the high level of crime in the area and the cumulative impact policy and he believed the permitting of that TENs would undermine the licensing objective. At that point it was highlighted that Bar 44 was being targeted due to the ongoing appeal in the magistrates court however Craig Carmichael insisted that this was not the case and that TEN objections had been considered for some time by Merseyside Police and Chief Inspector Jon Smith had now collated the evidence to demonstrate that TENs between the hours of 03:00 – 05:00 were undermining the licensing objectives, and that all TENs were now being objected to, not just Bar 44. When I stated that *one* TENs had been submitted 2 days after Bar 44s, I was informed this must have been a admin error which means it was missed as it should have been refused.

I now refer you to a list of TENs (Exhibit 2A) that have been submitted in 2024 across the town centre between 01/01/2024 and 31/03/2024 which amounts to 13 Temporary Event Notices – an average of 1 per week, 3 of which have been submitted **after** our last TEN application.

This clearly highlights that what we are being told about TENs across the town is simply not true and Bar 44 is being unfairly targeted.

In 2022 St Helens was first awarded Purple Flag Status recognizing it's standards and safety for patrons between the hours of 5pm – 5am in town centres. See Exhibit 1C. This is contradictory to what we are hearing regarding high crime in the area.

In fact in January of 2024 Merseyside Police released a statement where a venue on Duke Street had it's licence revoked and included a quote by Community Sergeant Julia Harris which stated that since it's

closure there had been a reduction in crime reported across the night time economy". Exhibit 1D.

It is therefore my contention that Bar 44 is only being refused TENs because of the ongoing appeal. It is neither fair nor just, when competing properties are allowed to continue operating under the same manner. We have not received any warnings, or had any intervention on how we operate the venue since taking over however now we are being refused Temporary Event applications.

I therefore ask the sub-committee to permit the Temporary Event Notice application as submitted.

Thomas Glover 8th April 2024

MTJ GROUP LTD TEMPORARY EVENT NOTICE SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

44 - 46 Westfield Street St Helens St Helens WA10 1QF Thu 06 Apr 2006		
10:30 PM		
10:30 PM		
10:30 PM		
10:30 PM		

EXHIBIT 1A

- As such, the Licensing Authority would estimate that 11 of the 19 premises with a licence until 03:00 in the town centre ward apply for extended hours, equating to 57.89%.
- 13. It is my experience that of the 19 identified premises in the town centre ward, there could be anywhere between 2 and 4 premises which operate a licence until 05:00 on a particular weekend and such applications are often made using the late TEN's procedure.
- 14. The records of the Licensing Authority show that Bar 44 applied for 6 late TEN's in 2023 for the following dates:
 - a. 29.01.2023.
 - b. 25.03.2023 and 26.03.2023.
 - c. 29.04.2023 and 30.04.2023.
 - d. 07.05.2023 and 08.05.2023.
 - e. 13.08.2023.
 - f. 10.09.2023.

I believe that the facts stated in this witness statement are true.

Signed (Lus Kum).

Dated: 17 January 2024

EXHIBIT 1B

St Helens Borough Council and its partnership working with organisations and businesses in St Helens town centre has brought success as it has been awarded the prestigious Purple Flag accreditation.



Article date: 10 November 2022

The Purple Flag is similar to the Green Flag for parks and focuses on raising standards and broadening the appeal of town and city centres between the hours of 5pm and 5am. Clinching the Purple Flag shows that judges recognised the vibrant and diverse mix of dining, entertainment and culture on offer in St Helens town centre while also promoting the safety and wellbeing of visitors and local residents.

Exhibit 1C

Community Sergeant for St Helens, Julia Harrison said: "We have been monitoring The Duke which has been a hotspot of reported incidents on the premises, which has been a cause for concern to us.

"We felt that a review of its licence was necessary as we received 20 reported incidences of serious crime and disorder such as assault, theft, drug use and sexual offences on the premises in the past year.

"Despite numerous attempts to engage with the licensee, continuous breaches in licensing conditions continued at the premises.

"However since its closure we have seen a positive impact over the Christmas and New Year period in the town with a reduction of incidents reported to us in the night time.

"We hope this sends a clear message to any other licensed premises that robust action will be taken when issues arise.

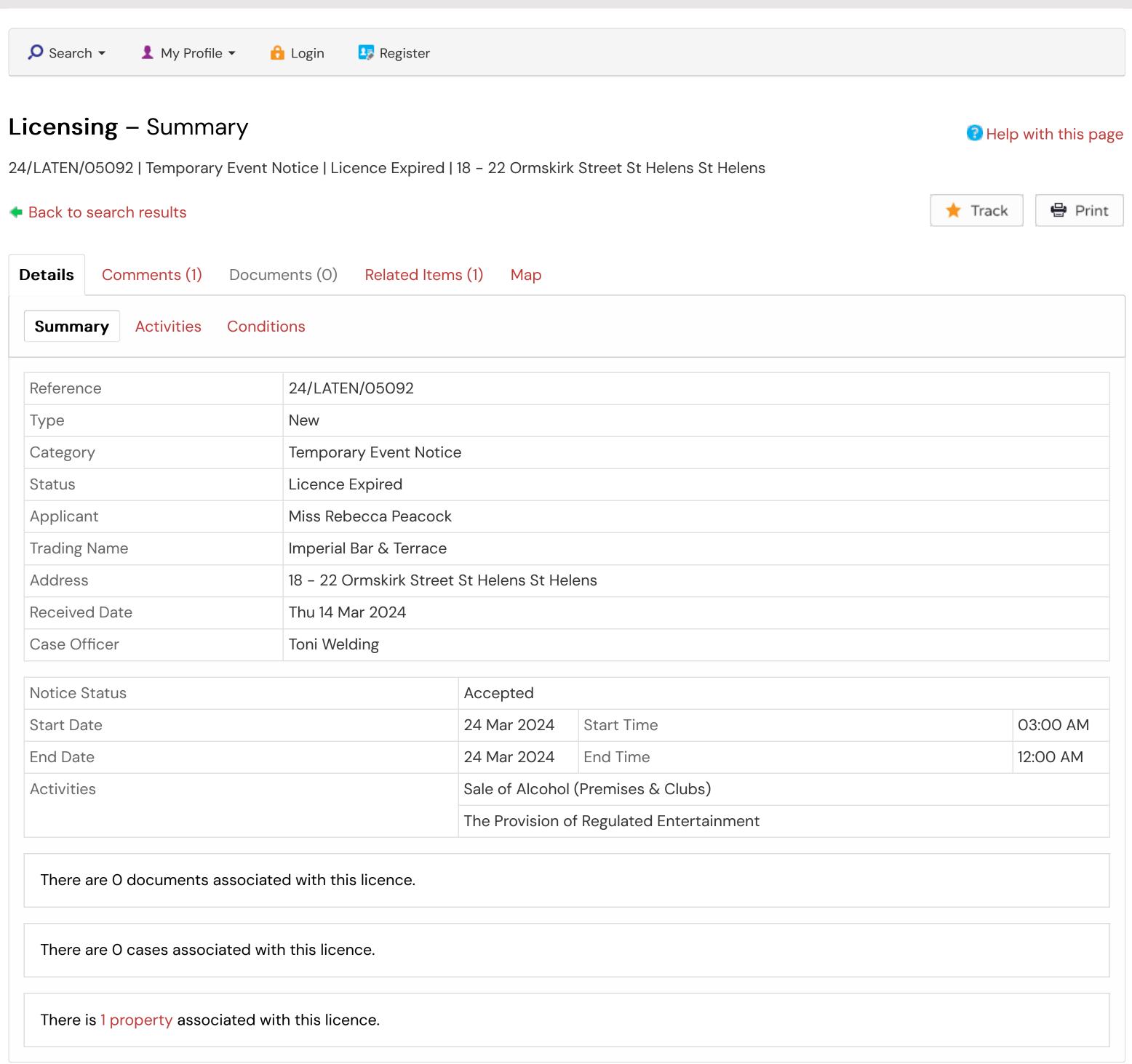
"St Helens has achieved Purple Flag status which recognises the town as being a safe place for people to visit and enjoy a good night out. We are determined to keep this status, which highlights the excellent partnership work between Merseyside Police and the local authority."

