

## The 1,000-capacity boat would cruise through several boroughs of the capital

Friday May 12 2023, 10.00pm, The Times London

Jack Malvern

At 86 metres, Oceandiva is longer than any commercial airliner Share

For the owners of Oceandiva, their £25 million party boat is a vision of the future that will revolutionise Britain's hospitality business.

Residents along the river on which it will run are less enthusiastic, with some convinced that the 86m, 1,000-capacity vessel is a battleship that will wage war

year". How it compares **HMS Belfast** Length: 187m

Thames clipper —\_\_\_\_

Length: 32m

not in use.

Passengers: 172

Crew: 761 in WW2

**Oceandiva** 

Length: 86m

Passengers: 1,000-1,500

Rachel Bentley, the Liberal Democrat councillor for the area around Butler's Wharf, where Oceandiva is due to receive guests, said that her council had no power over licensing. "The clientele they are hoping to attract are not going to want to schlep out to Newham," she said. "They have bought the pier at Butler's

Although the boat will serve alcohol to guests while in several boroughs it need

Campaigners said it was a quirk in the law that removed the need for a licence

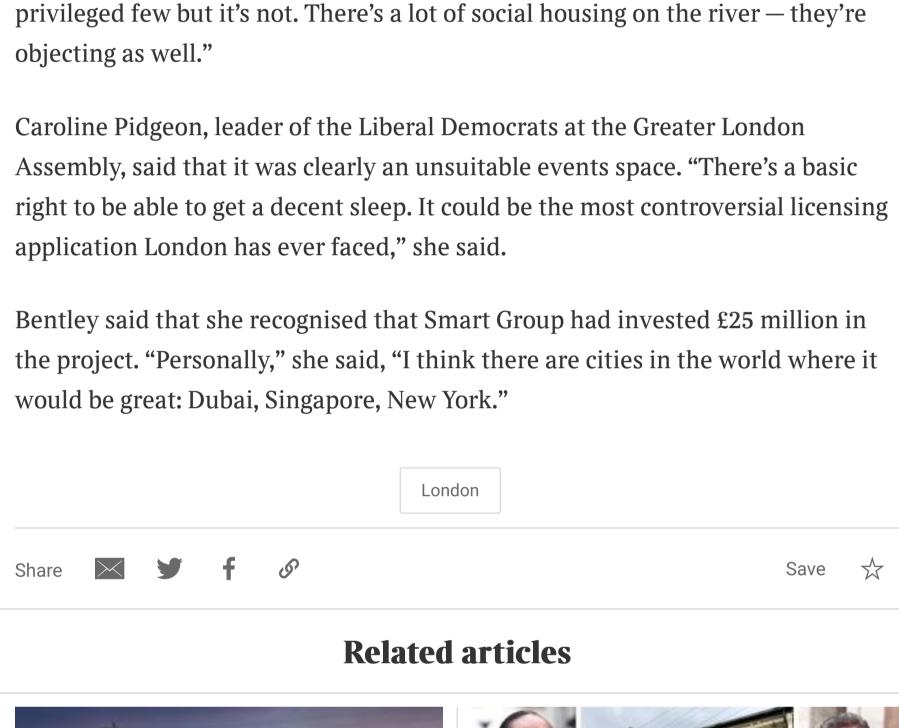
from Southwark, where partygoers will board and disembark.

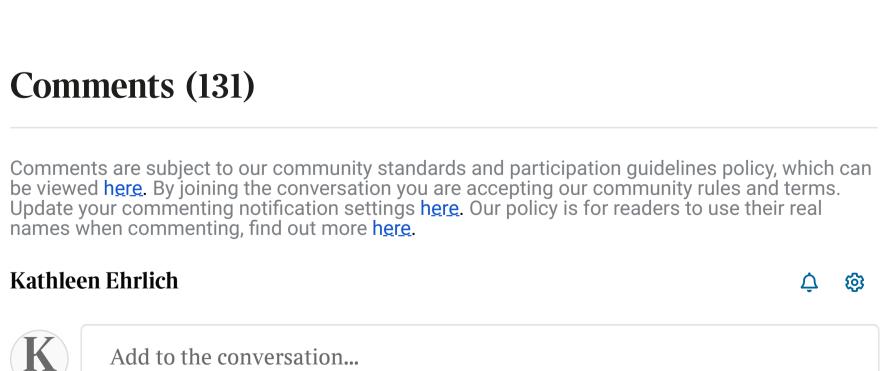
only obtain a licence from Newham because that is where it will be docked when

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said. "It's enormous — much bigger than any other boat operation on the Thames

in this capacity. If anything, people are getting more anti rather than less."





