

# **Minutes of a meeting of the Licensing & Gambling Acts Casework Sub- Committee on Monday 31 March 2025**

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## **Committee members present:**

Councillor Ottino

Councillor Jupp

Councillor Sandelson

## **Officers present for all or part of the meeting:**

Alison Daly, Legal Adviser

KC Prawesh, Licensing Compliance Officer

Emma Thompson, Senior Licensing Compliance Officer

Tanaka Merralls, Trainee Solicitor

Hannah Carmody-Brown, Committee and Member Services Officer

## **36. Election of Chair for the hearings**

Councillor Ottino proposed Councillor Jupp as Chair for the meeting; Councillor Sandelson seconded.

Councillor Jupp was elected as Chair for the duration of the hearing.

## **37. Apologies for Absence**

None.

## **38. Declarations of Interest**

None.

## **39. Minutes**

The Sub-Committee **approved** the minutes of the meeting on 4 March 2025 as a true and accurate record.

## **40. Procedure for the hearing**

The Sub-Committee noted the relevant procedure for the hearing.

## **41. Application to vary a premises licence: The Oranges and Lemons**

*The applicant and two colleagues joined the meeting.*

The Chair welcomed the attendees.

The Chair invited the Sub-Committee, officers, and applicants to introduce themselves. The applicants introduced themselves as Jack Amos, premises supervisor, Stephen Thomas, Solicitor, and Jacques Pretorius, operations director.

The Chair invited the Senior Licensing Compliance Officer to present the report.

The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer summarised the report, noting the requirement for the Sub-Committee to determine a variation application submitted by Twickenham Green Taverns LTD for the Premises Licence in respect of Oranges and Lemons, 30 St Clements, Oxford.

The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer outlined the variation in times requested for licensable activities, as noted in the report at appendix 1, and informed the Sub-Committee that the applicant had also requested alterations which would limit the provision of entertainment with speakers to inside spaces only.

The Sub-Committee also understood that the application stated that the premises opening hours will be Sunday to Thursday 09:00 hours to 00:30 hours and Friday and Saturdays 09:00 hours to 01:30 hours, the current licence permits the opening hours to be at the discretion of the Licence Holder.

The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer asked members to note that conditions 9 to 11 of the current premises licence would be superseded by the voluntary conditions if the variation were granted, as in appendix 3.

The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer noted that no adverse comments from Thames Valley Police or the Oxfordshire Fire and Rescue Service had been received, however representations from three Interested Parties were submitted relating to how the application may fail to promote the licensing objectives of the prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, and the prevention of public nuisance, as in appendix 4.

A map of the premises and surrounding area was enclosed in appendix 5.

The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer reminded the Sub-Committee of its responsibilities under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and the Human Rights Act

when reaching a necessary and proportionate decision based on the fair balance between the interests of the applicant and the rights of residents. Any decision must also promote the licensing objectives and must consider the report, and any representations provided within the hearing.

The Sub-Committee understood that they must select from one of the following decisions, but may also grant the licence subject to different conditions for different parts of the premises or the different licensable activities:

- Grant the variation in accordance with the application.
- Modify the conditions of the operating schedule by altering or omitting or adding to them.
- Exclude or restrict from the scope of the licence any of the licensable activities to which the application relates.
- Reject the whole of the application.

Finally, the Senior Licensing Compliance Officer reminded members that the applicant or persons making representations would have the right of appeal against the decision made by the Sub-Committee.

Councillor Ottino requested information regarding the opening hours of other licensed premises local to The Oranges and Lemons. The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer provided this information in relation to Glamorous, The Half Moon, The Port Mahon, The Old Black Horse, and Kazbar.

The Chair invited the applicant to make any representations to the Sub-Committee. Mr. Thomas spoke on behalf of Mr. Amos and Mr. Pretorius.

Mr. Thomas informed the Sub-Committee that the purpose of the application to vary the conditions of the licence was to ensure clarity on any uncertain terms within the previous licence of the premises. The Sub-Committee understood that Mr. Pretorius had acquired the premises licence in 2024 and had since spent approximately £750,000 on refurbishments with intentions to focus the business on food in the future. Mr. Thomas also emphasised the financial pressures facing the hospitality industry at present, noting that The Oranges and Lemons intends to support and maintain staff to ensure a viable pub for the future which functions in a positive manner for the local community.

