

Minutes of a meeting of the **Licensing Committee** of the Purbeck District Council held in the Council Chamber, Westport House, Wareham on Wednesday 6 March 2019 at 9.15am.

Present:-

Councillor Mark Unsworth (Chairman)

Councillors David Budd, Laura Miller, Bill Pipe, Barry Quinn, Carol Tilling and Mike Whitwam

Officers in attendance for all or part of the meeting: Ian Carter, Licensing Officer; Karen Poole, Licensing Assistant and Sonia Stickley, Democratic and Electoral Services Officer

(Note: These minutes have been prepared by officers as a record of the meeting and of any decisions reached. They are to be considered and confirmed at the next meeting of the Licensing Committee).

22.18/19 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Morris.

23.18/19 **Urgent items**

There were no urgent items.

24.18/19 **Public participation time**

No members of the public attended for this item.

25.18/19 **Minutes**

**Resolved** that the minutes of the meeting held on 5 December 2018 be taken as read, confirmed and signed by the Chairman.

26.18/19 **Declarations of Interest by Members**

There were no disclosures of pecuniary interest for this meeting.

27.18/19 **Pleasure Boat Licensing – review of licence conditions**

The Licensing Officer presented a report considering amendments to the current licence conditions for pleasure boats. Section 94 of the Public Health Acts Amendments Act 1907 empowered the Local Authority to issue licences for pleasure boats subject to such terms and conditions as seen fit. Two licensed pleasure boat operators had requested that the Council removed the licensing conditions currently imposed in respect of lifejackets being worn by under 16's whilst on board category 2 boats.

Under existing conditions there was a requirement that lifejackets were worn by all children under the age of 16 and the need for that was questioned by both

operators. Research had been carried out and following contact with other parties including the RNLI, the coastguard and other boat operators it was found that all agreed it was a necessity to have access to suitable lifejackets but there was no requirement to force passengers to wear them. The conditions appeared to be out of step with other legislation. Following further communication with the RNLI, coastguard and other boat operators it was suggested that a more risk assessment based system would be a better way to determine the need and the operators agreed they would make the lifejackets available and correctly stowed and signposted but trust to the professionalism of the operators to gauge the conditions to which people would be asked to wear them and would allow anyone wanting to wear a lifejacket to do so. A set of new conditions had been produced as Appendix 3 to the report with an amendment on page 3 item 5.2 condition 3 with the words “(category 1 boats only)” at the end of “Lifejackets must be worn by all children ...” being added and a new condition inserted on page 4 condition 8.

The Licensing Officer reminded the Committee that Category 1 boats were those boats occupied only by the hirer, such as kayaks and canoes. Most were now covered by the Adventure Activity Licensing Act.

The Licensing Officer confirmed that Category 1 boats did not go beyond the Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) line.

**Resolved** that the existing Pleasure Boats: Conditions of Licence be replaced with the conditions attached as Appendix 3 to the report.

## 28.18/19 **Licensing update report**

The Licensing Officer presented an update report on the activities of the Council’s Licensing Team and general licensing matters. This provided information on the number of applications received for each of the regimes administered by the Licensing Team between October and December 2018, as well as details of the number of licences in force and notices for the same period.

It was reported that in all areas of licensing apart from boat licensing levels were back up to where they were at 2016. There had been a drop in 2017 due to the software change for the methods for recording. The information shown was for applications received, notices given and service requests and did not reflect the amount of interaction with the public through general calls to the office and requests for information. It was reported that the team were very busy.

The highlights of the service requests received were non-compliance with conditions by a licenced club premises, which had resulted in an application being received to change part of the premises to a premises licence and thereby removed the problems; poor driving standards by taxi drivers overcharging, illegally plying for hire, inappropriate behaviour and the incorrect display of a plate by licensed drivers. Only two were found to have occurred. The inappropriate behaviour resulted in a warning letter being served upon the taxi driver who wrote a letter of apology to the person concerned and also to the licensing authority. The incorrect display of a vehicle plate had been resolved.

In answer to a Member’s question, it was explained no increase in applications had been seen leading up to the local government review externally. The intensity of work came from internal requests rather than external. There had not been many new applications received. Purbeck was the first authority to give out information to

taxi drivers, to inform them of what was going to happen as soon as it was known. Delivery of samples of the new taxi plates had been taken that showed the Dorset Council's logo and referred to taxis in the Purbeck zone. This would stay until things were changed as the council progresses.

All districts had individual zones and were allowed to operate outside of those areas. A hackney carriage could operate as a private hire vehicle anywhere. As members were aware consultation was taking place to a response saying that they wanted to allow any local authority to take action against any authority licensed vehicle within their area. At the moment in direct relation to Dorset the situation would be as it was before; taxis with a West Dorset zone plate would not be allowed to park on hackney ranks within Purbeck zone. There was a period of two years from the date of the council merger for these policies to be looked at. Purbeck's Taxi Policy was revamped two years ago.

A member expressed his hope that the Taxi Forum was carried forward as it had a positive effect cutting down the amount of time spent dealing with repetitive questions. The Licensing Officer confirmed that the Taxi Forum had been a very positive step and it was decided that future dates would be set and the Taxi Forum would continue along with the Event Advisory Panels for the Licensing Act until further notice.

In response to a Member's question the Licensing Officer reported that two scrap metal merchant applications had moved their operations outside of the district. There were only two businesses now in Purbeck, one being a collector and one operator who had a storage base of metal; they would possibly locate outside of the district. Most of the people who came through were either from Weymouth and Portland or Poole.

**Resolved** that the update report be noted.

The Chairman thanked the Licensing Committee members for their support and mentioned all past Chairmen and Vice Chairmen and members of the Committee over the years.

Thanks were also given to the Licensing Officer and Licensing Assistant for all their work and the excellent quality of reports presented; and to Democratic Services for their support.

The Licensing Officer thanked the Committee for their genuine interest and support which had been very much appreciated.

The meeting ended at 9.34am.

Chairman