

# TANDRIDGE THE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## LICENSING SUB COMMITTEE

Minutes of the virtual meeting of the Sub-Committee, hosted from the Council Offices, Oxted via Zoom on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2021 at 6.30 p.m. which adjourned and reconvened at 1.00pm on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021.

### **ATTENDEES:**

#### **Sub-committee members:**

Councillors Groves, Stamp and C.White (physically present in the Council Chamber)

#### **Other Councillors**

Councillor Shiner (present via Zoom as an observer)

#### **Council Officers:**

Ian Garrod - Licensing Officer (present via Zoom)

Lidia Harrison - Head of Legal Services (physically present in the Council Chamber)

Vince Sharp - Democratic Services Officer (physically present in the Council Chamber)

#### **Representing Surrey Police**

Ian Sandwell - Licensing Enforcement Officer (present via Zoom)

#### **Proposed premises users**

Chris Baldwin (SC Festivals & Events Ltd) (present via Zoom)

Emma Vicinic (SC Festivals & Events Ltd) (present via Zoom)

## **1. ELECTION OF CHAIR**

Councillor Stamp was elected Chair of the meeting.

## **2. TEMPORARY EVENT NOTICE - SANDHILLS FARM, OUTWOOD LANE, BLETCHINGLEY RH1 4NL**

Chris Baldwin (the 'premises user') had submitted the above mentioned TEN regarding a proposed event at Sandhills Farm on the 11<sup>th</sup> September 2021 (noon until 23:00). The event was described as a small, one day, over 18s event for friends and associates of the organisers (up to 350 attendees in total) with amplified, pre-recorded music and a paid bar. The TEN had resulted in objections from Surrey Police.

Ian Garrod presented his report which explained the legislative framework for TENs, including the fact that, when a licensing authority received an objection to a TEN from the police or environmental health, it was required to convene a hearing to consider whether or not to serve a counter notice in light of the four licensing objectives. The report included:

- a copy of the TEN submitted by Chris Baldwin, together with supporting documents; and
- details of the police objection and supporting evidence.

Ian Sandwell presented the police objections which argued that the event was likely to undermine the licensing objectives of public safety and preventing crime & disorder. This was in view of the unlit, rural location and the potential for incursions given the open nature of the site. The objections were also based on the fact that Chris Baldwin had submitted two previous similar TENs in 2018 for an outdoor music event at Whyte Gate Farm, South Godstone. The first of these previous TENs had been withdrawn after it emerged that the event was being promoted on Facebook where tickets could be purchased by the public in The Cage Public House in Reigate. This was contrary to the TEN which stated that the event would not be publicised. The second previous TEN resulted in a counter notice from the Licensing Authority following objections from Surrey Police, again in light of promotion via Facebook (with statements appearing to encourage a large gathering) contrary to the event being described as 'private' within the TEN. Given this history, Surrey Police had no confidence that the details in the current TEN could be relied upon. The objection asserted that, if the Sandhills Farm event was to be publicised via social media, the mandatory capacity limit of 499 could be exceeded.

Following the publication of the original agenda pack, Chris Baldwin had submitted revised 'additional information' which attempted to address the Police's concerns, including event control policies and a commitment to provide additional security personnel. It also corrected a typographical error within the original version regarding the duration of the event (i.e. from noon on the 11<sup>th</sup> September as opposed to the 9<sup>th</sup> September). Ian Sandwell remained dissatisfied that the event would uphold the licensing objectives and urged the Sub-Committee to authorise a counter notice. He was concerned about the absence of 'major incident' and 'command and control' provisions and drew comparisons to a recent illegal rave in Steyning which attracted up to 2000 people and led to over 80 arrests.

Chris Baldwin (accompanied by Emma Vicinic) addressed the Sub-Committee and argued that his proposed event was very different to the 'Steyning rave'. He asserted that there had never been any issues of concern arising from his events in the past. He regretted the problems caused by the Facebook posts in 2018 and wished to build a positive relationship with the police. He stated that he would cancel the Sandhills event if became the subject of similar Facebook coverage. He also advised that only 30 vehicles would be allowed in the car park and that the use of taxis would be encouraged. He would speak to the security company about equipping personnel with bodycams for use in patrolling the car park. Emma Vicinic added that parking had been allocated to specific ticket holders and that additional floodlighting would be provided. She stated that unsafe areas of the site had been cordoned off.

In his closing statement, Chris Baldwin agreed to deploy additional trained first aiders. He reiterated that he and Emma knew their guests and sought a safe afternoon and evening with like-minded attendees.

Ian Sandwell concluded that the proposed event presented unacceptable risks and was unconvinced by the organisers' additional submission.

The hearing concluded at 7.20pm and the Sub-Committee, together with Lidia Harrison and Vince Sharp, remained in the Chamber to consider its decision.

The Sub-Committee adjourned at 8.06pm and reconvened, via Zoom, at 1.00pm on the following day (1<sup>st</sup> July) with Lidia Harrison and Vince Sharp in attendance. The Sub-Committee took due regard of an e-mail sent by Lidia Harrison at 11.54pm on 1<sup>st</sup> July which clarified that:

- there were only two options available, i.e. whether or not to issue a counter notice; and
- because Sandhills Farm did not have a Premises Licence or a Club Certificate, it was not possible to impose conditions on the TEN.

The Sub-Committee's majority decision was that there was insufficient evidence to demonstrate that the licensing objectives of public safety and preventing crime & disorder would be undermined if the event was to proceed. The Sub-Committee was reassured about the commitments given (during the hearing) by the proposed premises users to:

- refrain from publicising the event beyond their restricted e-mail contact group and to cancel the event should it be promoted on social media;
- deploy additional trained first aiders at the event;
- provide security staff, with bodycams, to patrol the car park (the Sub-Committee would be further reassured if such patrols extended until 30 minutes after the event has closed); and
- provide as much lighting as possible for the car park and other areas of the event which would otherwise be in darkness.

It was therefore resolved not to issue a counter notice.

The meeting closed at 1.17pm on the 1<sup>st</sup> July 2021