In reference to appendix 3, Mr. Thomas notified the Sub-Committee that no timings were currently listed for the licensable hours of late-night refreshments, however the applicant wished to clarify these through this process. The Sub-Committee heard of Mr. Amos' wish to be a responsible licence holder.

Mr. Thomas summarised the changes which the applicant sought to make:

- To extend hours of alcohol sales from midnight to 1AM on Fridays and Saturdays
- To open from 8AM for the purpose of serving breakfasts

The Sub-Committee were informed that The Oranges and Lemons had made over 400 breakfast sales in recent weeks and believes that this could be a new popular feature which would support the success of the rebranded business.

In regards condition 15 of the current licence, Mr. Thomas also notified the Sub-Committee that no entertainment is currently permitted in the outside areas of the premises, however it is believed that the previous licence holder misunderstood this and utilised outdoor speakers and TVs. The Sub-Committee were assured that these have now been removed and notified of plans to install small TVs in outside booths which function either on mute, or with Bluetooth enabled headphones. This would ensure external entertainment does not produce additional noise.

Mr. Thomas also drew the Sub-Committee's attention the 17 conditions set out by Thames Valley Police, noting that the applicant supports these as enhancements to the operations of the premises. It was understood that Mr. Amos held no objections to these conditions and is taking actions to support compliance with them, including staff training and event notices.

Mr. Thomas further explained that the application seeks to retain conditions 12-14 of the existing licence to manage noise nuisance. He assured the Sub-Committee that Mr. Amos wrote back to letters of objection, as noted on page 49 of the report, that the premises does not provide regulated entertainment after 11PM, and that no complaints from residents or the public regarding late night activities have ever been received. Mr. Thomas reiterated the steps taken to manage noise in the outside areas of the premises after 11PM including monitoring the designated smoking area in the rear garden, engaging two door staff on Fridays and Saturdays, and prohibiting alcohol outside. Furthermore, the Sub-Committee learned that a noise dispersal policy is in place and door staff remind people to leave the premises quietly. Mr. Amos informed the Sub-Committee that he also lives above the premises but only hears noise from other premises with later opening times. He also noted that he has publicised a telephone number for locals to contact if issue arises.

Mr. Thomas summarised by noting that via the application, all licensing objectives will be met, an overall reduction of hours is requested, and only an increase in hours on Fridays and Saturdays is desired.

The Chair thanked Mr. Thomas for his representation and invited members of the Sub-Committee to ask questions.

Councillor Ottino, in reference to the objections received from residents, asked for clarification around the measures taken to manage noise during late hours. Mr Thomas noted that everyone is moved inside from 11PM and the rear patio is only open to those who smoke; drinks must remain inside.

In relation to the mention of TVs installed in outside booths, Councillor Sandelson asked whether the applicant was confident that this would not lead to additional human noise and whether this could be controlled. Mr. Thomas clarified that as the garden closes by 11PM every night, the TVs would also be switched off at this time and are managed from behind the bar to ensure they remain on silent.

The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer queried what would be shown on the external TVs, to which Mr. Thomas clarified that it would be the choice of the customer, but that sports would often be displayed. The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer noted that sports fixtures would be likely to generate more human noise, to which Mr. Thomas detailed a limit of 8 customers per booth.

The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer asked how many TVs would be outside, to which Mr. Pretorius noted 4. The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer noted that this would allow up to 32 people to watch sports outside at one time and expressed concern at the noise this could produce. Mr. Thomas noted a condition of the licence which would permit this and assured the Sub-Committee that TVs could be relocated inside after 11PM.

The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer noted some confusion regarding the request to open from 8AM despite the licensable hours for 1 May permitting opening from 6AM. Mr. Thomas requested that The Oranges and Lemons retain its permissions to open from 6AM on 1 May; the Senior Licensing Compliance Officer confirmed that this could remain as an exemption.

