

Update on the Licensing Service: September 2022

To update the Committee on the work of the Licensing Team

This year has posed a number of significant challenges to the Licensing Team with workloads unsustainably high during many months, and this trend has continued through the summer.

Officers have also carried out visits to premises and festivals continuing even as we returned to business as usual, complaints are now being received expressing concern about licensable activities, music events and noise from licensed premises.

Partnership Working

Public protection managers are attending quarterly meetings with Police colleagues to ensure we are working in collaboration addressing any relevant concerns and complaints relating to businesses in Wiltshire. These meetings ensure a cohesive multi-agency response across the county to multi-disciplinary issues.

Both agencies now have a clearer picture of how the hospitality industry are operating, we are making decisions on when to carry out any additional evening / weekend working in partnership to make best use of resources, however all agencies are still carrying out their own positive work.

Further proactive work will be carried out prior to the World Cup in November, offering words of advice and guidance to ensure the football is enjoyable for all and any issues are limited by the early engagement.

The Immigration Service have visited the county over the past few months carrying out engagements with a number of premises, to ensure workers are not being exploited or working illegally.

Enquiries and complaints

All the teams in public protection have seen an upturn in the number of enquiries and complaints we are receiving.

While some in the Licensed industry have sought to vary their offerings to their customers by adding food, extending into previously unused or underutilised areas of their property this expansion is not always been welcomed by local residents, who now believe they are unduly impacted by these changes. Whether that be the increase in traffic, people noise or entertainment taking place under the de-regulations.

There has been a notable number of premises who however well intentioned did not realise they required planning permission for the substantive changes they have made, and this has led to difficult conversations and engagement with aggrieved parties when we advise that Licensing is unable to intervene unless the licence if being used; is breached.

Licensing recognise this is a difficult time for Wiltshire businesses, with the impact of economic climate and the retention of staff playing a role in the ability of some premises to be sustainable.

Operationally

The Licensing Team like most of Public Protection are frequenting the offices more, inspections are being undertaken face to face. Evening and weekend intelligence/enforcement visits are being carried out where necessary.

Fetes, festivals, and large scale events

Wiltshire has seen the return of a significant number of festivals and events taking place in the first nine months of this year including, local community fetes, sporting, theatre shows, outdoor cinema shows taking place.

Wiltshire continues to be a popular venue for festivals and other large scale events. Prevention of harm is a key element when planning an event; Licensing Officers are involved in considerable pre event work guiding organisers in managing their own event to lessen the impact on the local community and emergency services of Wiltshire. By early intervention and positive engagement, we seek to guide and educate organisers around managing alcohol consumption levels, drug prevention, antisocial behaviour, and the wellbeing of all at events.

Wiltshire welcomed the return of its largest festival Womad at the end of July during one of the very hot spells we have been experiencing.

Additional advice was passed on to organisers of events during the extreme episodes we have experienced asking them to ensure further measures within any medical provisions to deal with excess heat were implemented to cover dehydration, heat stroke, and sunburn. That there was additional / sufficient available drinking water for all attendees. Increased fire checks should be undertaken due to dry grass and bushes.

Some events are supported through the Event Safety Advisory Group (ESAG). This is a forum where the organisers of events meet with the responsible authorities including the emergency services to discuss details of the event and any potential issues and are offered multi-agency advice. The aim of these meetings is to promote well-run, safe events in Wiltshire.

Hearings

In 2022 to date (end of September) 10 hearings have taken place, in comparison to 8 in 2021 in the same period. Thank you to all Members and colleagues who have enabled the due legal process to continue during these busy times.

Temporary Events Notices

This year has seen a steady increase in the number of temporary events notices received by the council, levels are returning to somewhere near pre covid levels.

Month Received	2020	2021	2022
January	119	3	67
February	121	10	88
March	77	18	134
April	6	50	150
May	8	67	289
June	31	126	187
July	40	156	142
August	38	163	159
September	17	136	133
Total	427	729	1349

The attached Temporary Events notice briefing note for Area Boards will be circulated shortly.

Animal Licensing

As part of the 2018 Animal regulations, inspectors must be suitably qualified to carry out animal activity inspections; prior to the first lockdown all relevant council licensing officers had attended one of the five day courses run by The Pet Industry Federation in London. The final requirement being to pass a series of assignments linked to the five welfare needs across the differing premises and species now covered by the regulations. Covid has made this task difficult as the assignments must be linked to physical inspections across the spectrum of premise types, all of our Licensing Officers have or will shortly achieve the level 3 certification.

The lockdowns saw an increase in dog owning with puppies in high demand which saw a phenomenal increase in the price for certain breeds. This seems to have now settled down, unfortunately the downside of the explosion in puppy sales is now being felt in a surge in stray dogs and dogs and other pets being handed in to animal sanctuaries as the effects of the current economic climate is affecting some people's ability to care for their animals.

Officers have recently been proactively investigating a number of complaints regarding possible unlicensed Dog Breeders in Wiltshire, this has involved colleagues and external agencies following up possible welfare and other related issues. Licensing are also reiterating the message to purchasers to do their homework and only buy a puppy from a licensed breeder. The checks carried out on a breeder seeking to be licensed by a local authority should where possible ensure that welfare of the puppies and mother has been managed appropriately.