Exhibit 1D

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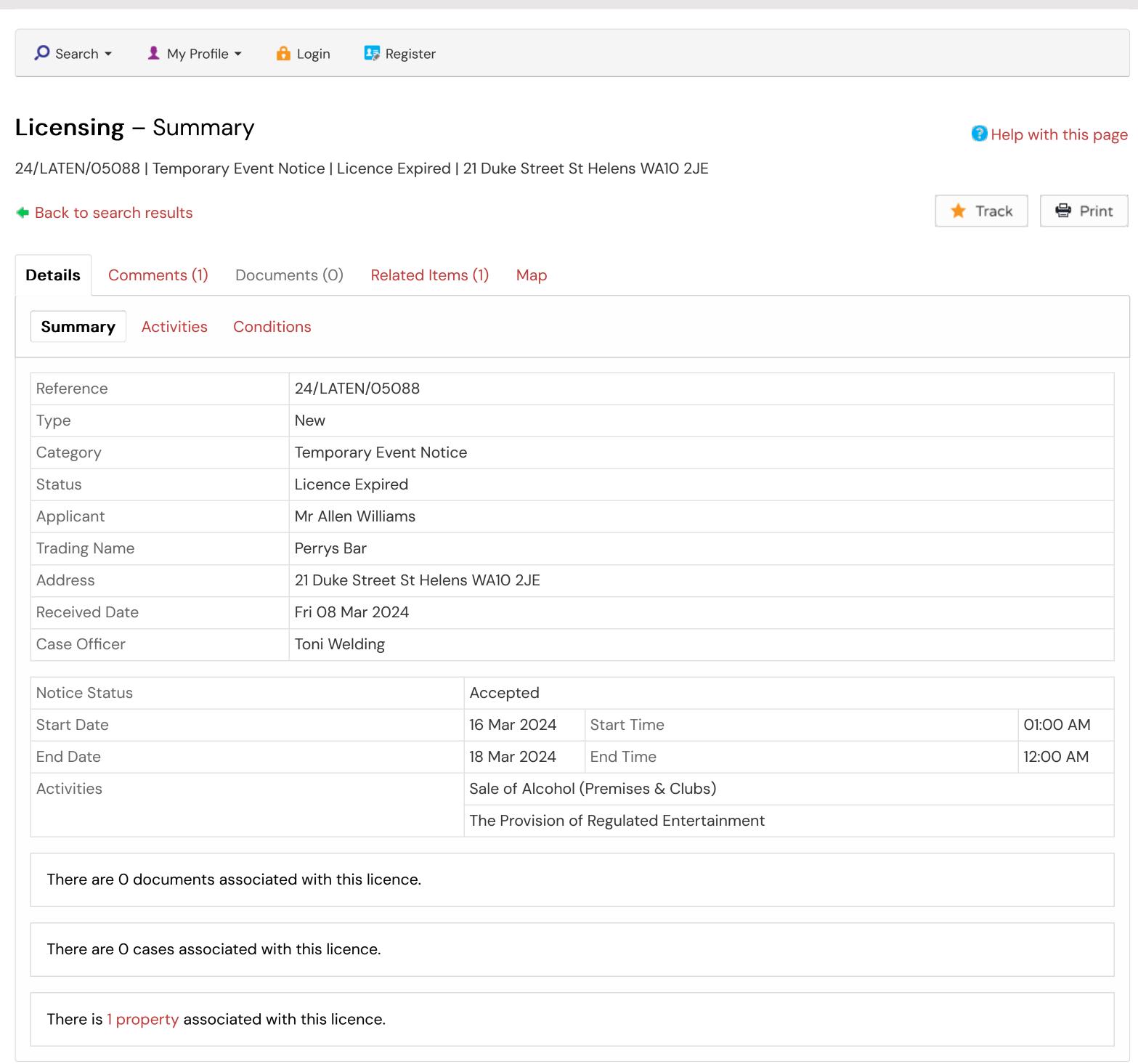