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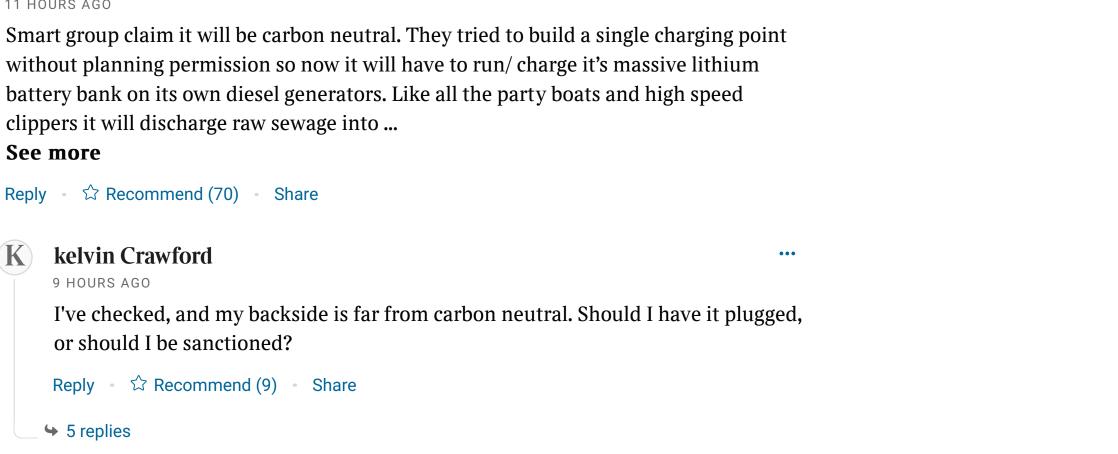
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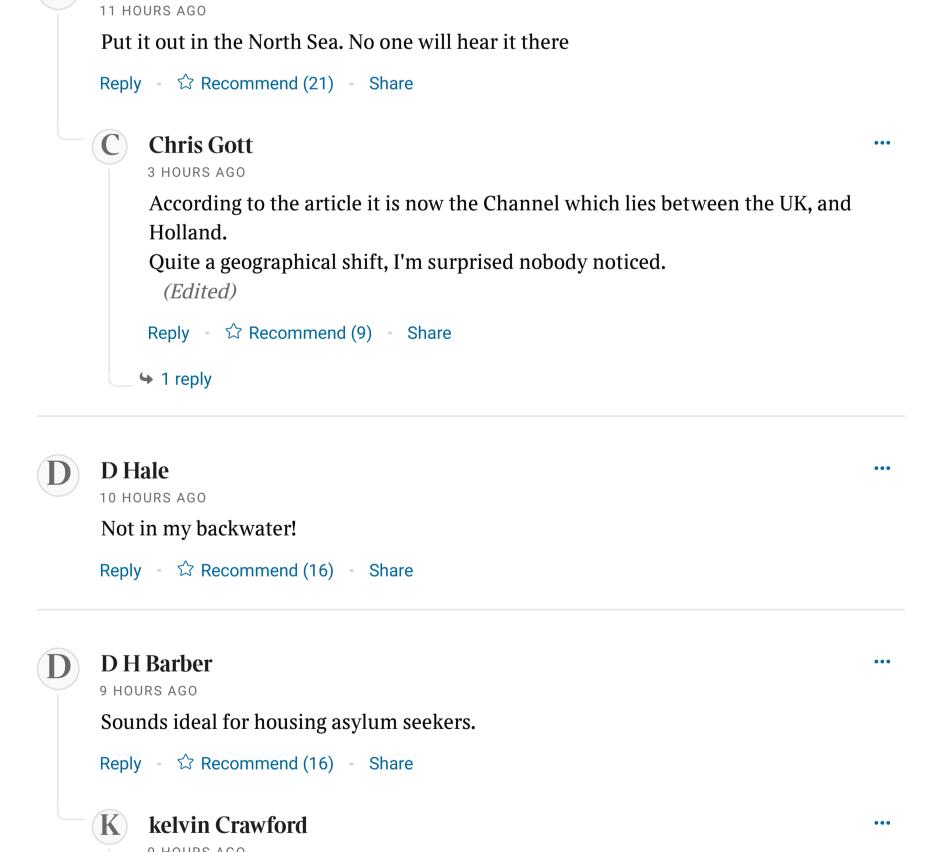
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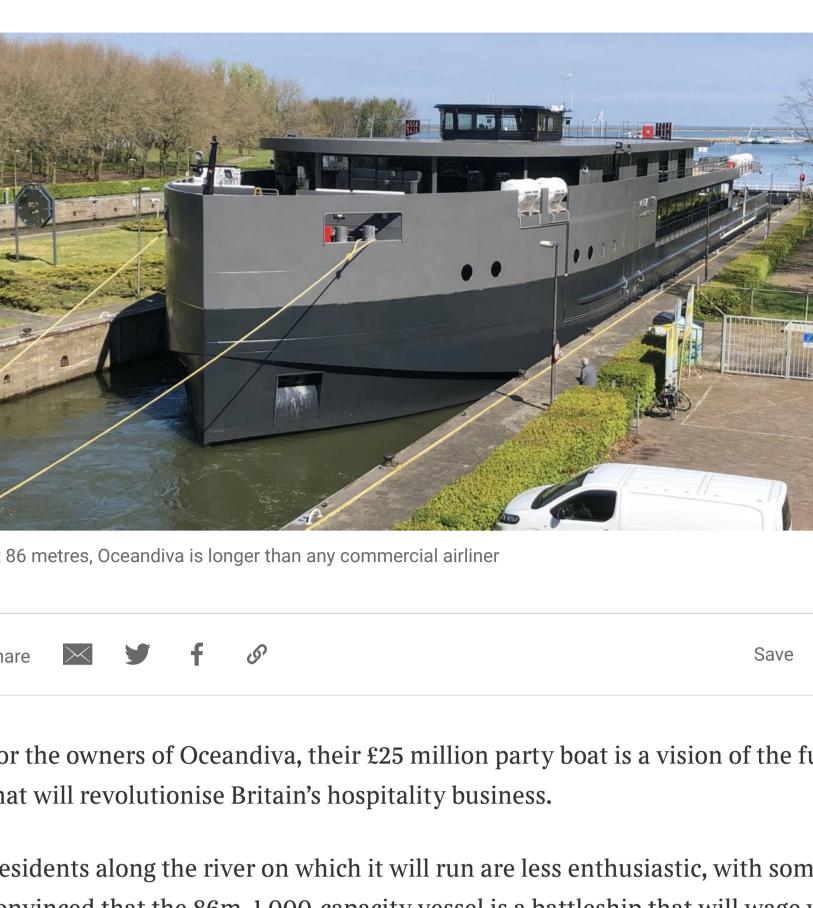
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Regulated