Officers have visited a number of travellers sites engaging with the occupiers to give out leaflets and advice about dog breeding and animal welfare.

There are currently 25 licensed breeders in Wiltshire.

All Licensing Officers are now currently undertaking unannounced inspections to all the higher risk premises awarded a 1 and 2 star rating. On a few of these inspections, visits we are discovering issues and concerns, which in turn is leading to further action such as warnings, suspensions, and possible revocation.

Zoo Licensing

A **zoo** licence is required if a premises is displaying wild animals to the public for at least 7 days a year, in any place that's not a circus or pet shop. A new **zoo** licence is valid for four years, renewals are valid for six years.

Wiltshire Currently has two Zoo's

Longleat safari park
Butterfly World

Hope Nature Centre has been granted a Full Dispensation by the Secretary of State based on the small number of the kinds of animals kept in the Zoo and therefore the Act does not apply.

Longleat safari park had its required periodical zoo licence inspection in early July this year. The inspection was undertaken by 2 Secretary of State appointed DEFRA inspectors, a Wiltshire Council appointed Zoo vet and two council Licensing Officers, the inspection took 2 very long days looking at all aspects of the animal park.

The inspectors looked at the :

- Health, welfare, and safety of public and animals including measures for prevention of escape
- Education regarding biodiversity
- Conservation research, education, and training
- Captive breeding and repopulation or reintroduction of species into the wild.

Under The Zoo Licensing Act 1981

The following three different types of inspections are required

- periodic
- special
- informal

Periodic inspections

Wiltshire Council undertake periodic inspections after we have granted a licence.

For new licences we are required to carry out:

- the first inspection during the first year
- the second inspection no later than six months before the end of the fourth year

For renewed licences or a new licence for the holder of an existing licence, Local Authorities are required to carry out:

- the first inspection during the third year
- the second inspection no later than six months before the end of sixth year

Special inspections

Wiltshire Council will carry out a special inspection if we think it necessary because of:

- a periodical report
- any representations made to us, or a properly constituted body concerned with any aspect of the zoo management or its animal welfare
- an informal inspection
- any other circumstances which call for an investigation

Informal inspections

Wiltshire Council is required to carry out an informal inspection once in any calendar year where we haven't carried out any other inspection.

Making our City Safer Event

Licensing Officers Andy Noble and Katherine Edge attended the Making Our City Safer event at the Guildhall in Salisbury on Saturday 1st October where they had set up a stall promoting Pubwatch, Ask Angela, information around alcohol health provided by Turning Point the commissioned substance misuse provider, Animal Licensing and Event Planning information.

Many elements of this event of the Salisbury Plan are similar to those of the Purple Flag in Salisbury around street scene, education and support to the trade and customers within the night time economy with particular emphasis on woman's safety.

Keynote Speakers included: Dame Vera Baird DBE KC Former Victim's Commissioner; Wiltshire PCC and Ch Supt Sarah Robbins (lead for violence against women). Links into this work here: <https://www.wiltshire-pcc.gov.uk/your-pcc/campaigns/safer-nights-charter---survey-toolkit/>

Photos of the event can be found here: [20221001 Soroptimists](#)

Latest Team News:

Licensing is currently seeking to recruit to two vacancies within the team as:

Technical support officer Vikki Bilella is moving to another Council department at the end of the month.

Licensing Officer Jemma Price is leaving the authority at the end of December.

Emma Hyde recently started maternity leave and had a baby girl at the end of September 2022.

Licensing Officers

Carla Adkins	01249 706438	carla.adkins@wiltshire.gov.uk
Roy Bahadoor	01249 706439	roy.bahadoor@wiltshire.gov.uk
<i>Emma Hyde (currently on maternity leave)</i>		

Teresa Isaacson	01249 706413	teresa.isaacson@wiltshire.gov.uk
Katherine Edge	01225 713559	katherine.edge@wiltshire.gov.uk
Lisa Grant	01380 826332	lisa.grant@wiltshire.gov.uk
Jemma Price (<i>leaving at the end of the year</i>)	01249 706436	jemma.price@wiltshire.gov.uk
Andy Noble Temporary Licensing Officer	01249 706402	Andy.noble@wiltshire.gov.uk

Technical Support Officers

Lesley Elven	01249 706555	publicprotectionnorth@wiltshire.gov.uk
Julie Macey	01225 716681	publicprotectionwest@wiltshire.gov.uk
Lauren Cuggy	01249 706555	publicprotectionnorth@wiltshire.gov.uk
Vikki Bilella (<i>moving departments at the end of October</i>)	01249 706555	publicprotectionnorth@wiltshire.gov.uk

Useful links:

[Licences and permits - Wiltshire Council](#)

[Licensing Act 2003: statutory guidance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

[Licensing Act 2003 - Councillor's handbook \(England and Wales\) | Local Government Association](#)

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**Linda Holland – Licensing Manager Public Protection
1st October 2022**