

Runnymede Borough Council

LICENSING COMMITTEE

29 June 2021 at 7.30pm

Members of the Committee present: Councillors J Wilson (Chairman), D Cotty (Vice-Chairman)
M Adams, R Bromley, T Burton, M Harnden, M Kusneraitis,
M Maddox, J Olorenshaw and P Snow

Members of the Committee absent: Councillor T Gracey

115 Fire Precautions

The Chairman read the fire precautions which were duly noted.

116 Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting of the Committee held on 10 November 2020 and the Sub-Committee held on 5 January 2021 were confirmed as correct records.

117 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for Absence were recorded from Councillor T Gracey.

118 2021 Annual Report on the Licensing Act 2003

The Committee reviewed the annual report prepared by the Council's Senior Licensing Officer for all matters under the Licensing Act 2003.

Officers advised that the Council's Licensing Policy had been reviewed in 2020 and renewed in January 2021 and that the next formal review would take place in 2026, unless legislative or other change necessitated amendments to it at an earlier stage.

Members noted statistical information with regard to the number of Premises and Personal Licences, temporary event notices (TENs), new applications, and surrendered licences and any variations.

Owing to the pandemic, there had been very few TENs and also a reduction in the number of personal licences; the full effects on the trade would be monitored and form part of the 2022 annual report. It was hoped that businesses would fully recover, noting that there was more use of outdoor facilities utilising the provisions under the Business and Planning Act to issue businesses with pavement licences, thus encouraging a café culture where space permitted. The pandemic had also affected the budget for Licensing, and a report on fees and charges would be submitted to the meeting of the Committee in November 2021.

Officers confirmed that because they had a lot of useful information on the Council's website, time and money had been saved, allowing Officers to focus on assisting applicants and pursuing a risk based framework for intelligence led inspections and enforcement to ensure compliance with the Licensing objectives. Joint working with the Police Licensing Officer was noted and Trading Standards where appropriate; taking an educational role first, unless serious crime was involved. There had been one such case in 2020, where a licence had been revoked, this was appealed but the appeal was eventually withdrawn.

The Committee noted that despite the pandemic, Pubwatch had continued on-line occasionally and had met in person very recently, within Government guidelines. Officers

reported that nearly 40% of the licensed premises in the borough were members of Pubwatch and usually met every 6 weeks to network and share useful information. Members were welcome to attend, and many did. To promote Pubwatch, Officers agreed to ask its organisers for a list of future dates for Councillors to diarise, promote and monitor attendance. Any trends would be reported at a future date.

Members were disappointed to note that the Government was no nearer to the creation of a national database of personal licence holders similar to the one that was in place for the taxi trade.

Officers and the Licensing Team were thanked for their report and work during the year.

Chairman

(The meeting ended at 8pm)