

LICENSING COMMITTEE
30th June 2008

Minutes of the meeting of the Licensing Committee of Flintshire County Council held at County Hall, Mold on Monday, 30th June 2008.

PRESENT:

Councillor J.B. Attridge (Chairman),
Councillors S.R. Baker, E. Cook, A.G. Diskin, B. Dunn, J. Forshaw, T.G. James, M.A. Reece, H.G. Roberts and L.A. Sharps.

SUBSTITUTE

Councillor P.G. Heesom for E. Owen.

IN ATTENDANCE

Heath, Safety and Licensing Manager and Democratic Services Manager.

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were received.

2. MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of meeting of the Committee held on 12th November 2007 be approved as a correct record.

3. INTRODUCTION

The Chairman indicated that this was the first meeting of the Licensing Committee since the County Council elections in May and asked those present to introduce themselves.

4. REPORT OF ACTING DIRECTOR OF ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION

The Committee considered the previously circulated report of the Acting Director of Environment and Regeneration which was presented by the Health, Safety and Licensing Manager. The purpose of the report was to update members on progress relating to licensing.

The Chairman had suggested that the meeting be called to allow members to be informed of the current situation with regard to the licensing function.

In presenting the report, the Health, Safety and Licensing Manager identified that the Licensing Committee was responsible for two distinct areas, the Licensing Act 2003 and the Gambling Act 2005. He explained the significance of these. To give an example of the extent of the Licensing function attached as Appendix A of the report was a list of the numbers of Licences/Permit issued. The report also detailed the current staffing levels within the section dealing with the licensing function and he introduced Gemma Brighton, who attended the meeting as an observer, who had recently been appointed as a Senior Licensing Officer.

The Committee was also informed of the working practices of the officers and the relationship that had been built up with the external partners, in particular the North Wales Police. Reference was made to the active liaison arrangements with the Public Protection Section, particularly in relation to pollution control, which dealt with noise issues arising from licensed premises. The role of the Trading Standards department in relation to the licensing function was also explained. As far as current issues were concerned, the ban on smoking in enclosed public places meant that noise and disturbance from customers congregating outside pubs had become a source of complaint and it was suggested that these were likely to increase should we have a warm summer. The Health, Safety and Licensing Manager also referred to issues to gambling licensing and the successful joint operation to seize illegal slot machines in take away food premises across a number of North Wales Authorities, in conjunction with the Gambling Commissioners. He explained the current status of the gambling machines, and advised that as from September 2009 it would be illegal for slot machines to be present in places such a taxi offices and take aways.

The Committee was informed that meetings of the Licensing Sub-Committee were now fairly infrequent because the trade had settled down following the major upheaval of the Act coming into force during 2005 when every premises had to apply for the new licence. He explained that Sub-Committees meetings now only arose if a new premises was setting up or a premises wished to vary their hours or activities and objections were tabled either by residents living in the vicinity or the Responsible Authorities.

He explained that one area that was likely to develop was a Sub-Committee Hearing following application to review a premises' licence. The Committee was informed that this was the

main method by which residents or responsible Authorities could take action if they were concerned by the impact of an existing licensed premises. It was used successfully by the police in 2007 to deal with the unruly behaviour by patrons of the public house and further new applications may be forthcoming in the future.

The leader of the controlling group took the opportunity to welcome the Chairman and wish him well in his new role. In doing so he also referred to the excellent track record of the Licensing Committee which had been ably led by its former Chairman, Councillor Tony Sharps. The Chairman thanked the Member for his comments and also wished to record his thanks to Councillor Sharps for the excellent manner in which he had undertaken his duties and acknowledged that he was well supported by excellent licensing staff. The Chairman reported that he had received excellent reports from throughout the county upon the excellence of the Licensing Service within Flintshire. In concluding he thanked the Members for their attendance and reiterated his view that it was important for members to get together as a Licensing Committee to receive the report presented at this meeting. He reminded members that a training day had been arranged for 8th July 2008 which would cover all aspects of the licensing function.

RESOLVED

That the Report be noted.

DURATION OF THE MEETING

The meeting commenced at 9.30 am and ended at 9.45 am.