on their sleep.

Oceandiva, longer than any commercial airliner, was due to arrive in Britain this week after being towed across the Channel from the Netherlands, where it was built. Weather thwarted its journey to the Thames, where it will be the river's biggest party boat, but its problems may only be starting. The last time its owners applied for a 3am alcohol and entertainment licence from Newham borough council, the application received a record 980 submissions, overwhelmingly objections from residents in the nearby boroughs of Southwark, Greenwich and Tower Hamlets. Critics said that the volume of complaints made it one of the most controversial licensing applications in London. Smart Group, the entertainment company that owns the boat, withdrew the application and is expected to restart the process in July after attempting to persuade residents by inviting them on board. **ADVERTISEMENT ™** Meltwater Sponsored by: Meltwater Monitor what **Measure Your PR Impact** matters most to your brand

Chloe Jackson, managing director of Smart Group, described Oceandiva as "the first carbon neutral-powered vessel on the River Thames, revolutionising London's hospitality sector". She said it would contribute £65 million to the economy over five years. "Our priority is to ensure that our operation [is] safe, sustainable and a good neighbour to the communities in which we operate," Jackson said, promising a "comprehensive programme of engagement with local authorities and residential communities prior to submitting a licensing application later this

Wharf, which is the only pier in London they can currently use." Bentley believes that Smart Group withdrew its last application in the hope that opposition would dissolve. "But, if anything, the passage of time has made people more organised. You now have residents' groups in Tower Hamlets, Newham, Southwark and Greenwich." She said that her constituents were doubly worried, not only about noisy parties but the impact of guests spilling off the boat at 3am into narrow, cobbled streets and struggling to find taxis to take them home. Smart Group declined to say whether its new application would seek to serve alcohol until 3am or an earlier cut-off point. "I can't see us finding a consensus based on the current state of affairs," Bentley

"It's not that people object to the principle of the boat. It's just that it's too big and will cause too much of a disturbance. There are no conditions that are satisfactory."

