
CENTRAL LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE, 12.05.09

Present: Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams (Chairman);
Councillors Louise Hughes and Ieuan Roberts

Also present: Sion Huws (Propriety Officer), Amlyn ab Iorwerth (Licensing Manager), Heilyn Williams (Licensing Officer) and Barbara Owen (Committee Officer).

Others invited to the Meeting:

Representing the Police: Sergeant Wynne Lane

Applicants: Gwyndaf Hughes (Secretary of Bala Rugby Club); Tony Parry (Chairman of the Club); Edwina Jones Evans (Club Supervisor)

Objectors: Eifion Roberts, Vice-chairman of Bala Town Council; Islwyn Pritchard Jones, Bala Mayor; Mr Joe Jordan; Mr Derek Evans.

Local Member: Councillor Dylan Edwards

1. APPLICATION FOR PREMISES LICENCE FOR BALA RUGBY CLUB

Submitted – the report of the Licensing Manager on the application on behalf of Bala Rugby Club for a licence for live and recorded music, dance and supply of alcohol between 11.00 and 1.00 and late night refreshments, with the premises open until 2.00am.

It was reported that a letter had been received from the local Member, Cllr. Dylan Edwards, along with a petition signed by local residents stating their objection to the application.

A letter had been received from the Police objecting to the application and submitting observations, along with letters on behalf of the Town Council and from numerous local residents objecting to the application and letters from the Fire Service, the National Park and the Environmental Health Section submitting observations.

The Licensing Manager drew the meeting's attention to the existence of the Events Safety Advisory Group, namely a group established in Gwynedd of representatives of appropriate agencies to advise on any significant event in the area in relation to public safety.

When considering the application, the following procedure was followed:-

1. Members of the Sub-committee were given an opportunity to ask questions of the Council's representative.
2. The applicant was invited to ask questions of the Council's representative.
3. Every consultee was given an invitation to support any written observations.

4. The applicant was given an opportunity to expand upon his application and then call witnesses.
5. Members of the Sub-committee were given an opportunity to ask questions of the applicant.
6. The Council's representative was invited to ask questions of the applicant.
7. The Council's representative and the applicant were given opportunities to summarise their case.

In supporting the application, the Secretary of the Rugby Club stated that the main intention in submitting the application was to be able to hold fundraising activities for the Club during the week of the National Eisteddfod in August this year. This would be organised in conjunction with the Welsh Language Society and the local Cricket Club similar to a few events in the past organised to raise money for good causes. He added that no complaints had been received following these events and that there would be a limit of 500 attending the rugby club and that this would be a good number to manage.

In response to questions the applicant reported:

- That Club officers would be satisfied with a licence for the Eisteddfod week only
- That it was not intended to hold activities on Sunday, 2 August at all
- That it would be acceptable to use plastic glasses and bottles only outside
- That the organisers would be willing to comply with any suggestions proposed by the Safety Advisory Group
- That the organisers would be willing to agree with the police's suggestions in terms of hours for holding the activities
- That the field would be surrounded by a safety fence over the period in order to facilitate the stewarding
- That any activities would be organised, as in the past, in conjunction with the Welsh Language Society and the local Cricket Club
- That the Club was keen to retain the good will of the local community after the Eisteddfod and, therefore, willing to accept the suggestions of the advisory agencies.

In his statement, the Police officer noted:

- That the police's objection was on the basis of Prevention of Crime and Disorder and the Prevention of Public Nuisance
- That it was the location of Maes Gwyniad which was the main cause of concern, since it was surrounded by dwellings
- That he supported the observations of the Police's Licensing Co-ordinator in his letter that the police would be willing to discuss with the applicants in relation to activities on Maes Gwyniad during the Eisteddfod week only
- That the Rugby Club had a faultless history of organising fundraising activities in the past
- Having discussed the matter with the Dolgellau Region Inspector, there was a suggestion to end the activities at midnight and clear the place by 12.30, but having considered further, and bearing in mind that the town's public houses would not close until 1.00am, it was believed that it would be wiser to stick to the same closing time as the other venues within the town.

The objectors were given an opportunity to voice their opinion. The Local Member reported that he had responded in his letter on the basis that the application was for a full licence, but if the application was to be considered for the Eisteddfod week only, personally he would not have

any objection to that application, subject to acceptable conditions and consultation with the police.

In supporting the observations expressed by letter, the objectors noted the following concerns:-

- That the events would add to the traffic congestion in the town
- That the activities would affect the peace of neighbouring residents, especially late at night as the customers would leave
- The possibility of damage to nearby houses and gardens, and apportioning responsibility for that
- Information had come to hand that the Welsh Language Society was advertising that attendees could camp on the field during the Festival. In response to this, it was stated that it was the Rugby Club which owned the land and that the Club had the ability to refuse permission for people to camp there.

The Mayor reported on behalf of the Town Council that he believed that the members' objection still stood should the application be considered for the Eisteddfod week only.

The applicant, the Licensing Manager and members of the public left the meeting and the application was discussed by Sub-committee members, considering all evidence submitted and giving appropriate attention to the principles of the act, namely:

- Crime and Disorder Prevention
- Public Safety
- Public Nuisance Prevention, and
- Protection of Children from Harm

The Members agreed that the application was a difficult one since there was sympathy towards both sides of the argument – everybody was supportive of the Rugby Club and were keen to allow them to benefit from an event such as the Eisteddfod, whilst being very aware of the concerns of neighbouring residents. Despite the fact that the members would be unwilling to permit a full licence to the Club, permitting a licence for the Eisteddfod week would be more acceptable, subject to strict conditions to protect the rights of the public, especially neighbouring residents. The conditions would include:

- consultation with the Police and the Fire Service
- consultation with the Environmental Health section regarding food preparation
- complying with the advice of the Gwynedd Events Safety Advisory Group
- erecting a security fence around the field
- no permission for camping
- contacting neighbouring residents beforehand by visit or letter with the arrangements, as a sign of good will.

RESOLVED to permit a Licence for the Bala Rugby Club for the period Saturday 1 August, 2009 and from Monday 3 August, 2009 until Saturday 8 August, 2009 as follows:

- 1. To permit live and recorded music from 6.00pm until 11.00pm**
- 2. To provide facilities for dance from 6.00pm until 11.00pm**
- 3. To permit the supply of alcohol from 11.00am until 12.30am**
- 4. To permit the supply of hot food from 11.00am until 12.30am**
- 5. No permission for tents or caravans on Maes Gwyniad**
- 6. To erect the marquee as far as possible from neighbouring houses**
- 7. To clear the site by 1.00am**
- 8. To meet with the Gwynedd Events Safety Advisory Group to discuss arrangements and to comply with any conditions suggested by the Group**
- 9. Officers to visit neighbouring houses to share information about the arrangements for the week**

The Propriety Officer reported that a letter would be sent to everyone within five working days confirming the decision of the Sub-committee and notifying everyone of the appeals procedure against the decision of the Sub-committee.

The meeting commenced at 2.00pm and concluded at 4.00pm.