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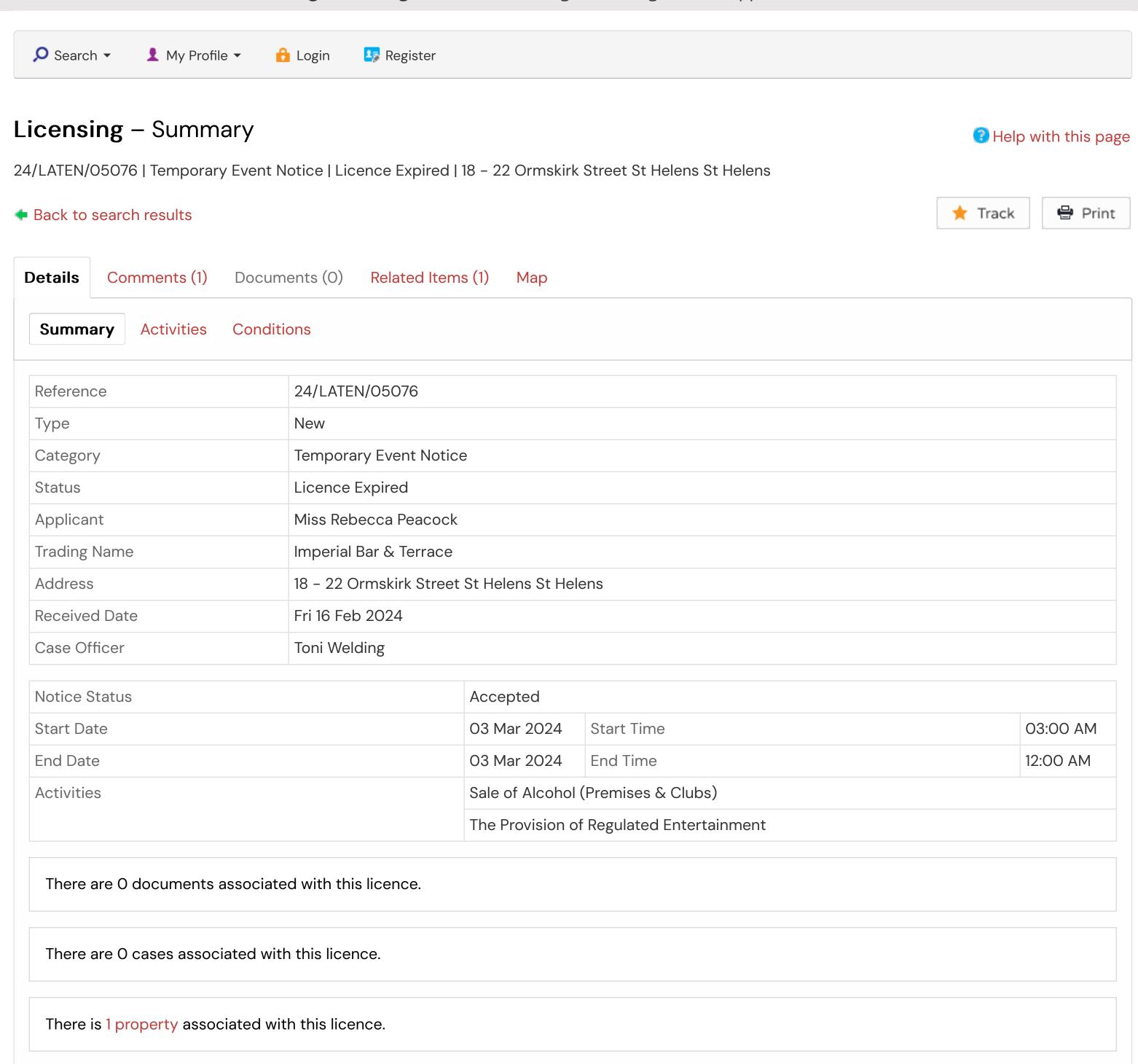




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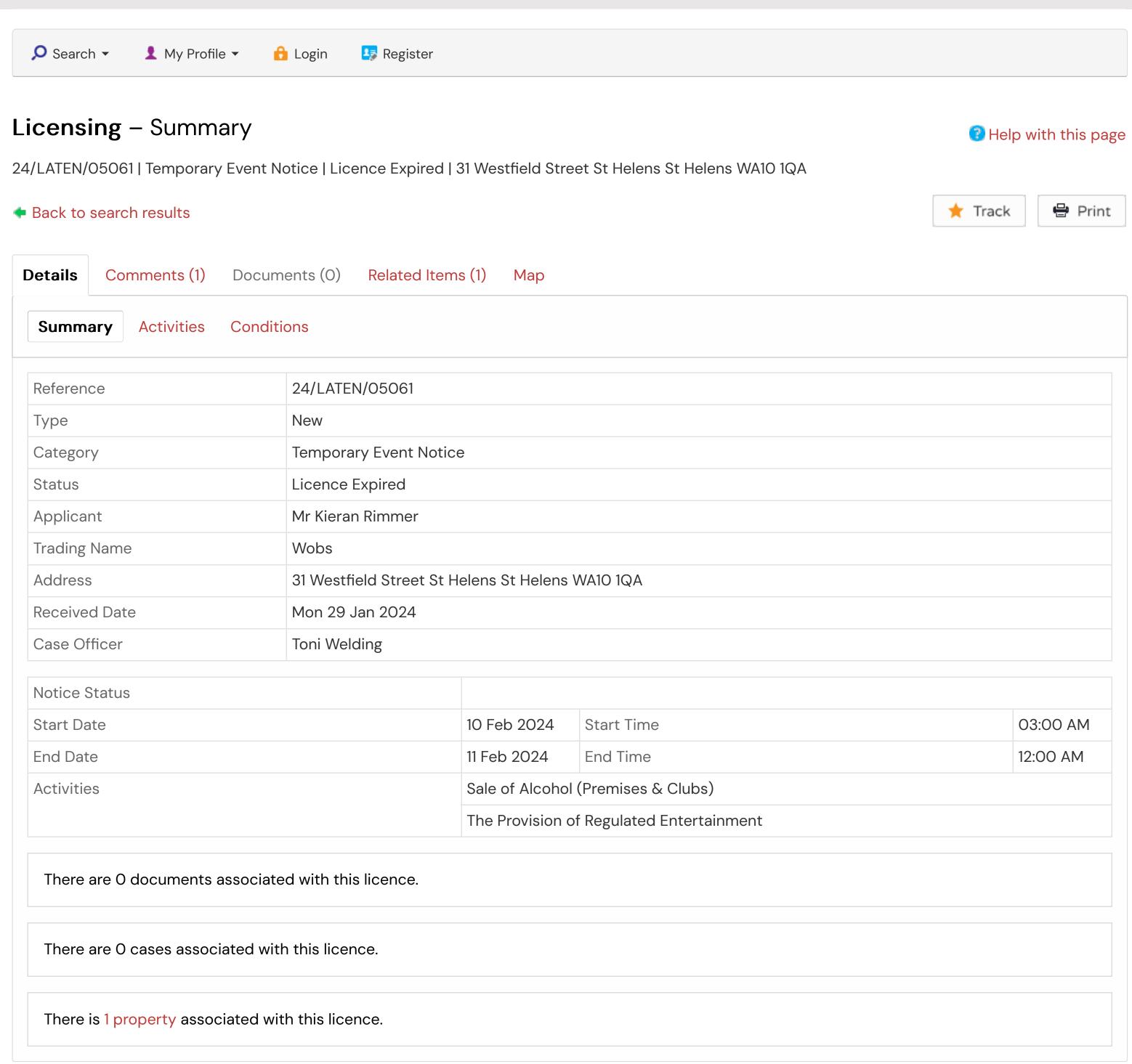




