

LICENSING COMMITTEE HEARING

TUESDAY, 18 MAY 2021 - 10.30 AM



PRESENT: Councillor M Humphrey (Chairman), Councillor A Maul and Councillor N Meekins, Councillor A Miscandlon (Substitute)

OFFICERS IN ATTENDANCE: Colin Miles (Legal Representative), Michelle Bishop (Licensing Manager) and Izzi Hurst (Member Services & Governance Officer)

LH3/20 DETERMINATION OF AN APPLICATION FOR A PREMISES LICENCE MADE UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE LICENSING ACT 2003 - THE BRAMLEY HOUSE HOTEL, HIGH STREET, CHATTERIS

Members considered an application for the review of a premises licence made under the provisions of the Licensing Act 2003 in respect of The Bramley House Hotel, Chatteris.

The Chairman introduced the Panel and Officers. Others present were;

Mr Thomas Payne – The Applicant
Mr Justin Preston-High – Proposed Designated Premises Supervisor

Michelle Bishop presented the report to the Panel. She confirmed that initially six objections had been received however following mediation with the applicant and objectors, three of these had been resolved.

The Panel had no questions for Michelle Bishop.

Councillor Humphrey invited the applicants to present their case.

Thomas Payne thanked the Panel for allowing them the opportunity to speak at today's meeting. He explained that he and his partner had purchased the property in October 2020, in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, and are focused on getting the business back up and running.

He explained that many of the guests and residents at the hotel, expect the premises to benefit from an alcohol licence and confirmed that there are several bookings secured at the venue already. They had recently declined a booking, as the guest had wanted a marquee in the premises car park which they felt could impact neighbouring properties. He stated that the lack of an alcohol licence would have a detrimental impact on the business and could even make it unviable. He highlighted that the premises had previously benefited from a licence and as far as he is aware, there had been no issues with this.

Mr Payne confirmed that he had received a great deal of public support on social media, with many same-sex couples and single women expressing support of the premises following negative experiences elsewhere. Regarding the objections received, one of the concerns related to the premise's proximity to residential properties however he argued that the property is situated in the town's high street and surrounded by other businesses.

Mr Payne said he was passionate about the regeneration of Chatteris and wants to provide safe, enjoyable location for residents and has no intention of causing any issues for the neighbouring

properties.

Councillor Humphrey invited the Panel to ask questions;

1. Councillor Maul asked how many people the business currently employs and whether this would increase in the future. Mr Payne confirmed that currently there are 4 employees, not including himself and Mr Preston-High, and they would look to increase this number in the future dependent on business demand. Mr Preston-High highlighted that an event such as a wedding, employs up to 20 people via local businesses such as cake makers, caterers, and florists etc.
2. Councillor Maul asked what training was in place to adopt and enforce Challenge 25, as referenced on page 32 of the agenda pack. Mr Preston-High confirmed that all staff will undertake in-house training and they plan to enrol staff in an online college course to ensure they are compliant with all legislation and guidelines.
3. Councillor Maul queried that there was no bar area highlighted on the plan submitted and asked for clarification on this. Mr Payne explained that drinks will be stored in the cellar and storage area and will be served directly to the table. He confirmed that this will continue post Covid-19 restrictions.
4. Councillor Meekins asked for confirmation on the number of rooms at the hotel and asked who their target market is. Mr Payne confirmed that there are 11 en-suite bedrooms and currently, due to restrictions, these are mostly occupied by tradespeople however in the future, they would look to cater to wedding guests or people on weekend breaks.
5. Councillor Meekins asked if either Mr Payne or Mr Preston-High have any experience in the hospitality industry. Mr Payne said that whilst he does not have a lot of experience, family members have worked in the industry and are able to offer invaluable advice.
6. Councillor Humphrey asked if the business would focus predominantly on events such as weddings. Mr Payne confirmed that their main business is the hotel and serving of food, but external events will provide an additional revenue stream.
7. Councillor Humphrey highlighted that the lack of bar area may not generate footfall to the premises and asked what the capacity is for events. Mr Preston-High explained that the bar area had been removed some time ago and their aspiration is for the hotel to be a family-orientated, safe environment rather than attracting a high number of 'walk-ins'. He confirmed that, for a wedding, the venue can safely accommodate between 36-46 individuals seated at tables.
8. Mr Preston-High said they had received several enquiries for the exclusive hire of the venue and with the rooms, they could accommodate approximately 20 individuals overnight.
9. Councillor Maul asked whereabouts the music would be played in the premises. Mr Payne confirmed that music would be played in one of the rooms which fronts on to the High Street, to minimise noise to neighbours.

Councillor Humphrey invited the applicants to sum up their case.

Mr Payne explained that their aspiration is to create a pleasant, family friendly environment and to cater for those individuals that do not currently feel catered for within the town. He reiterated that they do not want to create a 'party' venue.

Mr Preston-High explained that customers' needs have changed dramatically in the past six to twelve months, but the majority are looking for an environment that offers music, food & drink, and accommodation.

The Panel adjourned at 10.48am for deliberation and reconvened at 11.11am.

Councillor Humphrey thanked everybody for their time and patience and read out the decision notice.

The Licensing Committee Hearing Panel GRANTED the licence as applied for, subject to the additional conditions agreed with the Police.

11.24 am

Chairman