

**CENTRAL LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE**  
**11 November 2024**

---

**Attendance:**

**Councillors:** Elfed Williams (Chair), Annwen Hughes and John Brynmor Hughes

**Officers:** Nia Grisdale (Legal Service Manager), Gwenan Mai Roberts (Licensing Manager), Lowri Haf Evans (Democracy Services Officer) and Lyndsey Thomas (Licensing Compliance Officer) – observing

**1. APOLOGIES**

See below

**2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

None to note

**3. URGENT ITEMS**

None to note

**4. PREMISES LICENCE APPLICATION: Bala Rugby Club, Maes Gwyniad, Heol Tegid, Bala**

**Others invited:**

Huw Dylan (Chairman of Bala Rugby Club)  
John Williams (Vice-chair of Bala Rugby Club)  
Harry Guttridge – Bala Rugby Club  
Mike and Manon Dodd – local residents

Apologies were received from Eluned Jones (local resident), Eifion and Christine Roberts (local residents), Huw Antur (Clerk of Bala Town Council), Elisabeth Williams (North Wales Police Licensing Officer) and Councillor Dilwyn Morgan (Local Member)

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting.

a) **The Licensing Department's Report**

Submitted – the report of the Licensing Manager giving details of the application for a premises licence for Bala Rugby Club, Maes Gwyniad, Heol Tegid, Bala. The aim of the application is to be allowed to sell alcohol during matches throughout the rugby season between September and May, with the licence being used mainly over the weekend.

It was noted that the Licensing Authority Officers had sufficient evidence that the application had been submitted in accordance with the requirements of the Licensing Act 2003 and the relevant regulations. Reference was made to the measures recommended by the applicant to promote the licensing objectives, and it was highlighted that these measures would be included on the licence.

Attention was drawn to the responses that had been received during the consultation period which included a number of objections from the public expressing concern that allowing the club to sell alcohol would create antisocial behaviours, disruption, an increase in vandalism and concerns for public safety if they walked home intoxicated near the lake and railway.

A representation had been received from North Wales Police reporting that no incident of crime and disorder associated with the Rugby Club had been reported during temporary event notice periods, and therefore they had no objection. It was added that Bala Town Council supported the application but recommended that the hours be restricted to 13:00 - 21:00.

It was reported that additional observations supporting the application had been received outside the consultation period. It was noted that there would be a need to obtain legal advice as to whether or not the letters should be taken into consideration.

The Officer recommended that the Sub-committee considered the respondents' observations/concerns received, together with the applicant's response to those observations/concerns. It was highlighted that no complaints had been received by the Licensing Authority or the Public Protection Unit following several permitted events using Temporary Event Notices. Consequently, the Officer recommended that the application be approved with conditions.

- b) In considering the application, the following procedure was followed:
- Members of the Sub-committee to be given an opportunity to ask questions of the Council's representative.
  - At the Chair's discretion, the applicant or his/her representative to ask questions to the Council's representative.
  - The applicant and/or his/her representative to be invited to expand on the application and to call witnesses.
  - Members of the Sub-committee to be given the opportunity to ask questions of the applicant and/or his/her representative.
  - At the Chair's discretion, the Council's representative to ask questions to the applicant or his/her representative.
  - Every Consultee to be invited to support any written representations.
  - The Council's representative and the applicant or his/her representative to be given the opportunity to summarise their case.
- c) Elaborating on the application, the Chair of the Rugby Club made the following observations:
- That rugby was a social game and that discussing, teasing, leg-pulling and reminiscing were a key part of the culture during and after a match – this was the main reason for submitting an application.
  - That the Club wanted to improve and develop an atmosphere while extending a welcome to visiting fans and teams.
  - That the social room, 'Ystafell Yogi', had been upgraded and was managed by a Sub-committee who would also be responsible for managing the bar. The Sub-committee was working hard to ensure a hygiene standard and was working with the authorities to attain standard 5. The next natural step was to apply for a site licence.
  - That the Temporary Event Notice events had been successful – they had created a nice atmosphere, a sense of belonging, ensuring moderate and responsible alcohol use. Teams and fans currently used Plas Coch, which was in the centre of town, as a social venue.

- That the Club's success brought additional costs that needed to be met – around 230-300 individuals played every week. Profits from the bar would be invested in resources for the Club to serve the community and the wider area.
- That Bala Rugby Club was the only rugby club in north Wales without a licence.
- That there was no intention of clashing with neighbours – this was not a new development – events licences had been used over the last three years. Every attempt would be made to allay their concerns:
  - Antisocial behaviour. A robust and responsible sub-committee ensured that offensive or contemptuous behaviour would not be tolerated. The licence holder would set standards and maintain an overview of the situation.
  - The Club had an Antisocial Behaviour Policy which included a code of conduct (drawn up with North Wales Rugby guidance) but which needed to be revised.
  - That bans were imposed in the event of bad behaviour – posters around the venue informed of this.
  - The Challenge 25 Policy was implemented.
  - The Club did not tolerate drug use – any incident would be reported to the Police.
  - The policies were in place should an incident arise.
  - That not all the traffic problems were due to the Rugby Club – some walkers used the car park. The Club was in the process of purchasing the car park from the National Park with the intention of using an adjacent field as an extended car park. Having secured ownership, a Parking Control Officer would ensure that the car park would be for Rugby Club use only.
  - Child Safety – the Club followed strict Welsh Rugby Union policy – measures were in place along with public safety measures.
  - That there was an intention to draw up a noise management plan to allay concerns – there was double glazing in the building and they intended to adhere to maximum capacity so as not to disturb neighbours.
  - That having a bar was not in contempt of the memory of Yogi – the situation had changed in recent years – a licence was now part of the business plan.

