

MAIDSTONE BOROUGH COUNCIL

LICENSING COMMITTEE

**MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON THURSDAY 14 JANUARY
2021**

Present: Councillors Fort, Garten, Mrs Grigg, Hinder, Joy (Chairman), Naghi, Newton, Purle, Mrs Robertson, M Rose, J Sams and Springett

68. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Councillors Brindle and Fissenden.

69. NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Councillor Purle was present as a Substitute Member for Councillor Brindle.

70. URGENT ITEMS

There were no urgent items.

71. CHANGE TO THE ORDER OF BUSINESS

Item 14 – Member Virtual Training Programme would be taken before Item 12 – License Fees and Charges, before Committee Business be conducted.

72. DISCLOSURES BY MEMBERS AND OFFICERS

There were no disclosures by Members and Officers.

73. VISITING MEMBERS

There were no Visiting Members.

74. DISCLOSURES OF LOBBYING

There were no disclosures of lobbying.

75. EXEMPT ITEMS

RESOLVED: That all items be taken in public as proposed.

76. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19 NOVEMBER 2020

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2020 be approved as a correct record and will be signed at a later date.

77. MINUTES OF THE LICENSING ACT 2003 SUB-COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3 DECEMBER 2020

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Licensing Act 2003 Sub-Committee meeting held on 3 December 2020 be approved as a correct record and signed at a later date.

78. QUESTIONS AND ANSWER SESSION FOR MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

79. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE CHAIRMAN

There were no questions from Members to the Chairman.

80. MEMBER VIRTUAL TRAINING PROGRAMME

The Head of Housing and Community Services introduced the report setting out the proposed training package which would fulfil the Council's Constitutional training requirement for the Committee. It was requested that the Committee agreed a date for the training to be completed.

The Committee expressed their preference for face-to-face training rather than online training, and it was confirmed that the recommendation allowed the delivery of the training package to be flexible.

RESOLVED: That the training package contained within Paragraph 2.5 of the report be approved and completed by 30 September 2021.

81. LICENCE FEES AND CHARGES 2021-22

The Senior Licensing Officer introduced the report and outlined the proposed fees and charges for 2021-22. A robust review of the fees set by the Council was undertaken in 2016, and it was envisaged that a similar review would take place for the 2022-23 charges.

With the current rate of inflation at 2.6%, it was noted that surrounding Local Authorities had applied a 2.5% increase in their fees and charges. However in line with the Medium Term Financial Strategy, a 2% increase was proposed.

The introduction of a new fee for the EQUO online test was proposed, as part of the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Licensing fees.

In response to concerns over the proposed increases, the opportunity for feedback as part of the public consultation process was highlighted.

RESOLVED: That the fee levels set out at 2.8, 2.9, 2.11, 2.13, 2.15, 2.17 and 2.18 of the report be approved for implementation on 1 April 2021 subject to the consideration of any representations following consultation.

82. BUSKING GUIDELINES CONSULTATION RESULTS 2020

The Senior Licensing Officer introduced the report, highlighting that 84.9% of respondents were in favour of introducing busking guidelines, and 72% felt the proposed guidelines were appropriate. If introduced, the guidelines would be kept under review. It was noted that the Licensing Team would not have powers of enforcement against Buskers.

The Committee expressed support for the guidelines proposed, with the request made for the fixed volume level section of the guidelines to be made clearer.

Several Members of the Committee felt that the Bandstand, Brenchley Gardens, would be a suitable location for Buskers. The Senior Licensing Officer confirmed that the location was managed by the Council's Economic Development and Regeneration Service area and that the Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee could be asked to consider its use.

RESOLVED: That

1. The proposed Draft Maidstone Busking Guidelines as attached at Appendix 2 to the report be recommended for approval to the Community, Housing and Environment Committee for agreement; and
2. The Economic Regeneration and Leisure Committee be recommended to ask the Communities, Housing and Environment Committee to approve the draft Busking Guidelines, with comments on the use of the Bandstand to be provided as appropriate.

83. DURATION OF MEETING

6.30 p.m. to 7.30 p.m.