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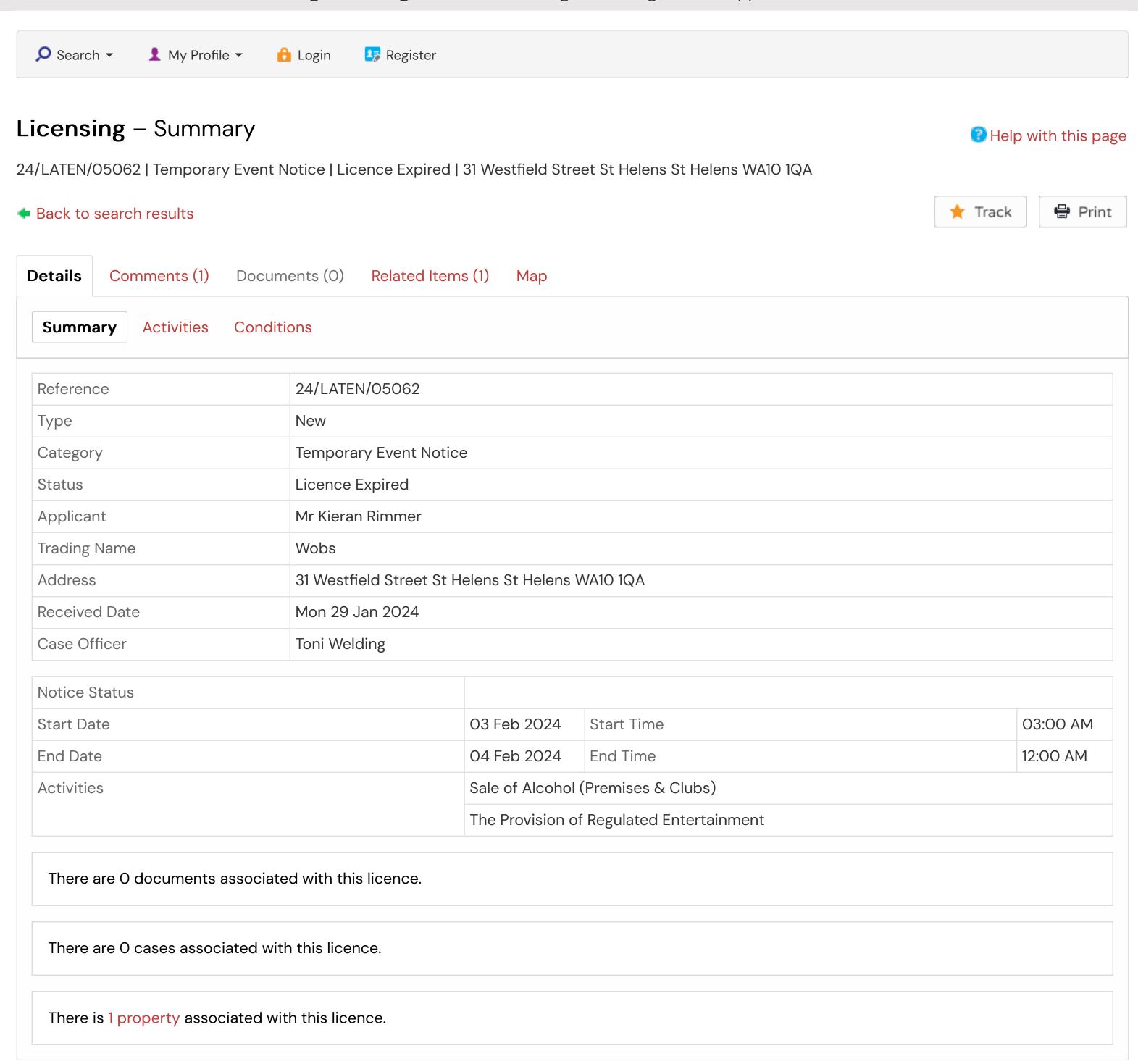




