

MINUTES OF LICENSING PANEL MEETING - MONDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2022

Present:

Councillors

Coleman

Hutton

O'Hara

In Attendance:

Sarah Chadwick, Democratic Governance Senior Advisor

Sharon Davies, Senior Licensing Solicitor

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN

The Licensing Panel considered the appointment of a Chairman for the meeting.

Resolved:

That Councillor Hutton be appointed Chairman for the meeting.

2 DECLARATION OF INTEREST - LICENSING

There were no declarations of interest.

3 PROCEDURE FOR THE MEETING

The Chairman explained the procedure for the meeting, including the order in which the application and representations would be heard and that each party would be allocated 20 minutes to present their case.

4 APPLICATION TO VARY A PREMISES LICENCE - HAPPY SHOPPER, 234 DICKSON ROAD

The Licensing Panel considered an application to vary the Premises Licence for Happy Shopper, 234 Dickson Road, to extend the terminal hour for off sales of alcohol by one hour from 23.00 to midnight. Mr Sudheesh Pallikulangara, director of the applicant company Sudi BB Ltd, was in attendance accompanied by his agent Mr Mark Marshall. Objections had been received from two members of the public, Mr Mark Courtney and Ms Katie Barker, who attended to present their representations.

Mr Marshall presented the case on behalf of the applicant. The premises was a convenience store / off licence which was situated outside of the Cumulative Impact Assessment area. Consultation had taken place with Lancashire Constabulary and the Licensing Authority prior to the application being submitted and the Panel's attention was drawn to the additional conditions offered in regards to CCTV and a proof of age policy which as a result had attracted no objections from any of the Responsible Authorities.

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Mr Pallikulangara was described as an experienced operator who had a controlling interest in seven other similar stores across the Fylde coast. The premises had been acquired in March 2022 and had recently undergone refurbishment and would be operated by a small team of dedicated staff and an operational manager who worked across the other stores in the group. Addressing the Panel directly Mr Pallikulangara explained the circumstances of the incidents highlighted in the objections which had taken place during daytime trading hours and related to thefts from the premises for which he had been a victim rather than a perpetrator of crime.

Mr Marshall concluded by advising the Panel that two Temporary Event Notices had recently been applied for to test the proposed later opening hours which had passed without incident. He therefore considered that there would be no adverse impact on the licensing objectives if the extended hours were approved and so invited the Panel to grant the application.

Mr Courtney presented the representations on behalf of himself and Ms Barker. He explained that the premises was situated in an area with a number of residential properties as well as business premises and which had a strong community spirit. There were drop in centres in the local vicinity for recovering alcoholics and ex-offenders and Mr Courtney expressed concern over the proposed later hours which could attract undesirable customers after other nearby stores had closed. Whilst they welcomed the investment in the premises, in his and Ms Barker's opinion there was no need for the hours to be extended and the later closing time was inappropriate for the area. They therefore requested that the Panel refused the application.

Members carefully considered the information provided by all parties. The residents' objections were acknowledged however the Panel was mindful that it could not consider "need" and had to base its decision on evidence of the impact of the proposed variation upon the licensing objectives. It was noted that no representations had been submitted by any of the responsible authorities and members considered that the theft incidents referred to in the residents' objections were typical of any retail premises and not related to poor management. The Panel therefore concluded that there was insufficient evidence to refuse the application based upon the licensing objectives and therefore agreed to grant the variation.

Resolved:

To grant the application to vary the Premises Licence for Happy Shopper, 234 Dickson Road, Blackpool.

Chairman

(The meeting ended 10.33 am)

Any queries regarding these minutes, please contact:
Sarah Chadwick Democratic Governance Senior Advisor

MINUTES OF LICENSING PANEL MEETING - MONDAY, 7 NOVEMBER 2022

Tel: 01253 477153

E-mail: sarah.chadwick@blackpool.gov.uk