

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Licensing Sub-Committee – 27th July 2023 at 10:00 hours (10.00am)

Report Title

Consideration of an application (made in accordance with s.17 of the Licensing Act 2003) for the grant of a Premises Licence to Pocket Sports Club Limited, in respect of the premises, which is an open space, known as Pitches, Wickersley Road, Rotherham S60 3PR.

Report Author

Diane Kraus, Principal Licensing Officer (Policy & Administration), Community Safety and Street Scene. Telephone 01709 289536

Report Summary

On the 5th June 2023 an application was made, by Pocket Sports Club Limited, for the grant of a Premises Licence in respect of the open space known as Pitches, Wickersley Road, Rotherham S60 3PR.

Representations to the application have been received from local residents, a ward councillor and three of the Responsible Authorities, namely the Council's Environmental Health Service, the Licensing Authority and South Yorkshire Police.

Further details on the application, and the representations to it, can be found within the body of this report.

Recommendations

1. That the Licensing Sub-Committee considers the information contained within this report (and associated appendices) along with any additional information presented at the hearing and subsequently determines the application that has been made.
2. The Licensing Sub-Committee should inform the Principal Licensing Officer of the decision in accordance with the requirements of the Licensing Act 2003 and Regulations made thereunder.

List of Appendices Included

- Appendix 1 Location details
- Appendix 2 Application under consideration
- Appendix 3 Representations - Responsible Authorities
- Appendix 4 Representations – Interested Parties

Background Papers

Rotherham MBC Statement of Licensing Policy 2020 -2025
(available at www.rotherham.gov.uk/licensing)

Revised guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 (Dec 2022)
(available at www.gov.uk/government/publications/explanatory-memorandum-revised-guidance-issued-under-s-182-of-licensing-act-2003)

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Consideration of an application (made in accordance with s.17 of the Licensing Act 2003) for the grant of a Premises Licence to Pocket Sports Club Limited, in respect of the premises, which is an open space, known as Pitches, Wickersley Road, Rotherham S60 3PR.

1. Background

- 1.1 The open space known as Pitches and situated at Wickersley Road, Rotherham S60 3PR has not previously had the benefit issued under the Licensing Act 2003. This is the first application made in respect of these premises.

2. Key Issues

Location of the Premises

- 2.1 Attached at Appendix 1 to the report are plans showing the location, and access and egress to and from, the open space known as Pitches.

The application

- 2.2 On 5th June 2023 an application was made, by Pocket Sports Club Limited, for the grant of a Premises Licence for the open space known as Pitches, Wickersley Road, Rotherham S60 3PR. A copy of the application form and plan, which marks in red the boundary of the open space, is attached at Appendix 2.
- 2.3 Within the boundary identified in the application as the open space is a building known as Pitches Sports Club. This building does not form part of the application currently under consideration. Further details on Pitches Sports Club can be found at paragraph 2.18 of the report.
- 2.4 The application seeks authorisation to allow the following licensable activities, all of which will be provided outdoors, for up to a maximum of 9,999 people:
- a. Performance of plays
 - b. Exhibition of films
 - c. Live music
 - d. Recorded Music
 - e. Performance of Dance
 - f. Anything of a similar description to c, d, and e above
 - g. The sale of alcohol for consumption on the premises, that is within the open space.
- 2.5 The application limits the number of occasions that licensable activities will be provided, as follows:
- a. From first issue to 31 December 2023 no more than two events;
 - b. From 01 January 2024 to 31 December 2024 no more than three events; and
 - c. From 01 January 2025 to 31 December 2025, and each calendar year thereafter, no more than six events.

- 2.6 In addition, the application clarifies that for *“an event comprising of more than one day, each day of the event will count as one event day”*.
- 2.7 The hours sought in the application, in respect of the provision of all licensable activities, are between 12:00 hours and 22:00 hours (12 noon and 10.00pm) on every day of the week, with the premise, that is the open space, closing at 23:00 hours (11.00pm).

Consultation

- 2.8 Consultation on the application has been carried out in accordance with all statutory requirements and the Council’s procedure. There is a prescribed period of 28 days following the submission of an application during which time representations in relation to the application may be submitted.