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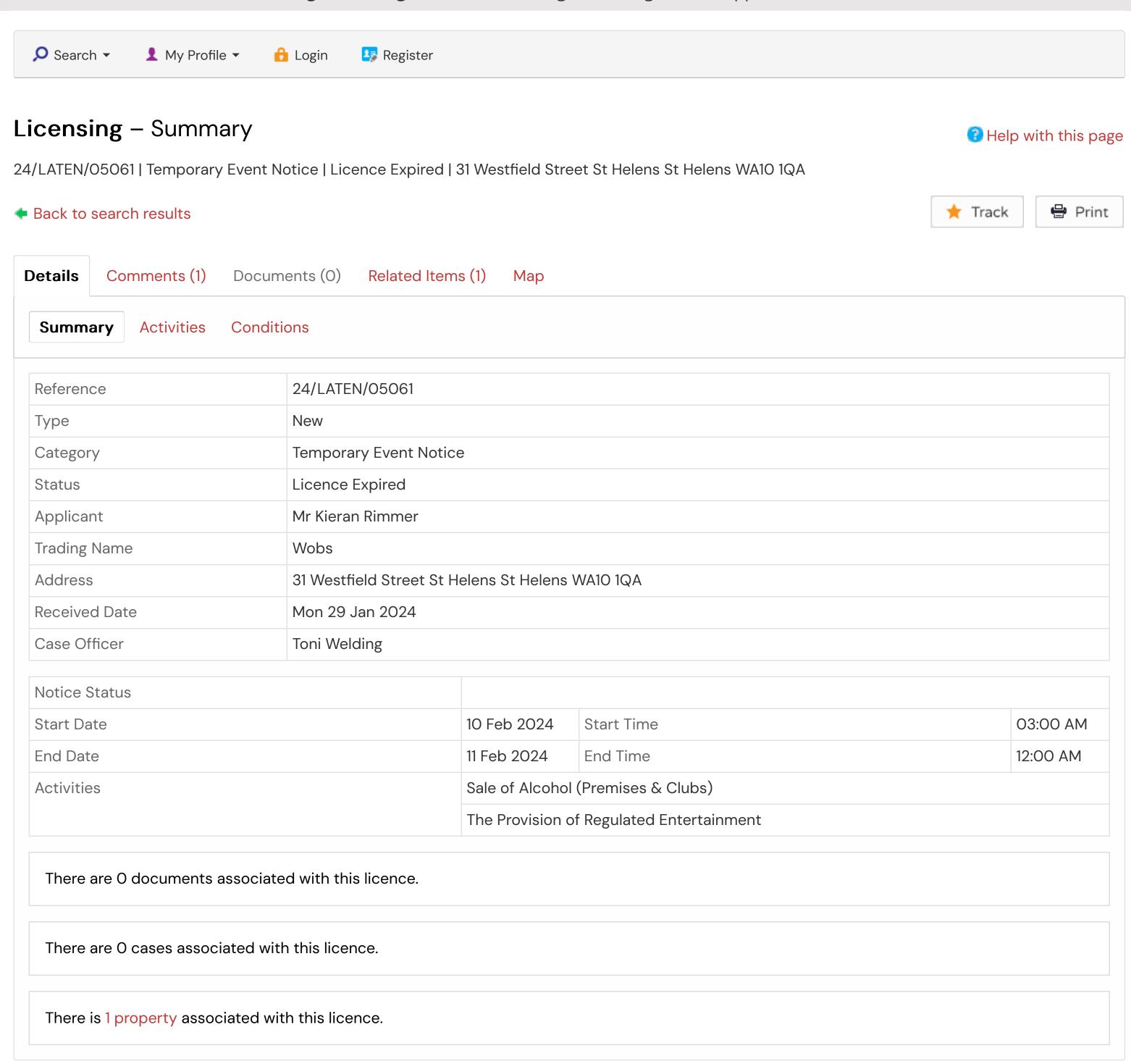




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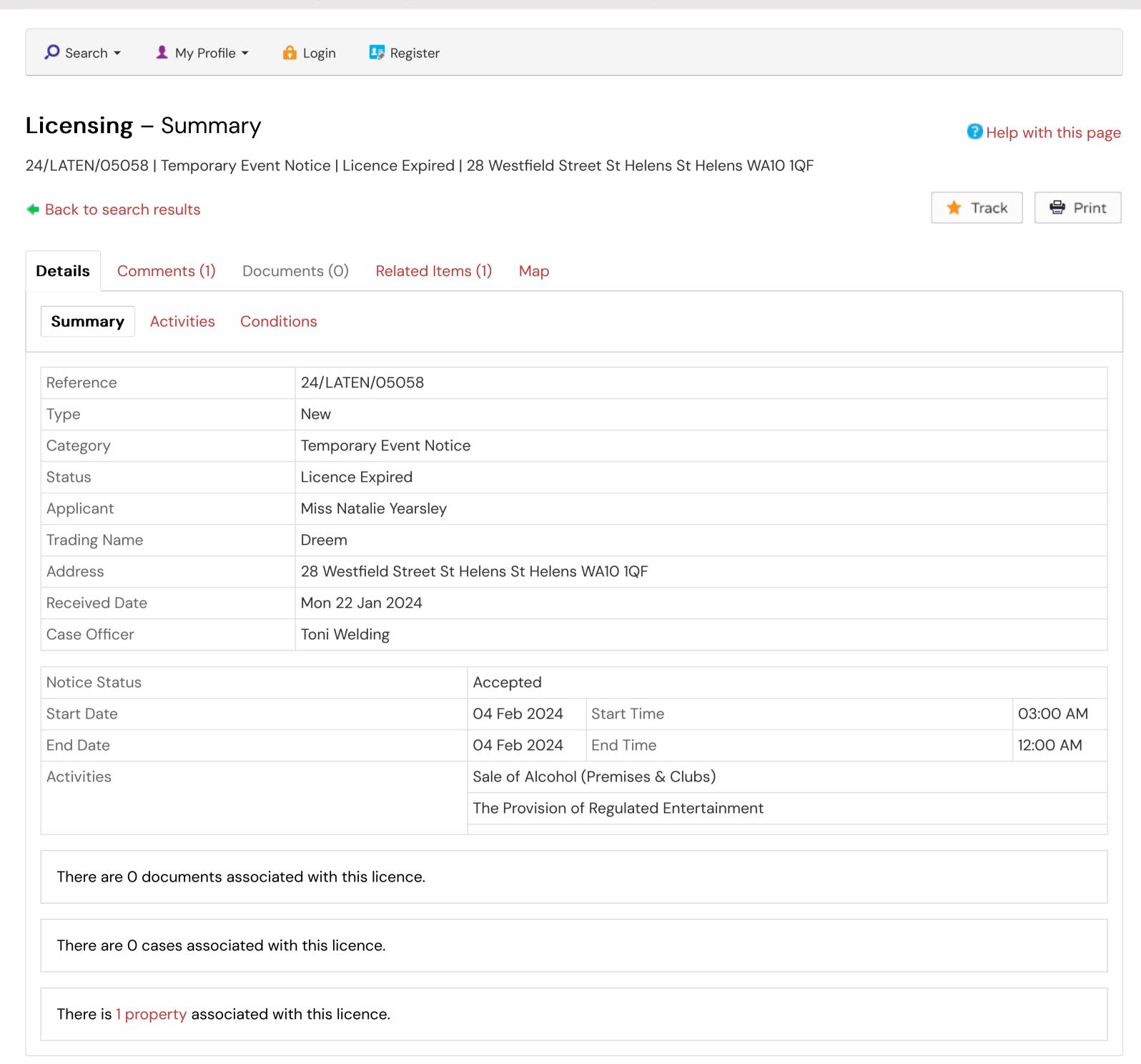






