

LICENSING COMMITTEE (LICENSING ACT 2003)

29 FEBRUARY 2016

Present: Councillor J Brown (Chair)
Councillor K Crout (Vice-Chair)
Councillors S Bolton, I Brown, J Connal, G Derbyshire,
F Ewudo, M Haley, K Hastrick, T Rogers, S Silver, M Watkin,
S Williams and P Taylor

Also present: Councillor Nigel Bell

Officers: Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer
Environmental Health and Licensing Section Head

11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE/ COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillor Mills and Councillor Hofman who was replaced by Councillor Taylor.

12 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY)

There were no disclosures of interest.

13 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on the 12 January 2015 were submitted and signed.

14 LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE MINUTES AND UPDATE

The Committee received an update on the Licensing Sub-Committee hearings which had taken place since the last Committee meeting.

The minutes were submitted to the Chairs of each Sub-Committee for approval.

15 LICENSING ACT 2003 ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2015

The Committee received a report of the Head of Community and Customer Services providing details of the operation of the Licensing Act 2003 in the Borough during 2015.

The Licensing Officer introduced the report. She highlighted some areas of note including the variety of licensed premises in Watford.

Councillor Watkin commented that the Parade area was still seen as an area for young people. He asked if the opinion in the room was aligned with that comment. He also asked if Watford Borough Council was doing enough to promote the town as a safe place to socialise.

The Chair replied that from the Police point of view, Watford was known as a very safe place to visit.

The Environmental Health and Licensing Section Head added there was a campaign planned with the Police to work in the Parade area of the town to show that Watford was a safe place and people entering licensed premises would be asked to show identification to prove their age. Furthermore, the new development in Charter Place should attract an older demographic and the BID (Business Improvement District) would undoubtedly further promote the town in a favourable light.

Councillor Williams stated that in his opinion, Watford was a safe place to come to. He asked that whilst the partnership with the Police was good, was there consideration given to working with the University of Hertfordshire. They were actively promoting a coach service to facilitate students travelling to socialise in Watford.

Councillor Connal asked about TENs (Temporary Event Notices) for churches. The Licensing Officer explained the sort of events and activities that churches applied for.

Councillor Taylor asked if the licensing team had any concerns about the number of TENs.

The Environmental Health and Licensing Section Head replied that the lack of complaints showed that this was not an issue. She added that TENs were sometimes used by premises to test or try out new hours or activities and following the use of TENs, a variation to the premises licence, may well be submitted.

The Business Compliance Officer added that even 10 years after the Act came into effect, licensees were still trying to familiarise themselves with the system.

Councillor Williams asked if there was a whistle blowing process for workers within licensed premises to report issues.

The Business Compliance Officer replied that whilst there was no such process, people could call in anonymously. He also referred to the test purchase procedures.

Councillor Ewudo commented that most new premises licences that were applied for were in the town centre.

The Senior Licensing Officer commented that the town centre was where the majority of the trade was and the Council had not received many applications for licences in other parts of the town.

The Business Compliance Officer added that lost licences were usually from traditional pubs, due simply to lack of customers. He commented generally on the changing drinking habits nationally.

The Vice Chair commented that this was a good report and offered his congratulations to the officers. He added that he had received positive comments about Watford at national level. Councillor Crout then added his thanks to the Councillors who worked so hard on the various sub-committees, in particular Councillors Jan Brown and George Derbyshire.

Councillor Silver commented that the town centre was moving in the right direction, there was still more work to be done. He added that not many licensed premises in North Watford had closed over the past few years and some new restaurants had opened.

He then asked if the town centre had seen an increase in footfall as a result of premier league football and if so, had there been an increase in licensing issues.

The Business Compliance Officer replied that most definitely Watford town centre had seen an increase in footfall on match days, but he was unaware of any issues caused by this. The policing and partnership work with the licensees was of such a high standard to preclude this.

The Environmental Health and Licensing Section Head stated that the current level of partnership working was very high. She also added that, although the data was not available at the meeting, the footfall information from the counters within the town centre would be distributed to Members.

RESOLVED –

that the report be noted.

16

COUNCILLOR JAN BROWN

After the conclusion of the meeting, Councillor Peter Taylor (Portfolio Holder) noted that this was the Chair's final Licensing Committee meeting and thanked her for all her hard work and dedication to the licensing service. He presented her with a small present.

Councillor Jan Brown asked for her profound gratitude to the Licensing Team to be noted in the minutes. She commended them for their hard work and professionalism.

The Meeting started at 8.24 pm
and finished at 8.55 pm

Chair