Representations

- 2.9 There are twenty representations lodged against this application, three from Responsible Authorities and seventeen from “other persons”. The detail of all representations has been provided to the applicant.
- 2.10 The representations received from the Responsible Authorities, namely the Council’s Environmental Health Service, the Licensing Authority and South Yorkshire Police are attached at Appendix 3. Also at Appendix 3 is an email sent by South Yorkshire Police in response to the applicant’s request for clarification regarding their representations.
- 2.11 The representations received from “other persons” are attached at Appendix 4. One of the representation has been made a ward councillor, with the remaining sixteen by local residents.
- 2.12 All the representations are continuing.
- 2.13 The Responsible Authorities and “other persons” have been invited to the hearing today and, if attending, will be given the opportunity to address the Sub-Committee in relation to the matters raised in their representations.
- 2.14 Members of the Sub-Committee should give full consideration of the issues raised in the representations when determining the application.

Point of Clarification

- 2.15 Section M of the application, which sets out the steps the applicant proposes to take to promote licensing objectives, includes an offered condition that *“Where the outside premises licence is being used the Pitches Sports Club (licence*

number P0425) will not trade past the terminal hour of the licensable activity on the outside licence”.

- 2.16 The Sub Committee should disregard this offered condition, as the conditions on any Licence that may be granted, can only be relate to the applicant premises, that is the outdoor space.
- 2.17 The applicant has been made aware that the offered condition is unlawful and, in response, has given an undertaking to vary the Premises Licence issued in respect of Pitches Sports Club, if the application currently under consideration is granted.
- 2.18 The applicant is the holder of Premises Licence issued in respect of Pitches Sports Club, and therefore has the authority to make an application to vary this Licence. In summary, this Licence allows the provision of live and recorded music and the performance of dance (all indoors) and the sale of alcohol (on the premises) on each of the days Monday to Thursday between 10:00 hours and 23:30 hours, on Friday & Saturday between 10:00 hours and 00:00 hours (12 midnight) and on Sunday between 10:00 hours and 23:00 hours.

Additional Information

- 2.19 At the time of writing, no information, beyond that included in the report, has been submitted. If additional relevant documentation is received prior to the date of the hearing, it will be circulated at the hearing. Documentation received on the day of the hearing may only be considered by the Licensing Sub Committee with the consent of all relevant parties.

Important considerations in relation to Regulated Entertainment

- 2.20 The following information is brought to the attention of the Licensing Sub Committee with regard to the provision of live and/or recorded music may be provided at the premises.
- 2.21 There are a number of exemptions that mean that a licence (or other authorisation) under the 2003 Act is not required. The following activities are examples of entertainment which are not licensable:
- Incidental music – the performance of live music or the playing of recorded music if it is incidental to some other activity (see below).
 - A spontaneous performance of music, singing or dancing.
 - Stand-up comedy.
- 2.22 Whether or not music is “incidental” to another activity will depend on the facts of each case. In considering whether or not live or recorded music is incidental, one relevant factor could be whether, against a background of the other activities already taking place, the addition of music will create the potential to undermine

the promotion of one or more of the four licensing objectives of the 2003 Act. Other factors might include some or all of the following:

- Is the music the main, or one of the main, reasons for people attending the premises and being charged?
- Is the music advertised as the main attraction?
- Does the volume of the music disrupt or predominate over other activities, or could it be described as 'background' music?

2.23 In addition to the above, as a result of deregulatory changes that have amended the 2003 Act, no licence is required for the following activities:

- Live music: no licence permission is required for:
 - a performance of unamplified live music between 08.00 and 23.00 on any day, on any premises.
 - a performance of amplified live music between 08.00 and 23.00 on any day on premises authorised to sell alcohol for consumption on those premises.
 - a performance of amplified live music between 08.00 and 23.00 on any day, in a workplace that does not have a licence, provided that the audience does not exceed 500 (a workplace could include an external area to a licensed premises – for example a beer garden or other outdoor space provided for patrons to consume alcohol).
- Recorded Music: no licence permission is required for:
 - any playing of recorded music between 08.00 and 23.00 on any day on premises authorised to sell alcohol for consumption on those premises, provided that the audience does not exceed 500.

