

LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE

11 JUNE 2014

Present: Councillor K Crout (Chair)
Councillors H Lynch and M Mills

Also present: Mr Matt Clark, Applicant
Mr Colin McEwen, Applicant
Mrs Jacky Wilson, Interested Party
Ms Beth Cherryman, Press
Ms Ellen Meadows, Press

Officers: Solicitor
Licensing Officer (PS)
Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer (JK)
Environmental Health Officers (SR and DH)

40 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP/ ELECTION OF A CHAIR

The Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer confirmed that the Sub-Committee would comprise Councillors Crout, Lynch and Mills.

The Sub-Committee was asked to elect a Chair for the Hearing.

RESOLVED –

that Councillor Crout be elected Chair for this Hearing.

41 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY)

There were no disclosures of interest.

42 NEW PREMISES LICENCE APPLICATION: WARREN BROWN IN RESPECT OF CASSIOBURY PARK, WATFORD (14/00516/LAPRE)

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Head of Community and Customer Services setting out details of an application for a new time-limited premises licence and also of the representations received.

The Licensing Officer introduced the report. She outlined the scope of the application and advised that there would be a number of marquees and a single stage. There would be a maximum of 3100 visitors permitted at the event. Two representations had been received from interested parties who were concerned about the levels of noise and the misuse of alcohol. A number of conditions relating to noise had been agreed with Environmental Health and the applicant

had attended the Safety Advisory Group to discuss issues including parking, location and food stalls. She advised that if the Licensing Sub-Committee granted the licence, it would only be granted by the Licensing Authority once the responsible authorities confirmed that they were satisfied with other practical arrangements.

There were no questions for the Licensing Officer.

The Chair invited Mrs Jacky Wilson to present her representation.

Mrs Wilson advised the Sub-Committee that she lived on the Cassiobury Estate. In her view, the park was a leisure facility and she questioned whether it should be used as a venue for events such as this. The High Street would be a better location as the park should be preserved as a nature area suitable for children. She could not see how an event for families was the right place to serve alcohol. The event would last six hours during peak visitor time. She had concerns that the visitors would consume a lot of alcohol as it would be readily available. She summarised that in her opinion it was not the right venue.

Following a question from Councillor Lynch, Mrs Wilson said that the annual fireworks event did cause disruption to local residents. She hoped that the dispersal from this event would be more staggered.

The Chair asked whether she had attended any of the events in the Park. Mrs Wilson advised that she had walked through the park on several occasions when an event was taking place. She felt that it was a shame that so many people were in the park who did not seem to appreciate it.

In response to a further question from the Chair, Mrs Wilson advised that she had attended a meeting of the Cassiobury Residents Association where remarks had been made about the number of events in the park.

Councillor Mills asked Mrs Wilson whether she was aware of the parking arrangements. Mrs Wilson responded that she hoped many would drive to the event so that they would not drink alcohol. Parking was not her main concern.

In response to a question from the Chair, Mrs Wilson confirmed that she had no particular concern with this event or applicant. She was concerned that it would set a precedent.

Mr Matt Clark asked about Mrs Wilson's statement regarding alcohol. She responded that it needed to be limited and she did not feel it was appropriate where children were present. Mr Clark noted that proper control of alcohol consumption was important. He would not sell to intoxicated customers and advised that there would be registered door supervisors to ensure the smooth running of the event. It would be a more controlled environment than the High Street where premises competed on prices of alcohol.

Mrs Wilson asked why the event could not be held on the Parade. Mr McEwen advised that an event in the town centre would be harder to control as it would

not have an enclosed area. Visitors would not be able to bring alcohol into the event in the park. Mr McEwen explained that the company had recently run a similar event in Witney, Oxfordshire. He described the family-friendly atmosphere and advised that very positive feedback had been received. He said that the Police had praised the operation of the event.

Mrs Wilson asked how those who were consuming alcohol at the perimeter of the event could be dealt with. Mr Clark said that the event would be controlled and they would liaise with the Police where necessary.

The Chair invited the applicants to address the Sub-Committee.

Mr Clark advised that from a Licensing perspective the event would have a simple setup. There would be a VIP area, a real ale and cider bar and a standard bar both of which would be staffed by trained individuals. A policy of Challenge 25 would be in force. The staff were experienced and there had been no incidents at Witney.

The applicants provided two letters to the Sub-Committee which the Chair read aloud. One was from the sound company outlining how they ensure that the sound at their events adhered to noise policies. Mr McEwen added that the sound engineer would monitor the sound levels on an hourly basis to ensure the event was fully compliant. The second letter was from a local councillor in Witney praising the relaxed and friendly atmosphere at the recent event. The councillor also noted that the Police wished to pass on their thanks for a well-organised event. Mr McEwen added that Witney Council had asked the company to run a three-day event for them.

Mr McEwen explained the structure of the company and informed Members that he was a solicitor and Mr Clark was a personal licence holder. There would, therefore, be an impact on them professionally if the events were not well-run. With regards to the question of trouble at the periphery of the event, he explained that he had been liaising with the Council to formulate plans for any such issues. He explained the procedure for this eventuality.

The Licensing Officer asked the applicants to describe the exact location of the event. They advised that they had met with the Horticultural Development Manager at Veolia to look at the best location and he had suggested that close to the splash park would be most suitable. This was 150 metres away from the nearest houses.

Mr McEwen provided further details about the arrangements for parking. The event would be promoted locally and people would be asked not to bring their cars.

Following a question from Councillor Lynch, Mr McEwen said that it would be much more difficult to control the event if it took place in the Town Centre. He added that there would be staff to direct traffic.

In closing, Mr McEwen advised that this would be a positive event for the community.

The Sub Committee retired to consider their decision.

On the Sub Committee's return the Chair announced the decision.

RESOLVED –

Having heard from the applicant and the interested party and having taken into account a written representation from an interested party, the Committee grants the application.

In reaching this decision, the Committee took into account the Provisions of the Licensing Act 2003, the Secretary of State's Guidance, as well as the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy 2013. The Committee also attached the conditions agreed with Environmental Health as set out in paragraph 10.5 of the report.

Chair

The Meeting started at 10.45 am
and finished at 11.40 am