

AGENDA ITEM NO. 3 (a)

Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing Committee held in Committee Room 2, Nutholt Lane, Ely on Wednesday, 11th May 2016 at 9.30am.

P R E S E N T

Councillor Elaine Griffin-Singh (Chairman)
Councillor Sue Austen
Councillor Mike Bradley
Councillor Paul Cox
Councillor Julia Huffer
Councillor Chris Morris
Councillor Carol Sennitt
Councillor Alan Sharp

OFFICERS

Stewart Broome – Senior Licensing Officer
Maggie Camp – Legal Services Manager
Liz Knox – Environmental Services Manager
Adrian Scaites-Stokes –Democratic Services Officer

54. **APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Councillors Christine Ambrose Smith, Neil Hitchin and Mike Rouse.

55. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

56. **MINUTES**

The Chairman, on behalf of Councillor Neil Hitchin, proposed the following amendment: on page 3, last paragraph – the words ‘in the relationship between the individual and state’ be included between the words ‘a fundamental change’ and ‘ and turned the district...’. This amendment was agreed.

It was resolved:

That the Minutes of the Licensing Committee meeting held on 9th March 2016, as amended, be confirmed as a correct record and be signed by the Chairman.

57. **CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman made no announcements

58. **LICENSING OFFICERS UPDATE**

The Committee considered a report, Q262 previously circulated, which updated the Licensing Committee on the work of officers.

Taxi Trade

The Senior Licensing Officer advised the Committee that a taxi trade meeting had been held on 11th March with eight representatives attending. A number of issues were discussed with two given prominence. The first related to enforcement in Ely city centre on Friday and Saturday nights. This was in response to concerns from the trade about some people taking advantage of the 'free-for-all' situation. The second referred to offering rank space in rural areas of the district. This was not dealt with by this Council and would have to be activated by the trade itself.

Councillor Mike Bradley questioned where the taxi trade were thinking of having these other taxi ranks. If a place was set for taxis in rural areas then people would know where to find a taxi. How much would it cost to set these up?

The Senior Licensing Officer explained that no specific areas had been mentioned, apart from Soham. The Ely rank was only just adequate and could be overrun with vehicles, even though the overall number of taxis had not increased and there had been no complaints received from either the trade or the public. The trade thought that there was no provision outside Ely and this could be considered, although taxis could stop in certain areas where there were no restrictions. There was no evidence to indicate that this was required outside of Ely. This Council did not deal with that matter, as it was a County Council issue. However, the trade could come to this Council to put its case if it wished. Setting up a taxi rank was not cheap, costing possibly as much as £20,000, as it would have to include public consultation on the proposals.

With regards the call for enforcement, some enforcement would be scheduled in for Friday and Saturday nights. This should help address the problems with people parking where they should not and help settle things down. Taxis had to line up in their ranks but the public were not obliged to use the first in the rank.

Councillor Sue Austen noted that the taxi drivers wanted this enforcement but was concerned that the night time economy in Ely went through to 3 a.m. The Senior Licensing Officer acknowledged that this had been requested by the trade so the Council would undertake some enforcement work in response, until 3 a.m. on occasion. The Council would not have to issue hundreds of suspension notices to get a reaction to improve the situation.

Councillor Alan Sharp thought that the villages in the south of the district would be too small to warrant taxi ranks. People tended to look to Newmarket to provide taxi services or to use private hire.

Lotteries

New rules had been introduced from 1st May and officers were out giving advice where needed.

It was noted that in paragraph 3.3 of the report the word 'not' should have been included between the words 'We have' and 'seen any impact...'.

Street Trading

A number of new applications had been received following the Committee's recent decision. More applications had been received from mobile and static traders as well as for events.

Councillor Elaine Griffin-Singh asked whether these applications would have been received before the recent decisions had been made and whether mobile traders secured specific routes to trade on. The Senior Licensing Officer stated that the applications from static traders were from new people, so these had been stimulated by the new policy. The mobile traders tended to be established traders in the district that had not been captured before. They were used to paying relevant fees in other areas where they traded. There was an in-built protection of spaces where they could stop and trade but this was determined overall by a 'proliferation of trade' rule.

Twelve records were pending processing, some of these were for events together with eight or nine other applications. People had been very positive about the change and there had been no issues brought up.

Suspensions

The good news was that the trend for the number of suspensions was going down. So it appeared that people had re-acted to the more professional approach adopted by the licensing team.

Animal Licensing

The Council currently did not have an animal licensing policy. One was being worked on and would be presented to the July meeting of this Committee to agree consultation. The aim was to get the policy adopted for implementation on 1st January 2017.

Annual Fees

Data for these were still being collected.

Scrap Metal Licensing

This responsibility was migrating to the licensing team to deal with, though it would still work alongside Environmental Health on his issue.

Councillor Elaine Griffin-Singh questioned whether this work had been moved over due to the greater efficiency of the licensing department. The Senior Licensing Officer thought that collectively, due to the decisions made and actions taken, this had freed up time enabling this additional work to be taken on.

The Environmental Services Manager advised the Committee that the licensing team's Service Delivery Plan would be reported to Regulatory & Support Services Committee on 13th June. All targets for 2015/16 had been achieved and the licensing team had over-achieved. Income had also increase over the year to over £10,000 and it was anticipated that fee income would also increase next year.

The report was noted.

60. **FORWARD AGENDA PLAN**

The meeting scheduled for June was cancelled due to lack of business.

The forward agenda plan was noted.

The meeting closed at 10.01am.