

## **Royal Tunbridge Wells Town Forum**

Sub-Committee: Licensing Forum

Subject: Update to Town Forum on 26<sup>th</sup> October 2005

Following a meeting held on the 20<sup>th</sup> October 2005 I am pleased to give a brief description summarising the Terms of Reference with Objectives and requests of the Licensing Committee of the Town Forum.

### **Terms of Reference**

- To maintain a two-way communication with the Council and to provide input on the best way to keep good relationships with Licensees and the public.
- To keep the Town Forum and residents informed on the Licensing Act and how it impacts upon the sale of food and alcohol and also entertainment.
- To ensure that there will be an efficient, simple and effective means to make a complaint about transgressions of the Act.
- To represent the views of the public, and other bodies if relevant, on the impact of the Act and its application on Tunbridge Wells. – Particular reference is made to noise, drunkenness, cost to the taxpayer, litter and violence.
- To be seen to act in the interests of the Public and Licensee. How do you stop “Binge Drinking” while ensuring a quality night out?

### **Objectives**

- To gain an insight into the workings of the Licensing Committee of the Council.
- To understand how the process of reviewing a license is undertaken and what steps the Council would take in the event of a Licensee being in breach of their license BEFORE the license would be varied.
- To become aware of what changes to the Act are proposed and how they will impact upon current and future licenses granted.
- To investigate and understand how the Public can challenge decisions made by Licensing Committees.
- To know exactly what the immediate vicinity is with reference to the Licensee.
- To establish understanding as to how you can complain if you are not in the immediate vicinity.
- To keep abreast of events as they occur.

## **Requests/Requirements**

- That the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council provides a quality support in the event of the Public reporting disturbances and abuses of the law. This support should be in the form of:
  - A telephone number which should be answered by an officer of the Council at any time of the day or night, with specific requirements covering the time from 6.00pm to 2.00am Thursday to Sunday.
  - All complaints, which could come via the Public, Councillors, the Police etc; to be logged by an officer of the Council, who should then maintain a clear record of all complaints.
  - All Complainants should be kept fully informed.
  - Such complaint log should be accessible for members of the Public and Councillors to read.
  
- That the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council ensure a good two-way communication with the Police and Councillors and that they ensure that members of the Public are not passed from pillar to post in the event of an incident, which may involve either the Police or the Council.
- That the Council propose to all Landlords to set up a communication channel so that Landlords can report to each other that certain individuals have been causing disturbances. This is no different to retailers keeping each other informed of shoplifters. That the Council impress upon the Landlord their responsibility to the community in the immediate area.
- That the Tunbridge Wells Borough Council employs a Duty Officer, who shall be responsible for dealing with suspected infringements of licensing conditions. This officer could be the person who maintains the log of complaints. It is observed that Westminster, Brighton and Eastbourne Councils have appointed such officers. As Licensees pay business rates and monies for obtaining licenses then funding should be ring fenced to pay such officers. Kent County Council and/or Tunbridge Wells Borough Council to take such action.
- In reviewing licenses there must be a clear accountable process, which must be seen to take into the views of the Public. Areas of considerable concern include loud activity as a direct result of additional alcohol being consumed. As we have so many large pubs in the Town Centre there must be an acknowledgement of the fact that noise created is even louder at night and consequently prevents people from sleeping etc. Entertainment licenses must therefore be strictly controlled while taking into account the views of the Public.

Thank you.

The Licensing Sub-Committee is open to all comments and suggestions.

Christopher Thomas  
on behalf of The Licensing Sub-Committee