

## **LICENSING LIAISON PANEL – 3 December 2007**

**PRESENT** Councillor Iris Smith, Councillor Edward Smith, Stephen Culleton, Keith Ogden, Janet Brereton, Irene Riding, Dave Leadbetter (MAPS), Inspector Ian Roberts, Sergeant Andy Walton, Sergeant Tony Bushell, Antony Price, Brian Crompton, Phil and Lynne Cooper, David Hamer, Peter Verhaege, Yaqoob Illahi.

**APOLOGIES:** Neil Kirkham (Public Health Technical Officer)

### **MATTERS ARISING FROM LAST MEETING**

The issue of decking outside two town centre premises was raised following the adoption of the Pavement Café Design Guide. Irene Riding said that the Design Guide would now need to be implemented and agreed to ask about the decking issue within the Economic Regeneration Section.

#### **1 INTRODUCTION OF NEW LICENSING MANAGER**

Councillor Iris Smith introduced Stephen Culleton, the new Licensing Manager, and he said that he was looking to move Licensing forward to enable people to safely and legally carry about their business. He said that he was happy to meet with anyone with an interest in Licensing and discuss any issues.

As there were a number of new people at the meeting, everyone introduced themselves.

#### **2 TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ACT/FIXED PENALTY SYSTEM**

Keith Ogden outlined the problems regarding parking on the Hackney Carriage Rank in High Street to Sergeant Andy Walton and a general discussion followed. Sergeant Walton said that he would look at building these issues into his future plans/operations and educating staff on taxi related issues. This could include police officers asking motorists to move on and offering words of advice if they were parked on the Hackney Carriage Rank. One panel member brought up a recent incident where two hackney carriage drivers who had waited temporarily on the disabled bay opposite the rank because the rank was full one evening had been told to move on by a police constable. Sergeant Walton agreed that if the Rank was full a bottleneck could be caused. He offered to give his contact details to the panel member so that details of incidents could be collated.

Keith Ogden also asked about making off without payment and whether it would be covered by the new Criminal Act. It was agreed that it was.

Dave Leadbetter and Keith Ogden informed everyone that they intend to work together before and after the Christmas period to run operations targeting illegal plying for hire etc. It was agreed that this was not a large problem but one which should be looked at.

#### **3 DROP-OFF IN TRADE**

Janet Brereton explained that at the last meeting a general discussion on this had led to an invitation being extended to Economic Regeneration to attend the next meeting to discuss plans for improving the day-time and night-time economy. Irene Riding informed everyone that there was a 10-year Town Centre Strategy in place and had brought copies outlining these plans. She explained that the empty shops in Market

Street, including the former McDonalds and Grahams site had initially had a multi-sales type shop in the pipeline but there was some uncertainty as to whether this was now going ahead. She continued to say that a consultant had recently been appointed to carry out an Audit and Design Strategy of the Town Centre.

The Council runs regular Town Centre Workshops and a recent workshop had asked people to come up with ideas for an evening culture and Irene Riding gave some examples such as holding a beer/music festival, late day parking prices, cinema and bowling alley. The Council were hoping to appoint a Town Centre Manager soon who would be responsible for looking at these issues. The Pavement Café Design Guide had been adopted to enhance the Town Centre and the markets were being developed and advertised. Discussion followed concerning the drop-off in trade which was highlighted by the private hire operators taking fares outside Chorley to neighbouring towns/cities, issues of supermarkets being able to sell alcohol at cheap prices, free parking at developments such as Middlebrook, smoke-free legislation and a perceived lack of people wishing to invest in Chorley.

Councillor E Smith asked about involvement on the Town Centre Workshops and Irene Riding confirmed that private hire/hackney carriage and representatives from the trade were invited to the meetings. She said that as a rule members of the public (customers) were not usually invited but agreed that it may be useful to incorporate raising these issues on other panels that included members of the public.

Stephen Culleton pointed out that the Licensing Section had an important role to play in enabling businesses to thrive. A member of Licensing was always invited to attend the Town Centre Forum.

#### **4 ELIGIBILITY TO WORK IN UK**

Janet Brereton informed everyone that whilst there was a responsibility for employers to check whether their employees had a right to work in the UK, the Council were looking at checking documents before a licence to drive is issued and the views of the panel members were being sought. The main documents required, such as passport, are already produced at the time of a CRB check and in most cases this is sufficient information. A report would be taken to a Licensing Committee in the New Year.

A question was asked regarding driving experience and Keith Ogden replied that normally a UK driving licence would need to have been held for 3 years. If a driver had less experience he/she would appear before the Licensing Committee and each case would be looked at on its individual merits. Keith Ogden also pointed out that criminal checks were requested for up to 5 years if an applicant had lived out of the UK during that time.

#### **5 NEW APPLICANTS FOR PRIVATE HIRE/HACKNEY CARRIAGE DRIVERS**

Steve Culleton outlined changes he wished to introduce to streamline the application process for new private hire/hackney carriage drivers. He would report back with more details at a later date.

#### **6 LICENSING – ENFORCEMENT VISITS**

Steve Culleton gave details of changes he wished to introduce regarding enforcement visits for premises. This would be in conjunction with the police, fire

officer and A & E and any other responsible authorities. He would report back in the New Year with further details.

## **7 SMOKE FREE LEGISLATION**

Details were given regarding alleged smoking in licensed premises. Janet Brereton read out an email from Neil Kirkham (Public Health Technical Officer) which stated that in order for him to gather evidence, he needed to be made aware of incidents as they happened. Janet Brereton agreed to find contact details for Neil. Steve Culleton said he would look into obtaining authorisation for the Licensing Enforcement Officer to be able to act if he witnessed anything.

## **8 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

- 8.1 **Traffic Lights at Hartwood Roundabout** - A panel member asked if there was any possibility of the traffic lights at the Hartwood roundabout being part-time. Janet Brereton reminded everyone that she had written earlier in the year and was told by LCC that this was not possible due to the design of the road layout. Discussion followed and it was agreed that Janet Brereton write to LCC asking if the traffic lights could be changed to vehicle actuation at night.
- 8.2 **Disabled Discrimination Act** – A panel member inquired about this and pointed out that there had been some changes in opinion regarding wheelchair accessible fleets and that a mixed fleet can sometimes meet the needs of the disabled public better. Keith Ogden said that a survey for unmet demand would be required next year and that wheelchair access could be included in that survey. Discussion followed and it was agreed an item be put on the next agenda for this panel.
- 9 **DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING** – the next meeting has been arranged for Monday 4 February 2008 at 10.30am in the Committee Room, Town Hall, Chorley.