2.24 The deregulatory changes mean that, for example, a performance of live music taking place between 07.00 and 23.30 on a particular day is licensable in respect of activities taking place between 07.00-08.00 and 23.00-23.30. Similarly, where the audience for a performance of recorded music, those activities are licensable if, and for so long as, the number of people in the audience exceeds 500.

2.25 Anyone involved in the organisation or provision of entertainment activities – whether or not any such activity is licensable under the 2003 Act – must comply with any applicable duties that may be imposed by other legislation relevant to the event (e.g. in areas such as crime and disorder, fire, health and safety, noise, nuisance and planning). Any such person should take steps to be aware of relevant best practice and may find responsible authorities a useful source of expert support and advice.

2.26 If the Licensing Sub Committee grant the licence, and the licence includes permission for the retail sale of alcohol, then any live or recorded music taking

place at the premises (subject to the above requirements) will not be licensable between the hours of 0800hrs and 2300hrs. In addition, any conditions that are applied to live or recorded music will not be effective during these hours (subject to certain conditions being met). Further detail in relation to conditions is contained within section 3 of this report.

3. Options available to the Licensing Sub-Committee

3.1 A licensing authority must carry out its functions under the Licensing Act with a view to promoting the licensing objectives:

- the prevention of crime and disorder
- public safety
- the prevention of public nuisance
- the protection of children from harm

3.2 In considering this matter, the Licensing Sub Committee should take into account any representations or objections that have been received from responsible authorities or other persons, and representations made by the applicant or premises user as the case may be. In reaching the decision, regard must also be had to relevant provisions of the national guidance and the Council's licensing policy statement. In relation to this application, the options available to the Committee are:

- To grant the application subject to the terms and conditions and set out in the application, or
- To reject the whole, or part of the application, which may include imposing additional conditions and/or a reducing the hours sought in the application.

3.3 The statutory guidance makes it clear that Licensing Authorities are best placed to determine what actions are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives in their areas. All licensing determinations should be considered on a case-by-case basis. They should take into account any representations or objections that have been received from responsible authorities or other persons, and representations made by the applicant or premises user as the case may be.

3.4 The Authority's determination should be evidence-based, justified as being appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives and proportionate to what it is intended to achieve.

3.5 Determination of whether an action or step is appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives requires an assessment of what action or step would be

suitable to achieve that end. While this does not therefore require a licensing authority to decide that no lesser step will achieve the aim, the authority should aim to consider the potential burden that the condition would impose on the premises licence holder (such as the financial burden due to restrictions on licensable activities) as well as the potential benefit in terms of the promotion of the licensing objectives. However, it is imperative that the Authority ensures that the factors which form the basis of its determination are limited to consideration of the promotion of the objectives and nothing outside those parameters. The Licensing Authority should consider wider issues such as other conditions already in place to mitigate potential negative impact on the promotion of the licensing objectives and the track record of the business (if appropriate).

- 3.6 The Licensing Authority is expected to come to its determination based on an assessment of the evidence on both the risks and benefits either for or against making the determination. Conditions may be placed on the licence – further information in relation to conditions is provided later in this report.
- 3.7 All licensing determinations should be considered on the individual merits of the application. The Authority's determination should be evidence-based, justified as being appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives and proportionate to what it is intended to achieve. Findings on any issues of fact should be on the balance of probability.
- 3.8 It is important that a Licensing Authority should give comprehensive reasons for its decisions in anticipation of any appeals. Failure to give adequate reasons could itself give rise to grounds for an appeal.

Conditions

- 3.9 Conditions include any limitations or restrictions attached to a licence or certificate and essentially are the steps or actions that the holder of the premises licence or the club premises certificate will be required to take or refrain from taking in relation to the carrying on of licensable activities at the premises in question. Failure to comply with any condition attached to a licence or certificate is a criminal offence, which on conviction is punishable by an unlimited fine or up to six months' imprisonment. The courts have made clear that it is particularly important that conditions which are imprecise or difficult for a licence holder to observe should be avoided.
- 3.10 There are three types of condition that may be attached to a licence or certificate: proposed, imposed and mandatory. Each of these categories is described in more detail below.