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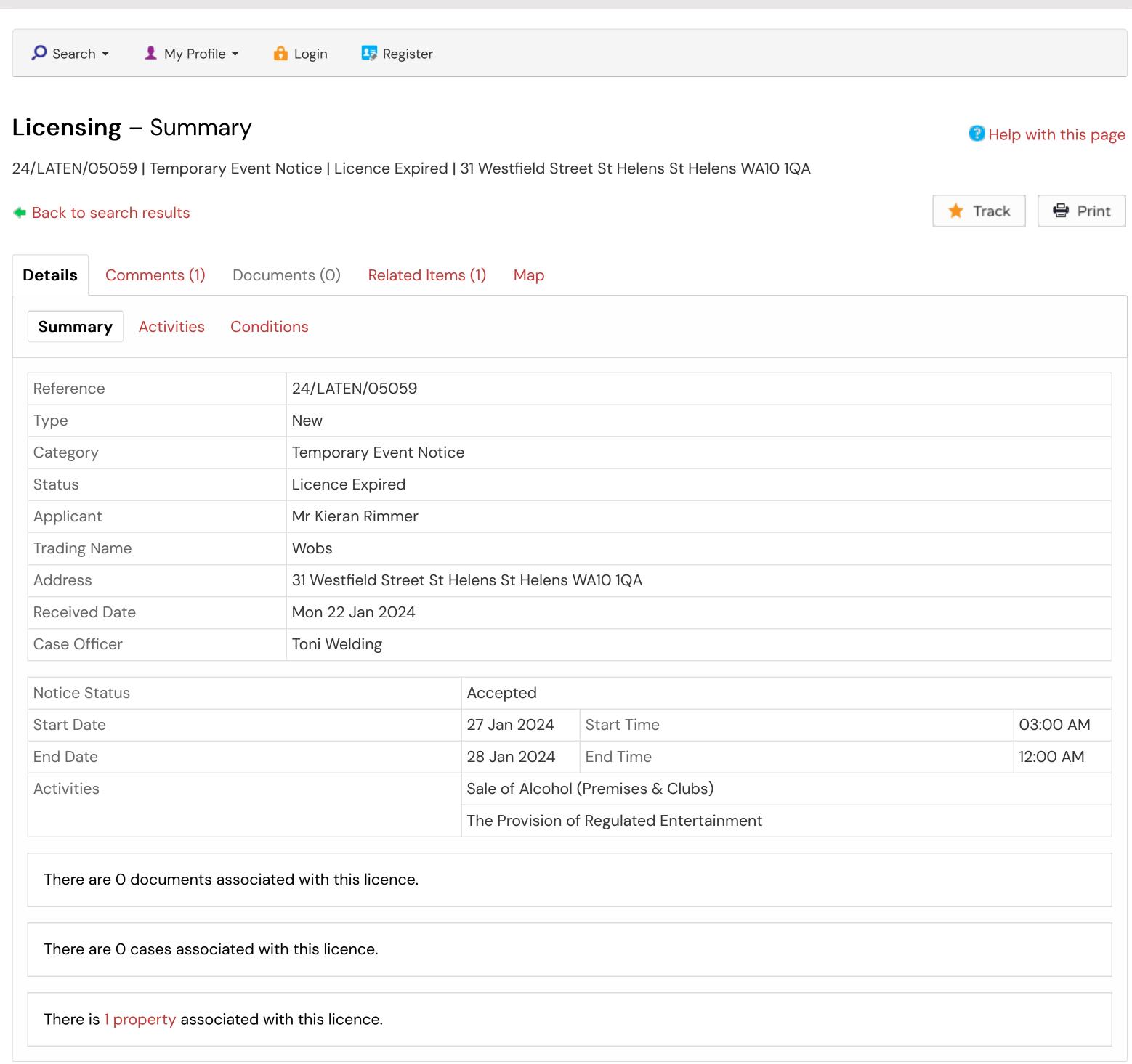




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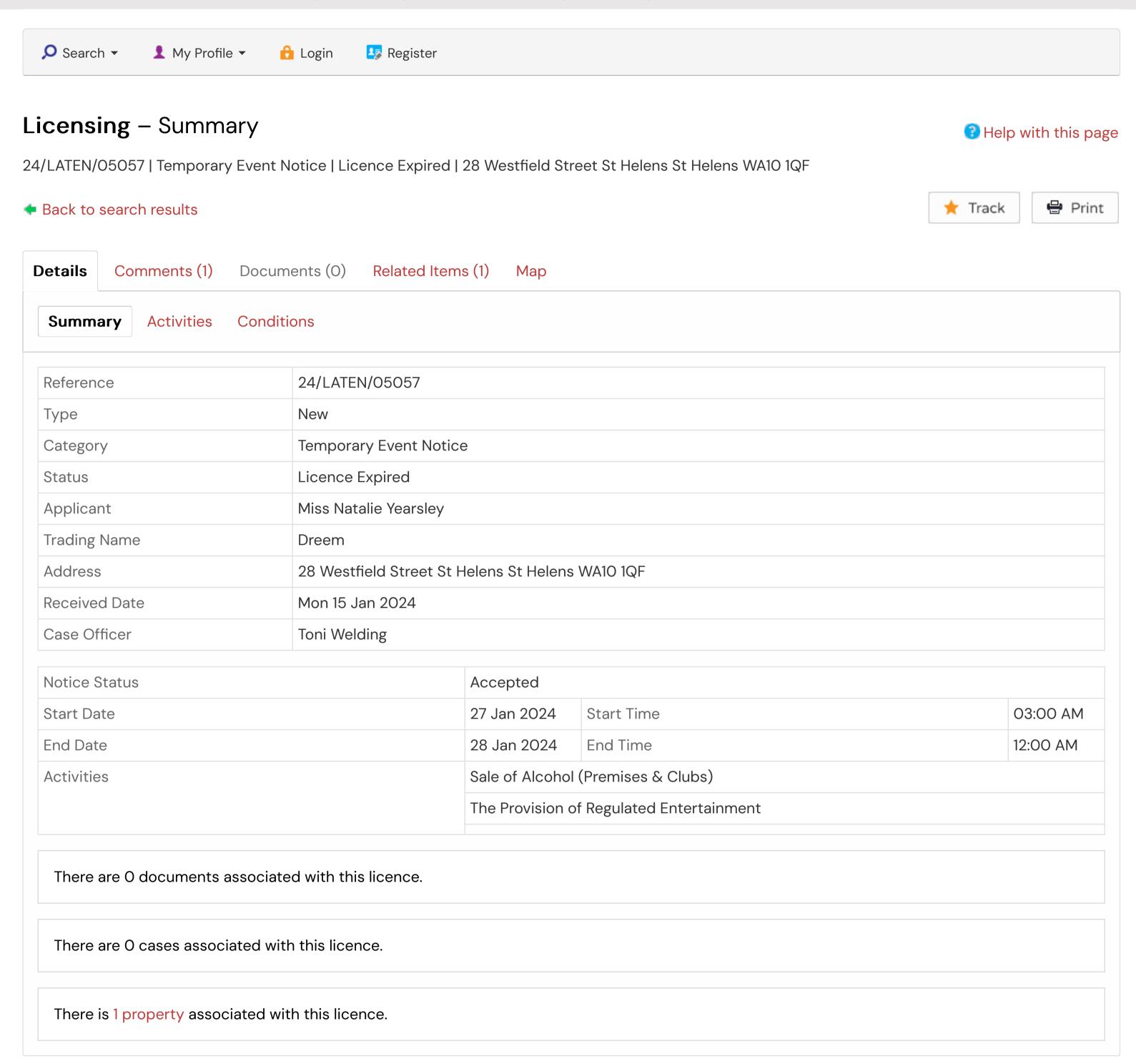






