

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE  
LICENSING AND APPEALS COMMITTEE  
HELD ON 17 SEPTEMBER 2013 FROM 7:00PM TO 8:00PM**

*Present:- Barrie Patman (Chairman), Chris Bowring (Vice Chairman), Michael Firmager, Mike Haines, Philip Houldsworth, Abdul Loyes, Ken Miall, Sam Rahmouni, Malcolm Richards, Chris Singleton, Wayne Smith and Dee Tomlin.*

**PART I**

**12. MINUTES**

The Minutes of the meetings of the Committee held on 10 July and 13 August 2013 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**13. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted from Mike Gore and Sue Smith.

**14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Mike Haines and Dee Tomlin declared personal interests in Item 22 – Hearings Update, as they had both recently been involved in a Home to School Transport Appeal Hearing.

**15. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

Mr Carpenter asked the Chairman of the Committee the following question:

“In regards to the aspect of drinking culture in Wokingham, how does Wokingham Borough Council implement national strategies?”

**Answer**

Officers are always reviewing material from Government and using their judgement as to how best to implement changes which can benefit the local residents and the economy. Whenever national policy changes significantly officers report to the Committee and decisions are taken where appropriate. For instance policy may change and be realigned to address new or amended legislation.

When considering drinking culture I would like to summarise the position of the council, in terms of alcohol consumption, to highlight how the Licensing authority and the Committee stay in touch with local issues.

The general consensus is that we do not have a 'problem' in Wokingham and our close working relationship with Thames Valley Police does enable us to deal swiftly with any incidents that get reported. That does not mean that we have no incidents, but given the overall scale of the local late night economy we have a good level of control. Officers are kept informed about undesirable activity through both the police and the trade itself. We have regular contact with the trade through 'Pubwatch', a forum to discuss relevant issues affecting the licensees and the licensing authority. We also receive intelligence reports from local police which we can act on to review licences and ensure that they are fit for purpose. We may receive a couple of notifications per week but none have resulted in our licensing authority taking a formal review.

The general direction of government policy has been to support 'light touch' regulation and allow local people to have a say over local issues. The licensing authority maintain an

open and transparent system for residents to make representation should they be concerned and we work closely with colleagues in Public Health and Trading Standards to look at innovative ways to reduce the burden of ill health through excessive alcohol consumption.'

### **Supplementary Question**

Mr Carpenter asked a supplementary question as follows:

“Does the Chairman feel that Legislation laid down by the Government could be clearer and more concise?”

### **Answer**

It is difficult for Members to judge. We work to the rules. Some Government legislation has its quirks and some makes its way through Parliament at speed. Lately, we have been given advance warning of changes made to enable us to react quickly. We work to the four main Licensing objectives when making decisions.

### **16. MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

There were no Member questions.

### **17. LICENSING ACT 2003 – POLICY REVIEW**

The Committee received a report, as set out on Agenda pages 5 to 27, which set out the consultation undertaken and introduced a draft policy for recommendation to Council for adoption.

**RESOLVED:** That the draft policy attached to the report be recommended to Council for adoption.

### **18. TOURISM AND EMPLOYMENT UPDATE**

The Committee received a report, as set out on Agenda pages 28 and 29, which is required by the Guidance issued under the Licensing Act 2003 and its need which was acknowledged in the adopted Licensing Policy.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

### **19. TAXI ROOF SIGNS**

The Committee received a report, as set out on Agenda pages 30 to 56, which asked Members to consider the consultation results regarding the introduction of a standardised roof top sign for all Hackney Carriage vehicles to enhance Public Safety.

Upon being put to the vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That a standard taxi roof sign for Hackney Carriage vehicles, to include the Council's logo, be introduced.

### **20. HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE DRIVER LICENSING - MEDICALS**

The Committee received a report, as set out on Agenda pages 57 to 73, which asked Members to consider changing the driver medical examination from the Royal Berkshire Occupational Health Service to the drivers' own General Practitioners (GPs).

Members were keen to ensure that any medical certificate was signed by the driver's actual GP and suggested that the form be amended to include a box which said "I am XXXXXX's GP that the GP would have to sign".

Upon being put to the vote, it was:

**RESOLVED:** That:

- 1) it be agreed, in principle, that officers be authorised to consult with the trade and bring the matter back to the December Licensing and Appeals Committee meeting for a final decision; and
- 2) The medical form be amended to include a box for the GP to sign and declare that he/she is the driver's actual GP.

## **21. HEARINGS UPDATE**

Councillors Mike Haines and Dee Tomlin declared personal interests in this item as referred to in Minute 14 above. Both remained in the meeting during the discussion.

The Committee received an update, as set out on Agenda pages 74 and 75, on the outcome of Sub-Committees and Appeal Panels which had taken place since the last meeting of the Licensing and Appeals Committee.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

*These are the Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing and Appeals Committee.*

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