

Minutes

Licensing Committee
Friday, 13 August 2021



SOUTH
KESTEVEN
DISTRICT
COUNCIL

Committee members present

Councillor Mrs Pam Bosworth
(Chairman)
Councillor Harrish Bisnauthsing
Councillor George Chivers
Councillor Mrs Rosemary Kaberry-Brown

Councillor Philip Knowles
Councillor Lee Steptoe
Councillor Dean Ward (Vice-Chairman)
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Officers

Mandy Braithwaite (Legal Executive)
Chris Clarke (Licensing Officer)
Graham Watts (Head of Democratic Services)

1. Register of attendance and apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Robert Broughton, Helen Crawford, Jane Kingman and Nikki Manterfield. All other members of the Committee were present, as expected.

2. Disclosure of interests

No disclosures of interest were made.

3. Application to renew a Sexual Entertainment Venue Licence at Taboo Gentleman's Club, 99A Westgate, Grantham. NG31 6LE

The Licensing Officer presented report number ENV 784 relating to an application to renew a sexual entertainment venue licence at Taboo Gentleman's Club, 99A Westgate, Grantham, NG31 6LE.

It was reported that the applicant had operated a sexual entertainment venue from these premises from 2012, up to the renewal application being submitted on 29 June 2021.

Three objections to the application had been received from two members of the public, the content of which were noted as follows:

- the locality of the establishment and the refurbishment of the Market Square in recent years;
- welfare concerns of those attending the establishment;
- concern for the welfare of the dancers/performers;
- possible links to crime, in all forms.

No objections had been received from Lincolnshire Police as the only responsible authority required to be served with a copy of the application.

The Chairman invited Mr Kent, representing the applicant, to present the application. The following points were noted as part of his presentation:

- the application should be treated as a new application as opposed to a renewal. Previous renewals had been granted upon their expiration, however, in relation to Covid-19 there had been uncertainty as to when the venue could be safely re-opened. It was for this reason that the submission of the application had been delayed but it was important that, if granted, this did not take effect from the date of the expiration of the previous licence and was instead effective from the date it was granted. Otherwise, the applicant only benefitted from the renewal for a proportion of the year as opposed to a full year;
- the premises had been licenced continuously since 2012 until April 2021 without any problems as far as statutory authorities were concerned;
- the premises had been closed for a period of 17 months due to the Covid-19 pandemic;
- at the time of the first consideration of the application in 2012 there were two objections from members of the public and one objection from Lincolnshire Police. The objection from the Police was in response to the proposed closure time of 6am and having met with representatives of the Police a compromise was agreed, with the application granted. Opening hours had since been extended and this application sought the same opening hours as those previously granted;
- the same conditions applied to this application as that previously granted, with the same owner and management team in place operating the business;
- objections received from members of the public primarily related to locality and the morals of the individuals putting forward representations, which he claimed were not valid grounds of objection. In terms of the locality, the same comments had been submitted in 2012 regarding financial investment in the town centre and the detrimental impact this venue would have on the character of the area. There had been no significant change in the character of the area since 2012 and this business had been operational continuously since then until April 2021, therefore, he felt that this suggestion was unjustified;
- the premises served the late night economy and was only open from 10pm until 4am. It was a very discreet operation and passers by would only see two doormen outside, which was the same for any other licensing establishment operating in the town centre at similar hours;

- there was no evidence to substantiate the claim that the premises had an adverse impact on the character of the area;
- the welfare of people employed to work at the premises was of no concern. They voluntarily worked there, were employed through an agency where relevant checks were undertaken regarding the right to work, together with additional checks and procedures undertaken by the club's management team prior to offering employment;
- there were no other sexual entertainment venues of this type in the town of Grantham, so it could not be claimed that this premises exceeded a number considered by the Local Authority as inappropriate;
- the internal layout of the venue had been updated during its closure over the past 17 months which had resulted in the re-positioning of the bar and a podium. It was emphasised that the entrance to the club had two sets of double doors to obscure the view of anyone passing by. However, even with both sets of doors open it would not be possible for passers by to see the podium. A plan of the layout of the building was made available to Members of the Committee.

The Chairman invited Members of the Committee to ask any questions following presentation of the application.

A concern was expressed regarding people trafficking and ensuring that people employed by the club had the right to work, but this had been addressed satisfactorily as part of the presentation.

A question was raised as to the location of a smoking area for employees. It was noted that this was located at the front of the premises. Anyone using this facility would be required to be appropriately dressed, normally wearing coats.

It was noted that there were no objectors present at the meeting.

As a closing statement the Licensing Officer reminded the Committee that it could renew the application as applied for, renew the application with modifications and/or additional conditions or refuse the renewal. If having considered the renewal application and decided to refuse it, the Committee must provide the applicant with the reasons for the decision taking in writing. The mandatory grounds and discretionary grounds set out in the report would need to be taken into consideration as part of the Committee's deliberations.

Mr Kent, as a closing statement, reported that he had been through the law and associated criteria in respect of this application and in its submission was of the view that there were no valid grounds to refuse the application and that there was no evidence of any problems ever having occurred in respect of operating under previous licencing arrangements.

In deliberating the application, taking into account the Licensing Officer's report and all representations made at the meeting, it was proposed, seconded and AGREED that an application for a sexual entertainment venue licence for Taboo Gentleman's Club at 99a Westgate, Grantham, be granted.

Decision:

That the application for a new sexual entertainment venue licence for Taboo Gentleman's Club at 99a Westgate, Grantham, be granted.

Councillor Lee Steptoe requested that his abstention from voting in relation to this application be recorded in the minutes.

- 4. Any other business which the Chairman, by reason of special circumstances, decides is urgent.**

No other business was considered.

The meeting closed at 11:43.