

## **Licensing Sub-Committee**

**Minutes of meeting held in Microsoft Teams on 14 August 2020 at 1.00 pm.**

**Present:**

Councillor Liz Boorman (Chair).

Councillors Isabelle Linington and Sean MacLeod.

**Officers in attendance:**

Paul Thornton (Specialist Advisor - Licensing), Michele Wilkinson (Lawyer (Housing & Regulatory)) and Nick Peeters (Committee Officer).

**Also in attendance:**

.

**6 Election of chair of the sub-committee for this meeting**

Councillor Sean Macleod proposed Councillor Liz Boorman as Chair and this was seconded by Councillor Linington.

Councillor Liz Boorman was elected Chair for the duration of the meeting.

**7 Apologies for absence/declaration of substitute members**

There were none.

**8 Declarations of interest**

There were none.

**9 Determination of a Premises Licence application - Secret Campsite**

The Chair of the Licensing Sub Committee welcomed all parties to the hearing.

The Licensing Officer presented the Report to the committee and summarised the Report as follows:

- The licensable activities applied for were the sale of alcohol for Consumption on and off the premises between 0900 – 1100 hours and 1500 – 1930 hours
- Alcohol would only be sold by staff wearing Secret Campsite Uniform at the reception shop between the hours outlined above and the stock of alcohol

would be kept in a locked and secure room.

- The Challenge 25 Policy (amended by condition) would be used and acceptable identification would be a drivers licence, passport, or PASS Card, with signs placed to inform customers about the policy.
- A consultation period took place between 22nd June and 19th July 2020 and as one of the responsible authorities, Sussex Police agreed with the applicant that specific conditions would be placed onto the licence if and when it was granted. These included a Challenge 25 age verification policy, documented staff training and the provision of a refusals register.
- A representation from the owners of a property neighbouring the campsite was received objecting to this application on the grounds relating to noise and anti-social behaviour.
- Following the initial application the applicant agreed with the Specialist Advisor a new condition that "Alcohol would only be sold to those who, at the time of sale, were booked into the site for the purposes of camping".
- In determining the application the Sub Committee was asked to give weight to the representations made, Home Office guidance, the Licensing Policy for Lewes District Council and to address the four licensing objectives
  - Prevention of crime and disorder
  - Public safety
  - Prevention of public nuisance
  - Protection of children from harm
- A representation was a 'relevant representation' if it was about the likely effect of the grant of the licence on the promotion of the licensing objectives. The objector would need to establish that such a consequence was a *likely* effect of a grant (i.e. more probable than not).
- Any decision made by the Sub Committee would be subject to an appeal to the Magistrates' Court by any party involved in the proceedings.

The following point was clarified:

- A representation was withdrawn following the agreement of the condition that alcohol would only be sold to those camping at the site

The Applicant, Mr Tim Bullen, addressed the Sub Committee and highlighted the following points:

- The site was in a quiet location and attracted families. Groups larger than 2 pitches or unaccompanied children were not accepted and there were a total of 18 pitches, with the number of campers on each pitch limited to no

more than 7 and never more than 4 adults.

- The campsite shop sold a range of products which were sourced locally with most originating from Sussex. The campsite had operated since 2012 and was fully booked most weekends from April to September and every night during school holidays.
- The focus of the campsite was to provide a habitat for local wildlife and there were a number of restrictions in place to promote that, which were advertised on the business website and agreed by campers at the point of booking:
  - No groups
  - No music
  - No dogs
  - No cars in the camping areas
  - Quiet time after 10:00pm
- Sussex Wildlife Trust had been instrumental in helping to design the site in a wildlife friendly way. To date, the business had raised in excess of £18,000 which the Trust's work.
- A drinks licence had been applied for to enable the sale of locally sourced products. Campers currently brought their own personal supplies of alcohol, most of which was bought outside of the area. These products would be sold at the campsite reception.
- The condition to only sell to campers who were booked in to camp at the site had been accepted and it fitted in with the business plan for a low density campsite.
- Efforts were made to keep the noise levels low and maintain a peaceful ambience around the site.
- Rewilding projects took place and part time employment had been offered to 5 local students.

Members and officers sought clarification on the following points:

- The sale of alcohol during the hours applied for mirrored those of the reception and allowed campers to make purchases before they left the site for the day.
- The hours of opening for the Campsite reception were 0900 – 1100 and 1500 – 1900. The reception closed at 18:30 for most of the week but stayed open until 1900 on Fridays.
- Mr and Mrs Janes, who neighboured the Campsite, and had made a

representation, addressed the Sub Committee and highlighted the following points:

- The application would increase alcohol consumption and had the potential to encourage anti-social behaviour and additional noise in a residential area.
- The area was well served by retail outlets offering a range of alcohol. Trade was generated locally by accommodation providers, supporting the wider business community & local producers.
- The campsite was already noisy during its eight month season and the proposal to make alcohol readily availability would lead to behaviour that would directly impact on neighbouring properties, particularly in the evenings and into the night when campers socialised.
- There had been incidents of campers trespassing into ancient woodland and alcohol consumption for sale on the site could lead to further issues
- Work with the applicant was ongoing to try to reduce the issues through improved signage, education and implementation of the campsites wildlife buffer zone.
- It was not felt the granting an alcohol licence was a positive development on a site focused on family values.
- Should the application be approved, it was noted that the applicant would accept a condition that a bar area would not be operated and alcohol would only be sold to registered campers.
- It was understood that the retailing of off-sale alcohol would be from the existing Campsite with campers socialising at their pitches or communal areas.
- The applicant stated an intention to relocate the retail of alcohol to a new camping and event hub, with a communal area. There were concerns that this would exacerbate the issues outlined above and create a bar area.

Members sought clarification on the following points:

Mr and Mrs Janes had attempted to deal with any incidents of anti-social behaviour directly with the Campsite owners. However, the Council's Planning and Enforcement teams were aware of the trespass issues.

The Sub Committee adjourned to deliberate at 1.40pm.

The meeting ended at 1.30 pm

Councillor Liz Boorman (Chair)

**FIEL  
D\_F  
ORM  
ATT  
ED\_  
NUM  
BER**

**FIELD\_TITLE**