Paul Crosbie, a resident of Shad Thames for more than 20 years, said: "It doesn't

disturbance. There will also be an impact on the view — it's like a battleship.

matter whether [the finishing time] is 8pm or 10am, you'll still have a

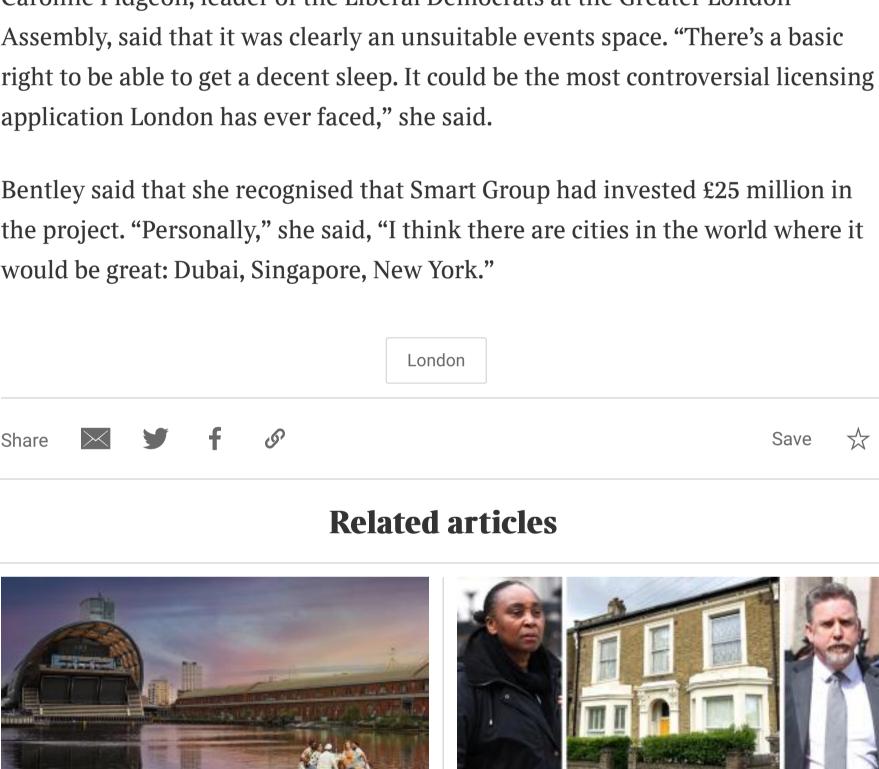
OCEAN **DIVA** 

LONDON -

Residents' groups in Tower Hamlets, Newham, Southwark and Greenwich are opposed to the plans

Crosbie said that it was unifying people from all walks of life. "Up till now, the

