

LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE

7 MARCH 2016

Present: Councillor G Derbyshire (Chairman)
Councillor
Councillors S Bolton and T Rogers

Also present:

Officers: Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer
Senior Solicitor
Licensing Officer

37 COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP/ ELECTION OF A CHAIR

The Committee and Scrutiny Support Officer confirmed that the Sub-Committee would comprise of Councillors Bolton, Derbyshire and Rogers.

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

RESOLVED –

that Councillor Derbyshire be elected Chair for this Hearing.

38 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS (IF ANY)

Councillor Rogers declared that he was a registered supporter of the football club and in the 1960s was given 41 shares in the club. He believed he still had about 23, but these were the old style shares and may now be invalid as the new company had floated their new shares.

39 APPLICATION FOR A NEW PREMISES LICENCE: WATFORD FOOTBALL CLUB STADIUM, VICARAGE ROAD, WATFORD, WD18 0ER

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Head of Community and Customer Services setting out details of an application for a new licence for Watford Football Club Stadium.

The Licensing Officer introduced the report. It was noted that the application was for a new premises licence at Watford Football Club Stadium, Vicarage Road, Watford, WD18 0ER to allow the sale of alcohol for consumption on and off the premises between 10:00hrs and 00:00hrs Monday to Thursday, between 10:00hrs and 01:00hrs

on Fridays and Saturdays and 10:00hrs and 23:00hrs on Sundays. Late night refreshment was applied for between 23:00 hrs and 00:30hrs on Mondays to Thursdays and 23:00hrs to 01:30hrs on Fridays and Saturdays. Regulated Entertainment was also applied for between 10:00 and 00:30 on Mondays to Thursdays, between 10:00hrs and 01:30hrs on Fridays and Saturdays and between 10:00hrs and 23:00hrs on Sundays. These hours are no different to the current licence, but cover the entire stadium. It was due to the scope of the change, that a new licence was applied for rather than a variation. It was noted by the Committee that boxing and wrestling were new licensable activities for the licence.

The Licensing Officer stated that there had been one representation from a local resident. However, since the initial representation had been received, there had been no further contact from the interested party. This was despite the Licensing Officer having made several attempts to contact the resident, by letter and by visiting the address. The Licensing Officer reminded the Sub-Committee that there was no requirement for the interested party to attend the hearing.

The Licensing Officer pointed out that this application fell within the scope of LP2 of the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy.

At this stage in the meeting Mr Evans offered the Sub-Committee copies of the latest and up to date plans of the stadium. The Committee viewed these copies.

The Sub-Committee took the opportunity to question the Licensing Officer and clarify aspects of his report. Councillor Derbyshire asked about the inconsistency between the hours in condition 2a contained in Annex 2 of the current licence (that the music will be turned off when the sale of alcohol ends) and the proposed hours on page 7 of the report, that showed regulated entertainment finishing 30 minutes after the end of alcohol sales.

The Licensing Officer stated that should the application be granted, condition 2a would not be included.

The Applicant was given the opportunity to put questions to the Licensing Officer. However he did not wish to ask any questions, but thanked the Council Officers for their support and advice in the new application process in order to improve the facilities at the stadium.

The Licensing Officer explained that a licence variation was not suitable due to the considerable scale of the changes. It had been suggested that the new application should include the whole stadium to reduce the need for further hearings if, for example, a bar was moved with the stadium and representations were received against the application.

Mr Evans assured the Sub-Committee that the club management was cognisant of their location and the close proximity of their neighbours. He pointed out that the representation seemed to miss the fact that the stadium already had a licence.

Mr Evans went on to deal with the inclusion of boxing and wrestling. He assured the Committee that there was no intention of holding regular bouts. The inclusion was only there in case the local boxer Anthony Joshua decided to fight in the Watford area. The stadium was the only suitable location in the town.

There followed a short discussion around the complexity of holding such large events and the different authorities involved. The Elton John concert was held up as an example.

Councillor Derbyshire noted that aside from the one representation from an interested party, there had been no issues raised by the responsible authorities such as the Police and Environmental Health.

Councillor Rogers asked about the corner section at Vicarage Road and Occupation Road. It appeared it was a bar, but he thought it was originally seating.

Mr Evans replied that although it was shown as a hospitality area, the view there was obstructed by a large pillar and so there were second thoughts about it being hospitality. Since there was also a requirement for a control room, it was now most likely to be the site of the new control room area.

Councillor Bolton asked about boxing and wrestling and if these types of events would be weather dependant.

Mr Evans explained that any such events would be pitch based and this would necessitate covering the pitch. Whilst it might be reasonable to expect such events to rely on good weather, concerts also might have a similar issue, but they went ahead in rain.

Councillor Bolton then asked about disposal of glass waste up until 23:00 hours at night.

Mr Evans replied that such disposal was usually done during the day, because most events finished at midnight which was too late for disposal of glass. It was therefore done the next morning.

There were no further questions and the Sub-Committee retired to consider their decision at 10.40 hours.

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

RESOLVED –

that, having considered the representations on the application by both the operator and the applicant and the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003 and the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy 2013, the Committee approves the application for a new premises licence*, in accordance with the draft licence included within the officer's report.

The Sub-Committee is satisfied that this application supports the four licensing objectives of the Licensing Act.

The Sub-Committee approves this application notwithstanding that the hours for the licensable activities, hereby approved, are in excess of Policy LP2, as are the hours of the current licence for the premises. The committee recognises the unique importance of this venue for the town of Watford and wishes to support the contribution it makes to the life and image of the town by approving this exception to Policy LP2.

**In the interests of transparency, it should be noted that the original decision announced at the meeting contained the phrase, "...subject to the removal of the proposed condition 2(a) of Annex 2 of the officer's report." However after the meeting it was realised that condition 2(a) was only on the existing licence and not the draft licence as contained in the officer's report at Appendix 5.*

Committee

Chair
Licensing Sub-

The meeting started at 10.30 a.m.
and finished at 11.15 a.m.

Chair

The Meeting started at 10.30 am
and finished at 11.13 am