# Pole dance instructor set to keep home studio amid Christchurch noise dispute



In a notable planning dispute in Christchurch, Dorset, pole dance instructor Samilou Saunders appears poised to keep her home-based dance studio, despite ongoing complaints from local residents regarding noise and parking issues. Operating from her £700,000 bungalow, Saunders has faced significant opposition from neighbours who describe the feelings of disturbance stemming from loud music and what they refer to as "grunting" during classes over the past two years.

Local councillor Margaret Phipps has voiced concerns, suggesting that the business is ill-suited for a residential area. This sentiment echoes broader community anxieties surrounding non-traditional businesses encroaching into suburban life. Residents assert that the studio has had a "devastating" impact, prompting them to formally object to her application for retrospective planning approval. However, many observers, including Saunders, believe the resistance to her studio is rooted more in generational bias and discomfort with pole dancing than legitimate nuisances.

Planning officers at Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole (BCP) Council, have recently recommended approving her application, while proposing conditions designed to mitigate disturbances. These include constraints on noise levels and restrictions on operating hours. “This has been going on for nearly two years now. It's been a lot of stress, and I've been really down about it,” Saunders shared about the emotional toll the objections have taken on her, but expressed hope that the council's support will provide a pathway to resolution.

The studio’s operation, which accommodates small classes averaging eight participants, significantly aligns with Saunders’ claim of minimal disturbance. In a bid to further alleviate neighbour concerns, she highlighted features such as air conditioning and closed windows that effectively contain noise during sessions. Saunders maintains that music is not played during classes, making the complaints from neighbours seem exaggerated to her.

Yet, some neighbours remain resolute in their opposition. An 83-year-old resident, Alan Forage, expressed a desire for the tranquility that characterised their neighbourhood, lamenting summer disturbances when windows are open. Another objector articulated the sentiment that the dance studio was not just an inconvenience but an infringement on their quality of life. These differing views reveal a sharp discord between modern lifestyle choices and traditional expectations of residential calm, which is often exacerbated by societal perceptions of businesses like pole dancing.

This situation mirrors other recent instances where pole dancing schools have faced significant challenges. For example, a pole dance studio in Elm, Cambridgeshire, was evicted following similar complaints about inappropriate attire and parking issues, despite a finding that residents’ living conditions were not adversely affected. This case highlights a recurring theme in disputes involving alternative forms of physical expression in traditional neighbourhoods: the balancing act between entrepreneurial freedom and community standards.

As the BCP planning committee prepares to vote on Saunders’ application, her case underscores broader societal debates about cultural acceptance and the integration of diverse businesses in residential zones. Saunders remains hopeful but apprehensive, recognising the potential for ongoing conflict even with a favourable recommendation. “I am still a bit on edge for the meeting. I’ve been told the councillors would have to have a good reason to refuse it and go against the officer's recommendation,” she noted.

The outcome of this case may not only dictate the future of Saunders’ studio but could also set a precedent for how similar businesses navigate the complexities of community relations and urban planning in the UK.

## Reference Map:

* Paragraph 1 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14760761/Pole-dancer-win-battle-dance-studio-bungalow-despite-neighbours-complaints.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[7]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14760761/Pole-dancer-win-battle-dance-studio-bungalow-despite-neighbours-complaints.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 2 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14760761/Pole-dancer-win-battle-dance-studio-bungalow-despite-neighbours-complaints.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cewll20xgeeo)
* Paragraph 3 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14760761/Pole-dancer-win-battle-dance-studio-bungalow-despite-neighbours-complaints.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cewll20xgeeo), [[3]](https://www.fenlandcitizen.co.uk/news/pole-dance-school-evicted-from-village-after-complaints-lodg-9377537/)
* Paragraph 4 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14760761/Pole-dancer-win-battle-dance-studio-bungalow-despite-neighbours-complaints.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[7]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14760761/Pole-dancer-win-battle-dance-studio-bungalow-despite-neighbours-complaints.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)
* Paragraph 5 – [[2]](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cewll20xgeeo), [[3]](https://www.fenlandcitizen.co.uk/news/pole-dance-school-evicted-from-village-after-complaints-lodg-9377537/)
* Paragraph 6 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14760761/Pole-dancer-win-battle-dance-studio-bungalow-despite-neighbours-complaints.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[6]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/tv/0/is-strictly-come-dancing-doomed-bbc-complaints/?utmsource=email)
* Paragraph 7 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14760761/Pole-dancer-win-battle-dance-studio-bungalow-despite-neighbours-complaints.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[4]](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/02/17/bbc-noise-residents-local-council-planning-application-one/)
* Paragraph 8 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14760761/Pole-dancer-win-battle-dance-studio-bungalow-despite-neighbours-complaints.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[5]](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cp3z1q4de55o)
* Paragraph 9 – [[1]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14760761/Pole-dancer-win-battle-dance-studio-bungalow-despite-neighbours-complaints.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490), [[7]](https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14760761/Pole-dancer-win-battle-dance-studio-bungalow-despite-neighbours-complaints.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490)