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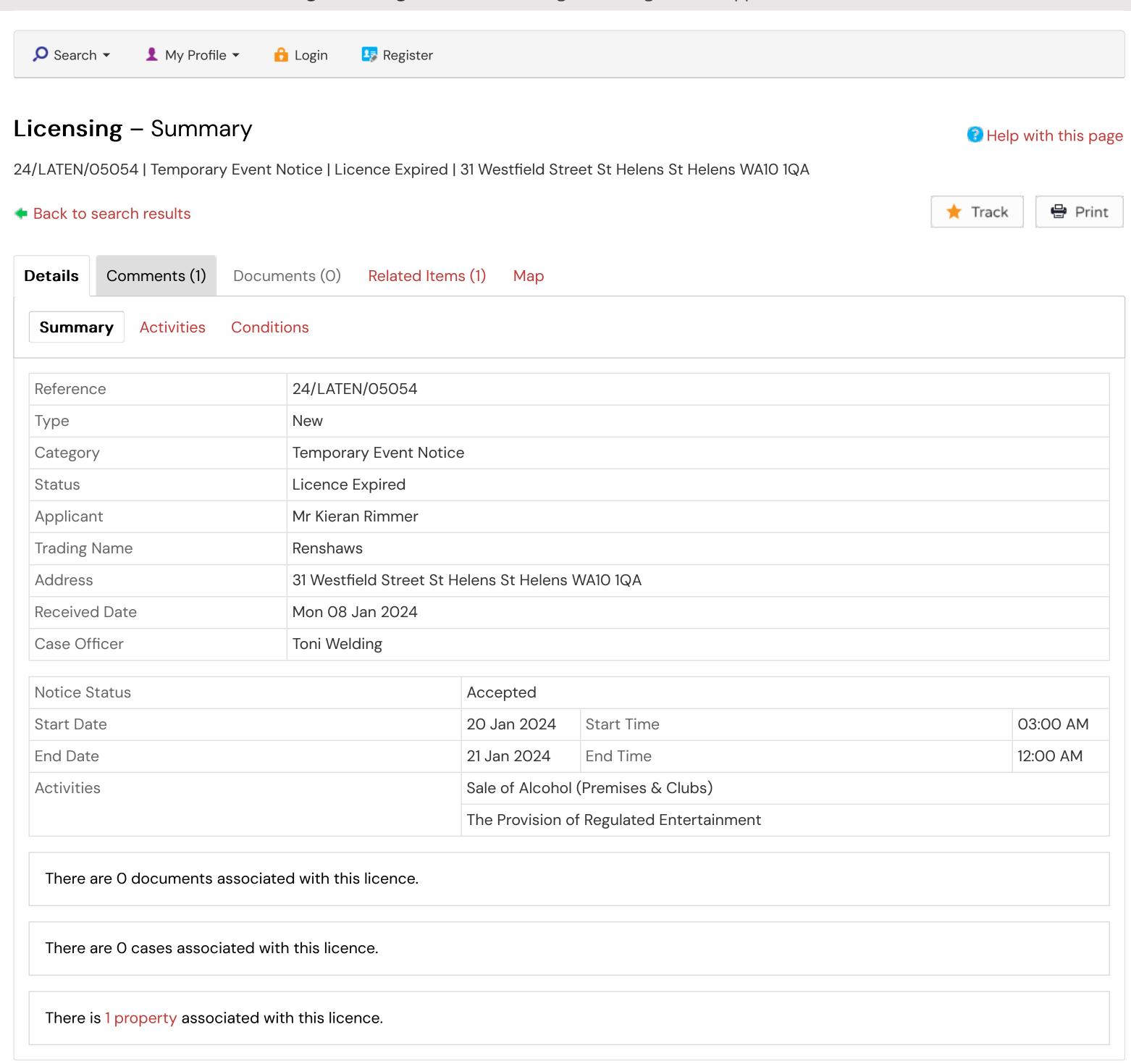