Proposed conditions

- 3.11 The conditions that are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives should emerge initially from the risk assessment carried out by a prospective licence or certificate holder, which they should carry out before making their application for a premises licence or club premises certificate. This would be translated into the steps recorded in the operating schedule or club operating schedule, which must also set out the proposed hours during which licensable activities will be conducted and any other hours during which the premises will be open to the public.
- 3.12 It is not acceptable for Licensing Authorities to simply replicate the wording from an applicant's operating schedule. A condition should be interpreted in accordance with the applicant's intention.

Consistency with steps described in operating schedule

- 3.13 The 2003 Act provides that where an operating schedule or club operating schedule has been submitted with an application and there have been no relevant representations made by responsible authorities or any other person, the licence or certificate must be granted subject only to such conditions as are consistent with the schedule accompanying the application and any mandatory conditions required under the 2003 Act.
- 3.14 Consistency means that the effect of the condition should be substantially the same as that intended by the terms of the operating schedule. If conditions are broken, this may lead to a criminal prosecution or an application for a review and it is extremely important therefore that they should be expressed on the licence or certificate in unequivocal and unambiguous terms. The duty imposed by conditions on the licence holder or club must be clear to the licence holder, club, enforcement officers and the courts.

Imposed conditions

- 3.15 The Licensing Authority may not impose any conditions unless its discretion has been exercised following receipt of relevant representations and it is satisfied as a result of a hearing (unless all parties agree a hearing is not necessary) that it is appropriate to impose conditions to promote one or more of the four licensing objectives. In order to promote the crime prevention licensing objective conditions may be included that are aimed at preventing illegal working in licensed premises.
- 3.16 It is possible that in some cases no additional conditions will be appropriate to promote the licensing objectives.

Proportionality

3.17 The 2003 Act requires that licensing conditions should be tailored to the size, type, location and characteristics and activities taking place at the premises concerned. Conditions should be determined on a case-by-case basis and standardised conditions which ignore these individual aspects should be avoided. For example, conditions should not be used to implement a general policy in a given area such as the use of CCTV, polycarbonate drinking vessels or identity scanners where they would not be appropriate to the specific premises. Conditions that are considered appropriate for the prevention of illegal working in premises licensed to sell alcohol or late night refreshment might include requiring a premises licence holder to undertake right to work checks on all staff employed at the licensed premises or requiring that a copy of any document checked as part of a right to work check is retained at the licensed premises. Licensing authorities and other responsible authorities should be alive to the indirect costs that can arise because of conditions. These could be a deterrent to holding events that are valuable to the community or for the funding of good and important causes. Licensing authorities should therefore ensure that any conditions they impose are only those which are appropriate for the promotion of the licensing objectives.

4. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

4.1 Any decision made by the Licensing Sub Committee does not have effect until:

- the end of the period given for appealing against the decision; or
- if the decision is appealed, until the appeal is disposed of.

4.2 An appeal may be lodged by either the applicant or a party to the hearing that has made a relevant representation.

4.3 Parties to the hearing must be informed of the decision within 5 working days of the hearing (or within 5 working days from the last day of the hearing if it takes place over multiple days).

5. Financial Implications

5.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this application.

5.2 However, additional costs may be incurred should the matter go to appeal. In such an eventuality it may not be possible to recover all of the costs incurred. The impact of these additional costs (if any) will therefore need to be met from within existing revenue budgets.