Source: [Noah Wire Services](https://www.noahwire.com)

## Bibliography

1. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14760761/Pole-dancer-win-battle-dance-studio-bungalow-despite-neighbours-complaints.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - Please view link - unable to able to access data
2. <https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cewll20xgeeo> - A pole dancing school in Elm, Cambridgeshire, was evicted after residents complained about women in 'thongs and bras' and parking issues. The Planning Inspectorate upheld the eviction due to 'harm to highway and pedestrian safety', though it found no harmful effect on residents' living conditions. The school plans to relocate to a new studio in Wisbech, Cambridgeshire. ([bbc.com](https://www.bbc.com/news/articles/cewll20xgeeo?utm_source=openai))
3. <https://www.fenlandcitizen.co.uk/news/pole-dance-school-evicted-from-village-after-complaints-lodg-9377537/> - High Voltage Pole, a pole dance school in Elm, Norfolk, was evicted after residents complained about seeing women in 'thongs and bras' through windows and parking issues. The Planning Inspectorate upheld the eviction due to 'harm to highway and pedestrian safety', despite finding no harmful effect on residents' living conditions. The school plans to relocate to a new studio in Wisbech. ([fenlandcitizen.co.uk](https://www.fenlandcitizen.co.uk/news/pole-dance-school-evicted-from-village-after-complaints-lodg-9377537/?utm_source=openai))
4. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/02/17/bbc-noise-residents-local-council-planning-application-one/> - Residents near the BBC's Broadcasting House in London objected to the corporation's planning application for live outdoor performances, citing noise disturbances. The BBC has hosted events featuring artists like James Blunt and Ellie Goulding in the piazza outside its headquarters. Neighbours have lodged objections to the BBC's planning application for a three-year extension to use the space for public events. ([telegraph.co.uk](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2024/02/17/bbc-noise-residents-local-council-planning-application-one/?utm_source=openai))
5. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cp3z1q4de55o> - Residents of Parkfield Grange care home in Stourbridge enjoyed a pole dancing masterclass from Pole Finesse of Bromsgrove. Thirty residents, family members, and staff attended the performance, with an 85-year-old resident describing it as 'fabulous' and expressing admiration for the dancers' skills. The session was initiated after residents inquired about the staff's activities outside of work. ([bbc.co.uk](https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/cp3z1q4de55o?utm_source=openai))
6. <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/tv/0/is-strictly-come-dancing-doomed-bbc-complaints/?utmsource=email> - Allegations of mistreatment and abuse have emerged from former 'Strictly Come Dancing' contestants, including claims of post-traumatic stress disorder and physical injuries. These revelations have led to a decline in the programme's popularity, with concerns about its future viability. The BBC is facing criticism over its handling of these complaints, raising questions about the show's continuation. ([telegraph.co.uk](https://www.telegraph.co.uk/tv/0/is-strictly-come-dancing-doomed-bbc-complaints/?utmsource=email&utm_source=openai))
7. <https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-14760761/Pole-dancer-win-battle-dance-studio-bungalow-despite-neighbours-complaints.html?ns_mchannel=rss&ns_campaign=1490&ito=1490> - A pole dancer is on track to win the planning battle to keep a dance studio at her posh £700,000 bungalow despite locals' complaints of 'grunting and loud music'. Samilou Saunders has been battling 'generational bias' from neighbours in the town who are against her business. She has operated the studio from her bungalow in Christchurch, Dorset, for the past two years, but it faced the threat of closure after complaints were raised by local residents. Neighbours argued that the studio was having a 'devastating' impact on their lives, pointing to loud music during classes and parking problems. They were supported by local councillor Margaret Phipps, who deemed the business 'inappropriate' for a residential neighbourhood. However, Mrs Saunders, whose clientele includes