

Update on Premises Licence Annual Fees Licensing Act 2003/The Police Reform and Social Responsibilities Act 2011

1. Purpose of Update

- 1.1 The purpose of this update is to advise members of the progress regarding annual fees relating to licensed premises, and implementation of a new process and the positive outcomes.

2. Introduction & Background

- 2.1 Every Licensed Premise within Wiltshire is required to pay an annual fee. Wiltshire Council currently licence 1518 premises with alcohol, 270 without alcohol and 162 Clubs, totalling 1950.
- 2.2 Annual fees for premises licences have always been due on the anniversary of the licence. Historically the licensing department has requested an invoice for each fee to be sent out by the finance department. If the annual fee was unpaid within 28 days of the date of the invoice (irrespective of the date of the licence) it became the responsibility of the finance department to chase the debt. The licensing department had no authority to suspend licences for non-payment of fees. As a result, many invoices remained unpaid and the licensing department accrued a considerable amount of debt.
- 2.3 In April 2012, The Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 introduced powers to allow the Licensing Authority to suspend licences if the annual fee had not been paid on or prior to the anniversary date of the licence. The aim of the Home Office was to reduce the burden and bureaucracy of licensing for businesses and to ensure that licensing authorities do not face additional costs as a result of licence holders not paying their annual fees.
- 2.4 The Licensing Team investigated the costs involved in raising invoices in SAP versus creating renewals on our in house M3 Software system. A report outlining the cost and time savings for both teams was presented to the finance team in a bid to convince them to move away from the SAP invoicing system. After almost a year of liaising with finance we have finally moved on to the M3 system which has proven to make the process leaner with better outcomes and more customer focused.
- 2.5 Licensing Officers are able to be more proactive in collecting the annual fees and suspending for non-payment where necessary, due to the information being more readily accessible.

3. Summary

- 3.1 The expected income for June was £28,190, from 109 licensed premises. Out of these 109 premises, 7 were suspended due to non-payment, all have now paid and been reinstated.
- 3.2 This process has been a great achievement for all Tech Support Staff and Licensing Staff involved.

4. Proposal

- 4.1 That the Committee note the update.

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