

South Somerset District Council

Minutes of a meeting of the **Licensing Committee** held at the **Council Chamber, Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil BA20 2HT on Tuesday 19 January 2016.**

(10.05 - 10.40 am)

Present:

Members: David Recardo (Chairman)

Clare Aparicio Paul	David Norris
Jason Baker	Wes Read
Val Keitch	David Recardo
Jenny Kenton	Alan Smith
Tony Lock	Linda Vijeh

Also Present:

Peter Gubbins

Officers

Jo Morris	Democratic Services Officer
Nigel Marston	Licensing Manager

Note: All decisions were approved without dissent unless shown otherwise.

23. To approve as a correct record the Minutes of the Previous Meeting held on 13th October 2015 (Agenda Item 1)

The minutes of the meeting held on 13th October 2015, copies of which had been circulated, were taken as read, and having been approved were signed by the Chairman as a correct record of the proceedings.

24. Apologies for Absence (Agenda Item 2)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Neil Bloomfield, Dave Bulmer, Crispin Raikes and Garry Shortland.

In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor Martin Wale, the meeting was chaired by the Vice-Chairman Councillor David Recardo.

25. Declarations of Interest (Agenda Item 3)

There were no declarations of interest.

26. Public Participation at Committees (Agenda Item 4)

There were no members of the public present.

27. Licensing Fees & Charges 2016-17 (Agenda Item 5)

Further to the report considered by the Licensing Committee in June 2015 with regard to Licensing Fees, the Licensing Manager explained that a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group had been established to look at two aspects of the Council's Licensing function:

1. Reviewing the current delegation arrangements with Town Councils. It was noted that a report on termination of the delegation agreement with the Town Councils was approved by Full Council in December; and
2. Adopting a principle of total cost recovery where possible within the service.

He further explained that the statutory fees set by government were not adequate to cover the Council's costs in dealing with applications. Members at the District Executive meeting in December agreed to lobby through the LGA, to request a reassessment of all statutory fees in relation to Licensing.

With regard to discretionary fees which were set locally, the Licensing Manager referred members to the proposed fees and charges to be recommended for inclusion in the budget proposals for 2016/17 as set out in the report. He explained that a lot of work had been undertaken with the finance team to ensure that the Council's costs in providing the Licensing Service were recovered in full.

During the ensuing discussion, the Licensing Manager noted the comments of members and responded to questions on points of detail which included the following:

- A member thanked the Licensing Manager for his comprehensive report;
- In response to a member comment regarding statutory fees, the Licensing Manager explained that there had been a poor response from Licensing Authorities to a government consultation document which looked at capping fees;
- The Licensing Manager explained that costs could be reduced further by streamlining the IT system;
- The Licensing Manager advised that there was always going to be a cost to the authority for providing licensing;
- One member felt that the proposed daily rate fee set for street trading was high and that the average street market trader would suffer by the increase. In response, the Licensing Manager advised that the fees were set to cover the Councils costs. The proposed fees were also in line with other local authority fees. It was agreed that the impact of the increase could be looked at later in the year;
- Members were informed that a Scrutiny Task and Finish Group would be established later in the year to look at the Street Trading Policy;
- Members were advised that the street trading fees did not apply to markets;
- Members noted that the proposed fees would take effect from 1st April.

At the conclusion of the debate, members unanimously approved the recommendations of the report.

- RESOLVED:**
- (1) That the further work carried out by the Licensing Manager and the Financial Services Team be noted;
 - (2) That the set of fees recommended for inclusion in the budget proposals for 2016/17 be agreed.

28. Enforcement Update (Agenda Item 6)

In the absence of the Licensing Enforcement Officer, the Licensing Manager summarised the agenda report, which updated members on the work of the Licensing Enforcement Team and the various issues that they were currently involved with including Taxis, Street Trading and Scrap Metal Dealers.

The Licensing Manager informed members that:

- There were no major reports of violent crimes over the Christmas period and there had been a good police presence;
- A lot of work had been undertaken with the major bars and clubs in Yeovil to ensure that people were properly vetted;
- A successful taxi arrangement had been initiated which meant that taxis could now be directly booked from Club Neo to stop people spilling out onto the street;
- The penalty point scheme was proving to be very successful and there was better behaviour on the taxi ranks as a result;
- The British Transport Police had set up a multi-agency database which was a good step forward in dealing with scrap metal theft.

During the ensuing discussion, the Licensing Manager noted the comments of members and responded on points of detail. Members were informed that the number of complaints received over the last six months was down slightly compared to the previous year and that penalty points operated on a rolling 12 month period. If a taxi driver received 12 points they would have to appear before the Licensing Sub Committee.

Members were content to note the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

29. Date of Next Meeting (Agenda Item 7)

Members noted that the next meeting of the Licensing Committee would be held on Tuesday 12th April 2016 at 10.00am at the Council Offices, Brympton Way, Yeovil.

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Chairman

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Date