

Runnymede Borough CouncilLICENSING COMMITTEE2 June 2016 at 4pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors Mrs J Gracey (Chairman), D W Parr (Vice-Chairman), J Broadhead, Mrs D V Clarke, R J Edis, Mrs E Gill, Mrs M T Harnden, N M King, Mrs Y P Lay and P S Sohi.

Members of the Committee absent: None

39 FIRE PRECAUTIONS

The Chairman read out the fire precautions.

40 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 17 November 2015 were confirmed and signed as a correct record.

41 2016 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE LICENSING COMMITTEE

The Committee noted the 2016 Annual Report on matters relating to the operation and administration of the Licensing Act 2003.

Members were provided with statistical information, some of which was also reported annually to the Home Office, as required.

Officers reported that the number of Premises Licences was static at 231, as although 8 new licences were issued in 2015/16, 8 were also surrendered. The number of Temporary Event Notices had increased slightly from 159 to 172 despite the De-Regulation Act. There had been no prosecutions during the year but one premises had received a suspension notice for non-payment of the annual fee.

There were 65 new Personal Licence holders and Members recalled that as a result of the De-Regulation Act making these no longer subject to renewal, a loss of approximately £2,200 per annum would be experienced by the Council in future. Furthermore, because the fees, set by Statute, had not been reviewed since their introduction in 2005, the cost of providing the service had increased and the alcohol licensing account was currently showing a deficit of £37,665. The Committee was advised that Officers had responded to a recent survey issued by the Local Government Association which it was hoped would re-open the issue of being able to set fees locally and at a more realistic level.

In terms of enforcement and inspection, Officers continued to operate a regime based on risk assessment principles, issuing advice where needed to help licensees comply with licensing conditions and requirements under the Licensing Act 2003. This included encouraging attendance at the local Pub Watch meetings. Officers had taken practical steps by writing to all local licensees, stressing the importance of Pub Watch and publicising dates and venues of meetings. It was confirmed that Members of the Committee were welcome to attend the meetings and details would be made available.

With regard to new and proposed legislation, Officers would submit reports to future meetings as and when necessary so that the Council's Licensing Policy and practice remained current and relevant. It was anticipated that the Policing and Crime Bill would

give local authorities greater powers and freedom to better regulate and enforce the Licensing Act 2003. In addition, the Immigration Act 2016, which had recently received Royal Assent would help local authorities ensure that applicants for Personal and Premises Licences were fit and proper and legitimately authorised to work in the UK. Finally, Members' attention was drawn to the Alcohol Wholesaler Registration Scheme being introduced by the Finance Act 2015. This would require all businesses that trade in or retail alcohol to ensure they sourced alcoholic goods from suppliers that were registered with HMRC.

A query was raised with regard to Late Night Refreshment Licences. Officers confirmed that whilst the sale of alcohol and food was licensable, its consumption was not.

The Senior Licensing Officer concluded his report by thanking the staff he worked with which contributed to the smooth running and efficient delivery of the service.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 4.21pm)