Oceandiva operators have been trying to stress that [protest is coming from] a



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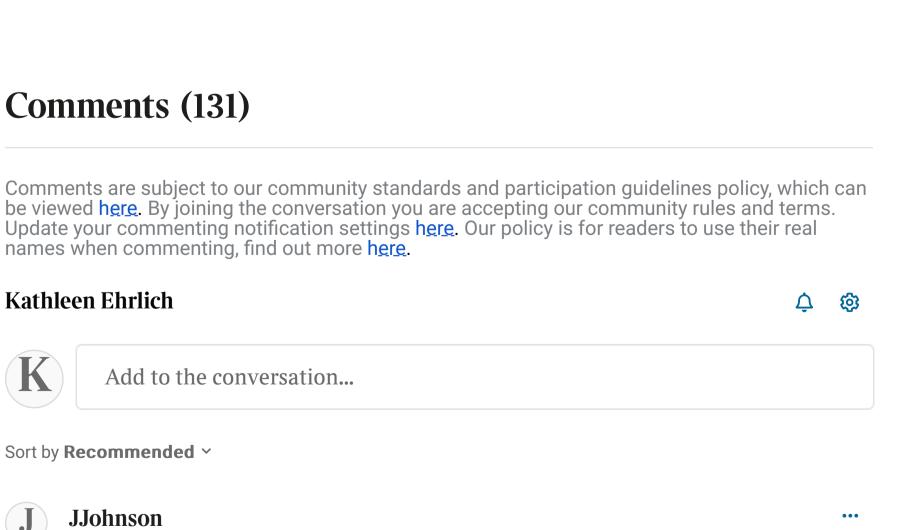
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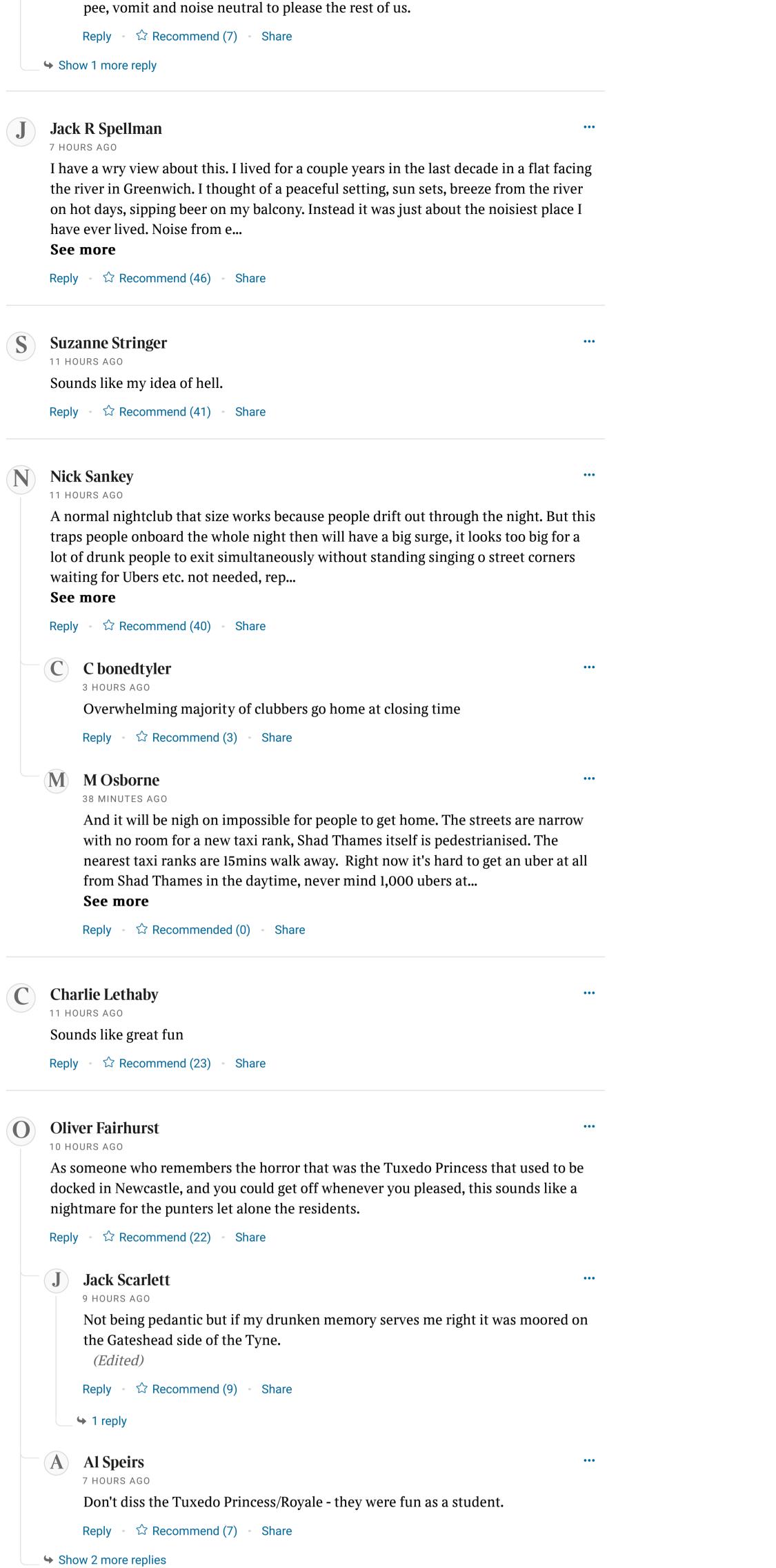
New Guinea minister his job



Having lived by the Thames, the party boats are already quite noisy, and they definitely

Hurrah, I'm sure Greta and her buddies will love it! Now all it needs to be is pooh,

don't have 1,000 people on them. Good luck to the objectors!



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