6. Legal Advice and Implications

- 6.1 A Council Solicitor will be in attendance at the hearing to provide appropriate legal advice to the Licensing Sub Committee in relation to specific aspects of the application / hearing, however the advice below is generally applicable to all applications.
- 6.2 Hearings under the Licensing Act 2003 operate under the Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005 (as amended).
- 6.3 In accordance with Regulation 18 of the Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005, the authority may take into account documentary or other information produced by a party in support of their application, representations or notice either before the hearing or, with the consent of all parties, at the hearing.
- 6.4 The Licensing Sub Committee may accept hearsay evidence and it will be a matter for the Licensing Sub Committee to attach what weight to it that they consider appropriate. Hearsay evidence is evidence of something that a witness neither saw nor heard but has heard or read about.
- 6.5 The Secretary of State's guidance to the Licensing Act 2003 is provided to licensing authorities in relation to the carrying out of their functions under the 2003 Act. It also provides information to magistrates' courts hearing appeals against licensing decisions and has been made widely available for the benefit of those who run licensed premises, their legal advisers and the general public. It is a key medium for promoting best practice, ensuring consistent application of licensing powers across England and Wales and for promoting fairness, equal treatment and proportionality.
- 6.6 Section 4 of the 2003 Act provides that, in carrying out its functions, a licensing authority must 'have regard to' guidance issued by the Secretary of State under section 182. The guidance is therefore binding on all licensing authorities to that extent. However, the guidance cannot anticipate every possible scenario or set of circumstances that may arise and, as long as licensing authorities have properly understood this guidance, they may depart from it if they have good reason to do so and can provide full reasons.
- 6.7 In addition to the above, the members of the Licensing Sub Committee are reminded that all decisions must be taken in accordance with the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy (adopted 3rd June 2020).
- 6.8 Departure from the guidance and / or Statement of Licensing Policy could give rise to an appeal or judicial review, and the reasons given will then be a key

consideration for the courts when considering the lawfulness and merits of any decision taken.

7. Risks and Mitigation

- 7.1 The statutory requirements in relation to the consideration of this application are detailed in this report. It is essential that the Sub Committee act in accordance with these statutory provisions and take account of statutory guidance.
- 7.2 Failure to do this exposes the Council to significant risk of legal challenge, the consequences of which could result in financial and / or reputational damage to the Council.
- 7.3 Members of the Licensing Sub Committee are therefore urged to fully consider the information in this report when making a decision regarding this application, and to ensure that any decision made is justifiable, proportionate and based on the promotion of one or more of the Licensing Objectives.
- 7.4 Council officers are present at the meeting today and can provide additional advice to members of the Licensing Sub Committee should this be required. In addition, a copy of the statutory guidance and Statement of Licensing Policy is available for members to review should they wish to do so.

8. Accountable Officer(s)

Diane Kraus, Principal Licensing Officer (Policy & Administration), Community Safety and Street Scene

Hearing Procedure

1. The Chair of the Licensing Sub Committee will introduce the Committee and ask officers to introduce themselves.
2. The Chair of the Licensing Sub Committee will ask the applicant(s) and persons listed as having made representations to the application to formally introduce themselves, together with any person representing them and any witnesses they wish to call.
3. The Licensing Officer will introduce the report and provide any updates to the report and application.
 - i. Questions concerning the report can be asked by Members, persons making representations and the applicant.
4. The Chair of the Licensing Sub Committee will then invite persons who are listed as having made a representation to the application if they wish to highlight any points made in their written representation, and/or call witnesses, for the same purpose.
 - i. Members may ask questions of all person's listed as having made representations and any person who have given evidence on their behalf as a witness
 - ii. With the leave of the Chair, the applicant, or their representative, may ask questions all persons who are listed as having made representation and any person who has given evidence on their as a witness.
5. The Chair of the Licensing Sub Committee will then invite the applicant (or their representative) to present the application and respond to the representations made.
 - i. Members may ask questions of the applicant and any person who has given evidence on their behalf as a witness.
 - ii. With the leave of the Chair, all persons who are listed as having made representations may ask questions of the applicant and any person who has given evidence on their behalf.
6. The applicant will then be given the opportunity to sum up the application.
7. The public hearing will then be concluded, and the Sub Committee will go into closed session, together with the Councils Solicitor and the Clerk to the meeting.
8. The decision of the Licensing Committee will be given in accordance with the requirements of the Licensing Act 2003 and regulations made there under.

Note:

- At any time throughout the hearing Members of the Licensing Sub Committee may request legal advice from the Council's Solicitor. Any advice sought during closed session will be included in the notice setting out the decision.
- The Committee Hearing will be held in public unless and in accordance with relevant Regulations the Licensing Sub Committee determine that the public should be excluded.