doctors, accountants, vets, nurses, and school teachers, believes the opposition stems more from discomfort with a pole dancing studio in the area than genuine concerns. Now in her 40s, Mrs Saunders was required to submit a retrospective planning application in January in a bid to continue running the studio. Now, planning officers at Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole (BCP) Council have recommended it be approved. Pole dancer Samilou Saunders has hit back at her elderly neighbours who strongly object to her home studio at her £700,000 bungalow in Christchurch, Dorset. Several neighbours have lodged formal objections to Bournemouth, Christchurch & Poole (BCP) Council about the noise and parking issues that have arisen since her classes began. In his report, planning officer Peter Walters recommended introducing conditions to curb noise disturbance and restrict opening hours in an effort to address the complaints. Mrs Saunders said she felt a sense of relief but admitted the dispute has strained her relationship with her neighbours. She said: 'This has been going on for nearly two years now. It's been a lot of stress and I've been really down about it. 'Some of the things neighbours said were quite horrible and shocking. Everyone is entitled to their opinion but I'm glad the planning officer has seen through the lies about music and noise. 'If I honestly thought I was causing an issue I would have gone round to my neighbours and said what can I do to sort this out? 'I don't feel like I can wave and smile at people anymore, I feel intimidated. They (objectors) will stand and stare at me when I leave the house. 'I'm very pleased with the report, I'm feeling really positive about the outcome. 'I'm hoping when it's all over, we can just move on, but I don't feel like I'm quite there yet.' Samilou has now spoken out against her detractors and said her neighbours have 'completely the wrong idea'. The mother previously ran a studio in Bournemouth but relocated the business to her home during the Covid pandemic, continuing operations there due to the ongoing cost of living crisis. She is the sole employee and typically works around 20 hours per week, holding small classes of up to eight people, spread throughout all seven days. Her planning application lists the studio’s hours as 9am to 9pm Monday to Friday, and 9am to 12pm on weekends. However, the timetable published on her website shows only one or two classes per day during the week, usually around 10am and again at 6 or 7pm. She stated that the studio is fitted with air conditioning, meaning windows and doors remain closed during sessions, and that music is not audible from outside. She also noted that music is not played during the classes themselves. Despite this, neighbours insisted the business was ruining their enjoyment of their homes and the surrounding neighbourhood. Alan Forage, 83, a retired scientist who lives next door, said: 'We (the residents) are all reasonably old and at our age we just want peace and quiet in a nice area, a quiet life. 'In the summer when windows are open you hear grunting and loud music and chatting when the pole dancing classes are on.' One objector called the application - which states that the proposed change of use is well-suited for the location - 'little more than wishful thinking and not the reality'. Neighbour John Thompson wrote: 'We, the residents, have put up with this intrusion into a totally quiet residential area with a devastating effect on our amenity. 'We are the people who have experienced the significant disruption from the noise from the pole dancing music and the effect of the parking not only the road but also on our grass verges which we maintain on a regular basis. 'This application should be rejected and the building brought back in line with the original planning approval, namely construction of an enlarged replacement garage, not an unauthorised pole dancing business in the heart of a quiet residential area.' Dorothy and Michael English wrote: 'We feel that our home is no longer as enjoyable. We can no longer use the garden freely. Our mental health and wellbeing is being affected.' The BCP planning committee will vote on the matter at a meeting next week. Mrs Saunders said: 'I am still a bit on edge for the meeting. 'I've been told the councillors would have to have a good reason to refuse it and go against the officer's recommendation.'