(ch) In response to questions to the applicant from the Sub-committee and the Council's representative:

- In terms of confirming opening hours – there was no intention to open every day. The licence provided flexibility of use, but the Club's intention was to limit use to weekends only.
- The Act would permit live music/staging regulated entertainment. Did they plan to make occasional/regular use of this? In response, it was noted that there was no specific intention at this time to play live music, but it may be an option for the future although the room was not large enough to host a group. The Licensing Manager noted that this would need to be set out in the noise management plan.

d) The consultees in attendance took the opportunity to expand on the observations that were submitted in written form by them.

Mike and Manon Dodd

- They expressed their gratitude for the opportunity to express their concerns following the Rugby Club licence application.
- Although the Police noted that complaints had not been received relating to antisocial behaviour, there were times where they could have complained.
- Concerned that things could get out of hand when alcohol is available – wanted to avoid this.
- They lived within 20m of the Club entrance with the garden hedges adjoining the

Club and therefore noise carried from two directions.

- Accepted that the Club did a good job with adults and children in the area, but why was it necessary to include alcohol in health and fitness events?
- Accepted the social element and having a drink to socialise at the end of a match, but why ask for until 11pm? This was bound to lead to unnecessary noise and antisocial behaviour.

In response to questions to the respondents from the Sub-committee, it was noted:

- In terms of examples of complaints, that cars parked in front of the house and they were unable to get the car out, visitor noise levels and cars revving in the car park.
- In the context of temporary events and the fact that there had been no official complaints, it was noted that those events had not gone on until late, but there was concern that with a licence until 23:00 events could go on later and therefore introduce factors such as noise and public nuisance. Concern that events such as watching international matches at the Club were also going to create problems.
- The position of the house and its proximity to the Club were confirmed.

All observations received were acknowledged and gratitude expressed for those comments.

dd) The respondents and the Licensing Manager withdrew from the meeting while the Sub-committee members discussed the application.

In reaching its decision, the Sub-committee considered the applicant's application form, the written observations submitted by interested parties, the Licensing Officer's report, together with the verbal representations from each party present at the hearing. The Council's Licensing Policy and Home Office guidelines were considered. The Sub-committee gave due consideration to all the observations and weighed these up against the licensing objectives under the Licensing Act 2003, namely:

- i. Prevention of crime and disorder
- ii. Prevention of public nuisance
- iii. Ensuring public safety
- iv. Protection of children from harm

Observations submitted which were irrelevant to the above objectives were disregarded.

**RESOLVED: To approve**

**Opening hours**

**Sunday: 09:00 - 23:30**

**Monday: 09:00 – 23:30**

**Tuesday: 09:00 – 23:30**

**Wednesday: 09:00 – 23:30**

**Thursday: 09:00 – 23:30**

**Friday: 09:00 – 23:30**

**Saturday: 09:00 – 23:30**

**Supply of Alcohol on the Premises**

**Sunday: 09:00 – 23:00**

**Monday: 09:00 – 23:00**

**Tuesday: 09:00 – 23:00**

**Wednesday: 09:00 – 23:00**

**Thursday: 09:00 – 23:00**

**Friday: 09:00 – 23:00**

**Saturday: 09:00 – 23:00**

**Include the additional measures submitted in part M of the application, as**

**conditions on the licence.**

Note:

Obtain advice on noise mitigation measures

Particular consideration was given to the following.

In the context of **Crime and Disorder**, the Police did not submit any objections in response to the application, and no further evidence had been submitted which related to this principle. The Police also noted that no crime or disorder matter had arisen while these premises had operated the sale of alcohol using a Temporary Event Notice on a number of occasions.

In the context of matters of **Public Safety**, no observations or evidence had been submitted that related to this principle.

In the context of **Prevention of public nuisance**, a number of observations were received from neighbours of the Club expressing concern about potential anti-social behaviours and noise levels. However, the Public Protection Service did not have any observations or objection and did not present any evidence of anti-social behaviour or noise problems. The Club Chair explained that they were currently producing a noise mitigation policy and the Sub-committee believed it would be of great benefit to the neighbours if the Club could seek advice and procedures that would assist them in mitigating any noise from the Club. No further observations had been submitted in relation to this principle, so the Sub-committee was willing to approve subject to the conditions.

Appreciating the concerns expressed by the local residents and neighbours, the Sub-committee was not of the opinion that there was evidence to suggest that approving the application would lead to problems under this heading. The opening hours were a Rugby Club business planning matter and the applicant noted that it was highly unlikely that the Club would be operational all day, every day. The Club would mostly be open during the rugby-playing season with the peak use restricted to the weekends. If any problems arose in connection with the licensing principles, the Act would allow a licence to be referred for review by the Authority.

In the context of **Protecting Children from Harm** no observations or evidence had been submitted that related to this principle.

The Solicitor reported that the decision would be formally confirmed by letter to everyone who had submitted written observations. It was added that all parties to the application had the right to submit an appeal to Caernarfon Magistrates' Court against the Sub-committee's decision. Any such appeal should be lodged by giving notice of appeal to the Chief Executive, Llandudno Magistrates' Court, Llandudno within 21 days of the date that the appellant receives the letter (or a copy of the letter) confirming the decision.

The meeting commenced at 11:30 and concluded at 12:35.