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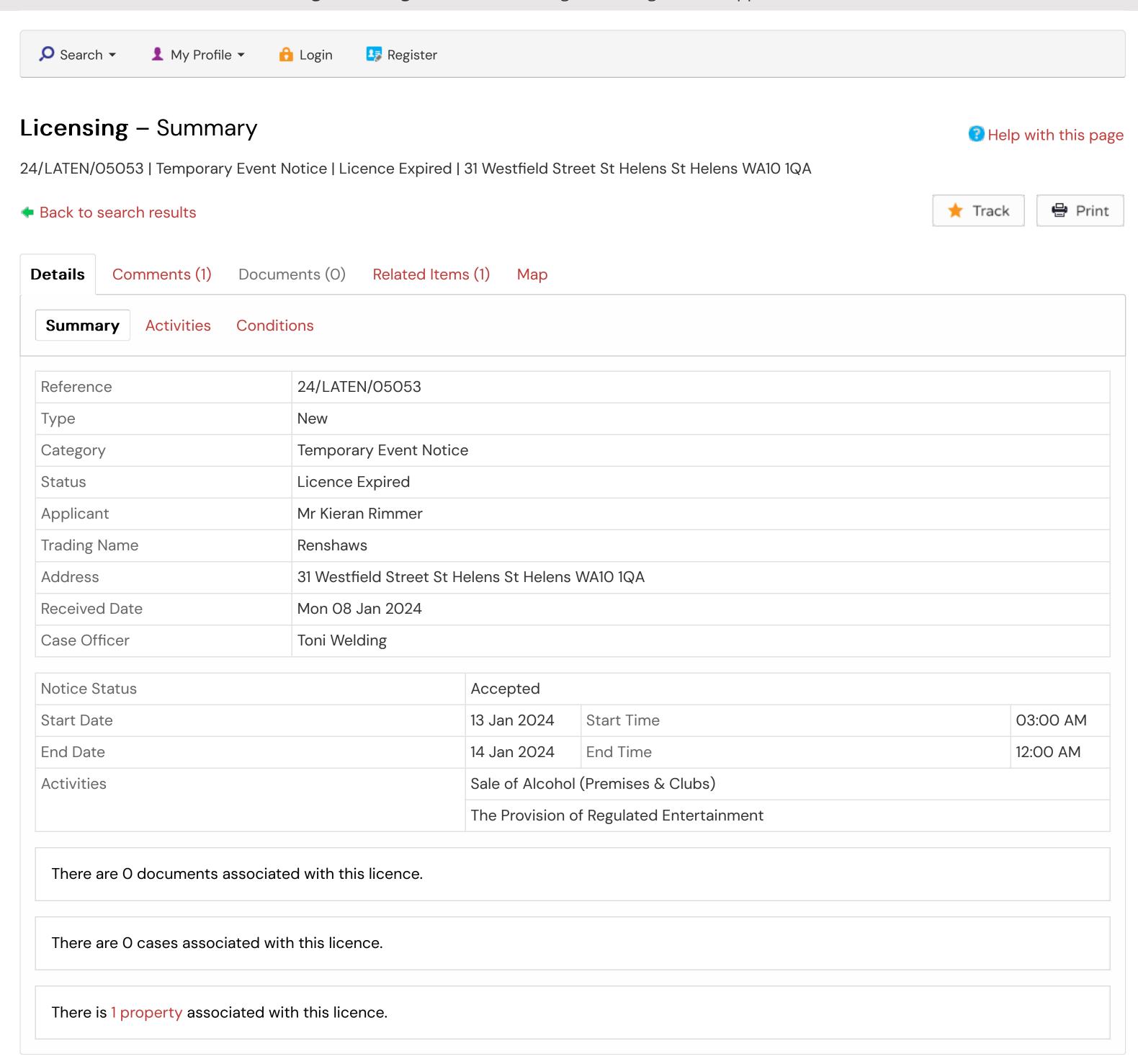




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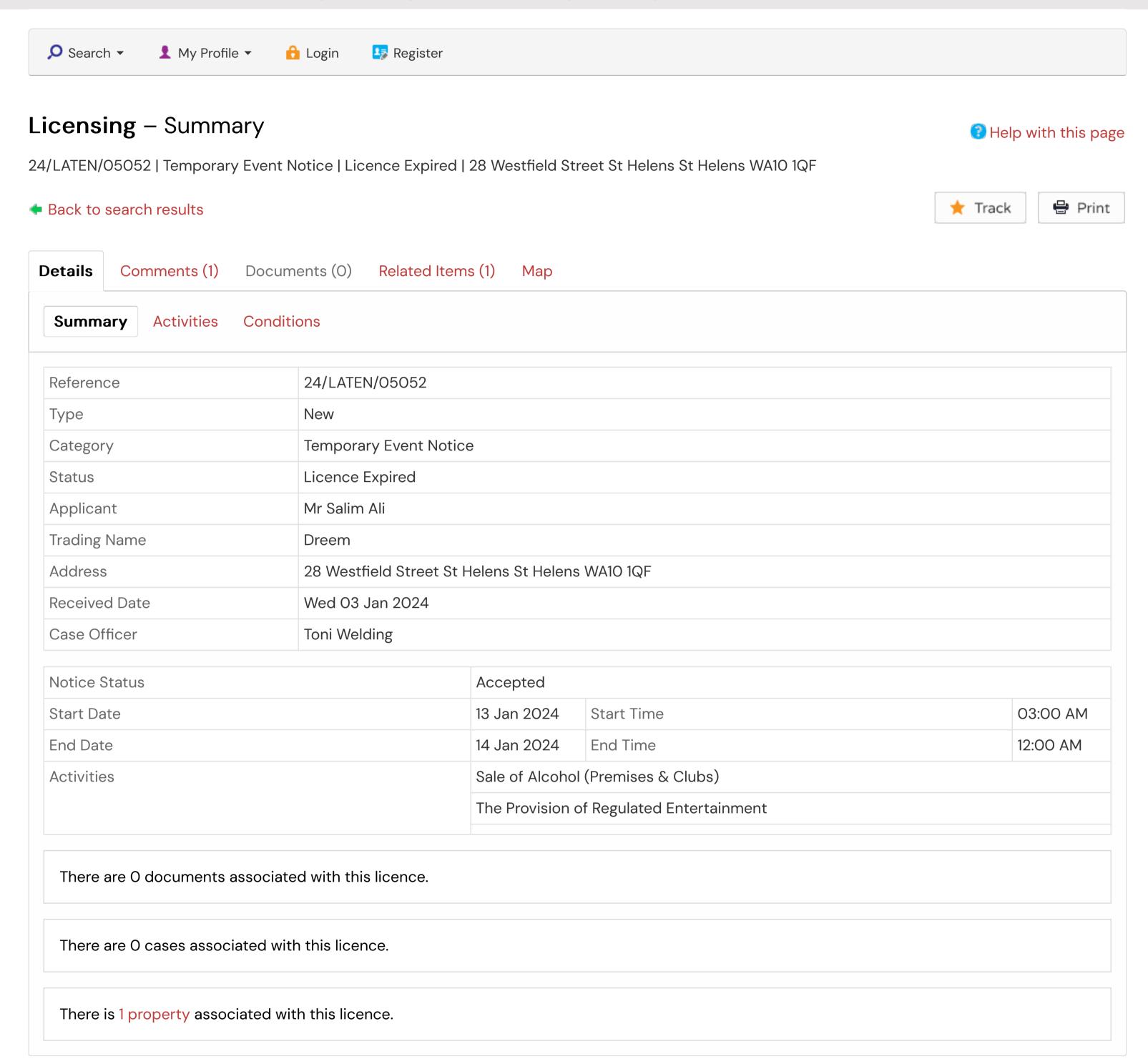






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