

Licensing Committee

Thursday, 29 September 2016

7:30pm

Present:

Cllr Harold Craske (Chair)

Cllrs: Karen Hurdle
Sara Langdale
John Loughlin
Jordan Meade
Leslie Pearton
Peter Scollard
Lyn Milner
Valerie Ashenden
Les Howes
Michael Wenban

Sarah Kilkie	Assistant Director (Communities)
Mark Lees	Licensing Manager
Jane Blade	Compliance Manager, Gambling Commission
Emily Lane-Blackwell	Licensing Officer
Ben Clarke	Committee & Scrutiny Assistant (Minutes)

45. Apologies

An apology of absence was received from Cllr Steve Thompson, Cllr Gurjit Bains and Cllr Lesley Boycott (Vice-Chair).

46. Minutes

The Minutes of the meeting held on 07 March 2016 were signed by the Chair.

47. Declarations of Interests

The Chair declared a personal non-prejudicial interest in that his son is the Director of Communications at the Association of British Bookmakers.

48. Gambling Commission Overview and Update

The Compliance Manager, Gambling Commission gave a presentation to the Committee on what the Gambling Commission are and their work around the UK (please see supplementary).

Following Members questions the Compliance Manager, Gambling Commission explained that:

- All staff that work in gambling shops have to be trained to spot potentially vulnerable people. They should notice tell-tale signs like long periods spent in shops, repeated cash withdrawals from ATMs, smell of alcohol, shouting and swearing at machines etc. They also have a legal requirement to interact with any person they think has a gambling problem
- Self-exclusion does work once someone has self-excluded themselves from a premises, such as a betting shop, then that proprietor can inform other similar premises in the vicinity so that the exclusion applies there also. This information sharing may be carried out by means of an app provided by the trade body.
- A new optional feature is being implemented within the next 6-8 months where you can self-exclude yourself not only from all betting shops in the area, but also from other types of gambling premises such as arcades and bingo halls
- Operators themselves can also chose to exclude problem gamblers
- Online gambling is regulated in the UK and some illegal gambling websites have been shut down. Regulation and enforcement of overseas remote operators presents difficulties but new strategies and procedures are being developed and introduced.

The Chair thanked the Compliance Manager, Gambling Commission for an informative presentation.

Members **noted** the information contained within the presentation.

49. 'When A Licensing Officer Calls'

The Licensing Officer gave a detailed presentation to the Committee on the roles of the Licensing Officer and maintaining proper standards in Gravesham (please see supplementary).

The Licensing Officer expanded and gave further information not included on some of the slides from her presentation:

Licence Plates

- A white licence plate means it is a Taxi for hire vehicle
- A yellow licence plate means it is a private hire vehicle
- A green licence plate means the vehicle can only be used for school runs
- All plates must be visibly attached to the rear of the vehicle at all times unless the driver has an exemption form which is granted by GBC under special circumstances – this allows for the plate to be stored elsewhere in the vehicle

What else do I want to see on inspection?

- For all premises and clubs that hold a licence under the Licensing Act 2003, it is mandatory to have both the current owner and designated premises supervisor 's (DPS) names on the licence otherwise it cannot remain open
- All establishments must have age verification policies in place in case children try to get in and/or purchase alcohol
- If a premises provides gaming machines they must hold the relevant permit. All taxi vehicles must have CCTV inside, a sticker informing customers that there is CCTV, no smoking signs as well as a first aid kit and fire extinguisher somewhere in the vehicle. This is all checked on regularly

- Betting Premises can only have a maximum of four fixed odds betting terminal (FOBT) machines. as well as no drinking (alcohol) and age verification policies
- Scrap metal sites must have a licence and fully document all metal sales and purchases.
- A sex shop must have any windows that can be looked through into the inside of the shop by passers-by. There must be clear signs clarifying that no one under 18 may enter and clear prices on all products.; Refreshments are not allowed to be served on site

Safer Gravesham and Stronger Gravesham

- The Licensing team are part of the Gravesham Safety Advisory Group (SAG) and offer advice on making events safer and making sure they meet the licensing requirements
- Taxi drivers are informed when events are on and when there are severe traffic delays.
- The Safer Socialising Awards inspections, both renewals and new applications are in progress.; A team of officers from licensing, trading standard and the police inspect the premises and give them the award if they meet the criteria

The Licensing Manager advised Members of the following information with regard to the:

Sound and Self-Sufficient Council objective

- As of 2003, clubs and premises have had to pay an annual fee to the local Council to operate. Since 2012 the law was amended so that if the fee remains unpaid 21 days past the deadline, then their licence may be suspended
- So far around 20 have been suspended in Gravesham this year. Annual fee invoices have now been set up as automated PIMs.(periodic invoice masters) , to go out 2 weeks before the payment deadline. It is hoped that this will improve timely payments.
- GBC are looking to purchase a new online system for the Taxi Street Knowledge Tests which will be a more efficient process than the current manual system ‘
- la ID’s badges for the Taxi Drivers and other licence holders, will now incorporate embedded logos for increased security
- Online DBS checks are being investigated as a possible future efficiency improvement

Following questions from Members the Licensing Manager and Licensing Officer clarified that:

- All Taxi drivers are DBS checked (previously CRB checks) before they become drivers
- Taxi drivers do not need to pass an English language test, however they do need to pass a written exam which is in English
- The penalty point system in place for drivers and operated by the Licensing Team places points on their council driver licence not their DVLA licence

The Chair thanked the officers for an informative presentation.

Members **noted** the information within the presentation.

Close of meeting

The meeting ended at 9:05pm.