

Town Centre Neighbourhood Panel
31st March 2011

Present:

Ray Barron	Resident
John Bradshaw	Resident
Insp. Charles Connaughton	Police
Ch.Insp. Jayne Dando	Police
Srg Gareth Evans	Police
Alan Gander	Resident
Debbie Gander	Resident
Nigel Goodyear	EBC Ward Councillor
Bob Gough	Crime Reduction Partnership
Pam Hagon	Resident
Marie Hennelly	Resident
M Isatsan	Shop Owner
Militsa Katsavis	The Dolphin
Adrian Ley (Chairman)	Resident
Tom Liddiard	Upperton Ward Candidate
Kevin Mannall	Community Liaison Manager
David Mitchell	Resident
Kevin Mitchell	Resident
Netta Nielsen	Resident
Jay Patel	Resident
John Pattenden	Resident
Roy Peacock	Neighbourhood Watch
Panayiotis Photious	Odyssey Fish Restaurant
Kareen Plympton	EBC Licensing Manager
Sylvia Rimmer	Resident
Hilary Rawdon Smith	Resident
Stewart Rawdon Smith	Resident
William Rye	Resident
Christos Stylianou	GM Eastbourne Pier
Eve Sheere	Resident
John Soars	Advice/Counselling Centre
Doreen Staines	Resident
V A Thomas	Resident
David Waldick	Resident
Steve Wallis	EBC Ward Councillor
Rosemary Watson	Resident
Robert Witeman	Devonshire Ward Candidate
Georgina Wood	Resident

1 Welcome and Introductions:

The Chairman welcomed new attendees to the meeting and introductions were given around the table.

2 Apologies :

Liz Goude	Resident
Richard Goude	Resident
Stephen Priestley	Resident
Chris Richards	EBC Town Centre Manager

3 Revised Procedure:

The Chairman described how the meeting was to be conducted as a special meeting looking at the implications of the night time economy. He set the context by explaining how the recent variation in capacity for the Funktion Rooms had caused some consternation amongst the residents which led to their invitation for Chief Inspector Jayne Dando (Borough Commander) and Inspector Charles Connaughton (Licensing Inspector) to attend. He also welcomed Kevin Mannell from the University of Brighton and Christos Stylianou the General Manager of Eastbourne Pier.

4 Neighbourhood Management

BG gave a brief overview of the Draft Town Centre Action Plan. Areas to be covered include:

- Community Empowerment
- Community Structure
- Health
- Environment
- Economy
- Training
- Crime and anti-social behaviour
- Resources
- Marketing

The following volunteered to be members of the Operations Group which would help develop the text of the plan for consideration by the full panel.

Ray Barron
Marie Hennelly
Adrian Ley
Kevin Mitchell
Jay Patel
John Soars
Inspector Steve Tullett
Steve Wallis

5 Summary of Licensing Arrangements

Eastbourne Borough Council's Licensing Department is responsible for operating the Licensing arrangements. The Licensing Department consult with **Responsible Authorities**:

- Sussex Police
- East Sussex Fire and Rescue Service
- EBC Health and Environment Department (Noise)
- EBC Planning Department
- ESCC Area Child Protection Team
- ESCC Trading Standards Department

They also invite representations from **Interested Parties** (local residents and businesses).

If no objections are received the application may be approved by officers. If the objections can not be met through mediation between the License proposer and the person making the objection then the matter is referred to the Licensing Act Sub-Committee of Eastbourne Borough Council. A panel of three specially trained

councillors will here representations and decide on the application. There is a right of appeal to the local Magistrates Court for people unhappy with the Licensing Panel's decision.

There is equal weight for the four valid reasons for objecting to a license:

- The prevention of crime and disorder
- Public Safety
- The prevention of public nuisance
- The protection of children from harm.

Eastbourne also has a **Cumulative Impact Policy** which means that the person submitting a license application must demonstrate that they are not contributing to making any of the above worse.

The license is attached to the premises. This means that it is transferred to new owners/managers.

The Police and Licensing Department make regular visits to ensure that licensed premises are acting appropriately. The Eastbourne Joint Action Group (JAG) meets monthly to consider premises causing concern. Premises may be placed on an Action Plan to ensure that areas causing concern are addressed by the licensee. In extreme cases the Police have powers to apply for an expedited summary review of a license.

Interested Parties also have the power to make representation to the Licensing Act Sub-Committee for the review of a license.

6 Summary of Points Made During the Discussion

Crime and disorder associated with the night time economy is the recurring major priority for the Town Centre Neighbourhood Panel. It is not just the residents living close to licensed premises who experience criminal damage to their property and noise disturbance. Many other residents are affected as people make their way to and from Town Centre venues.

The Cumulative Impact Policy has been used effectively to prevent significant increase in the number of pubs, clubs, off-licenses and take away establishments in the Town Centre. However it is limited value in addressing issues for premises already having a license. A permanent reduction in the number of premises can only be achieved through planning applications to change the use of the premises.

A range of measures are taken against staff and licensed premises ranging from £60 fixed penalty fines for staff who breach licensing conditions to temporarily withdrawing the license until necessary improvements are made. This frequently involves additional conditions being attached to the license. This is the case for the Funktion Rooms which has many additional conditions and is now unique in East Sussex as being the only premises in which discounted drinks promotions can only be offered if agreed by a Police Officer of the rank of Inspector or above.

Several other premises also have additional conditions requiring them to employ additional Security Industry Approved staff. One consequence of this is that it places pressure on managers to increase the number of clients to cover the extra cost incurred as increasing their prices is seen to have a negative impact in a saturated market. Cheap drink promotions are used to try to secure a greater share of the market which

encourages increased consumption of alcohol frequently leading to higher levels of disorder. This disorder very often occurs after the clients have left the premises where it is difficult to provide evidence that a particular licensed premises is at fault so that action may be taken against them.

The situation is further complicated by the practice of “pre-loading” in which people consume significant quantities of cheap alcohol before leaving for Town Centre venues. Greater effort is required to discourage this practice by ensuring that already intoxicated people are refused entry to licensed premises.

It is not always possible to find long term solutions to problems occurring at particular locations. In the case of Elms Avenue the residents consider that the only permanent solution would be to gate the road as has been used effectively with some alleyways. The Highways Department at East Sussex County Council will not agree to this action. The precise reasons for this are being investigated to see if there is a foundation to challenge their decision.

The Police use three different patrol patterns overnight to make best use of available officers. At 3am officers take up positions on the red routes, the major exit routes from the Town Centre. One such point is located at the entrance to the pier. Police may have to leave these positions to respond to incidents.

Intoxicated people cause a moving point of disturbance as they make their way home and the Police frequently find that the problem has moved on by the time that they respond to residents calls even when their response is prompt.

Street Drinkers is also a Town Centre priority and significant action has resulted in many having ASBOs in place. It is acknowledged that enforcement action frequently serves to displace the problem to a different area but experience shows that this often causes lower levels of disruption. “Hot Spots” need constant monitoring with repeated enforcement actions to keep the situation under control

7 Agreed Actions:

Two particular areas for action were identified during the meeting. It was agreed that although they should included in the Town Centre Action Plan they require immediate attention and should be considered as priorities.

1. Elms Avenue

The Police will meet with residents to determine what measures may be taken to improve the situation for them.

2. Street Drinkers

KP convenes the Street Drinkers Group. A number of actions are being planned for the area outside the Post Office. KP will meet with residents to involve them.

9 Date of Next Meeting:

The date of the next meeting is Thursday 26th May 2011 at 1900hrs at the Town Hall.

The dates for the rest of the year are:

28th July 2011

29th September 2011

24th November 2011.