Councillor Sandelson asked if Mr. Amos, as a resident living above the premises, hears noise during late hours. Mr. Amos described only hearing noise disturbance from Glamorous and The Half-Moon during late hours and explained that The Oranges and Lemons will ask all at customers to leave quietly to avoid disturbance. In regards the earlier discussion of external TVs, Mr. Amos also informed the Sub-Committee that they would be located as far away from residents as possible and closer to the car park at the rear of the premises.

Councillor Sandelson queried whether there are any residential properties overlooking the premises' garden to which Mr. Amos explained that some do, however noted the presence of a large tree obstructing direct view. Mr. Amos also clarified that the objections made to this application all refer to the front area of the premises, and do not mention any noise from the rear garden.

The Chair queried the commercial motivation behind the request to reduce the flexibility of the licence. Mr. Thomas explained the intentions of the licence holder to ensure that staff can work reasonable hours whilst receiving good hourly rates above the minimum. It would also support staff retention. The Sub-Committee heard that the one-hour extension to 1AM on Friday and Saturday nights would support this.

The Chair asked specifically how the flow of smokers in the outside area would be managed after 11PM, raising concern over large groups seeking to stand outside chatting. Mr. Amos explained that a limit would be set to ten persons outside at any one time which would be enforced by doorkeepers. The Chair queried the feasibility of physically stopping customers congregating outside, to which Mr. Amos reiterated that the door staff would be required to monitor this and advise bar staff to stop serving as required. He expressed hope that gentle conversations would be sufficient. The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer suggested the use of signage, noting the limit of 10 persons, to which Mr. Thomas assured the Sub-Committee that these are already in place. Mr. Thomas also emphasised that the management of the smoking area would be at the discretion of house rules imposed by The Oranges and Lemons management team.

The Chair detailed a scenario in which a customer manages to enter the patio once the limit of 10 persons had been reached and becomes annoyed at being asked to move back inside. The customer then moves to smoke at the front of the premises on the street and friends join them here, causing noise. The Chair asked what steps would be taken to manage this. Mr. Thomas and the Senior Licensing Compliance Officer clarified between them that the street immediately within the curtilage of the premises is the responsibility of the licence holder. Mr. Thomas notified the Sub-Committee that the customers would be barred from service to which Mr. Amos agreed, noting that this has previously been done out of efforts to ensure a nice environment for everyone within the immediate vicinity of the premises.

The Chair queried the success of breakfast service at The Oranges and Lemons and requested further information on the typical arrival pattern of customers in the mornings. Mr. Amos explained that since 13 February 2025, around £2500 to £3000 had been taken in sales from breakfast service between 8AM and 10AM, also describing that it is usually workers and students who attend alone and sit inside.

Councillor Ottino returned to the matter of smokers after 11PM and sought further information on why the area for this has been designated at the rear of the premises. Mr. Thomas explained that the decision was in response to the objections received from people living towards the front of the premises and the Sub-Committee heard of Mr. Thomas' belief that the relevant policies in place at The Oranges and Lemons were sufficient. Councillor Ottino queried whether there would always be door staff at the front and back of the premises, to which Mr. Thomas clarified this would only be the case on Fridays and Saturdays after 11PM. Mr. Amos clarified that door staff would be present on Fridays and Saturdays from 8PM until the premises is empty and that during the week, the manager on shift would serve this function.

Councillor Sandelson expressed concern about speaker volume on quiz nights to which Mr. Thomas assured the Sub-Committee that quiz events would always end by 10PM and speakers would not be placed outside.

The Chair queried how much the number of people frequenting the premises on weekends differs from weekday evenings. Mr. Amos noted that on Friday and Saturday nights it can double, but that throughout the days on weekdays it is usually quieter.

The Chair noted the popularity of other surrounding venues amongst students and the sizes of crowds this can attract, especially during term times. In regards Mr. Amos' comment on having only a manager present to control crowds during the week, the Chair asked how this would be feasible during busier periods. Mr. Amos admitted not being able to predict numbers in the summer but committed to hiring additional door staff should the numbers of customers spike considerably. The Senior Licensing Compliance Officer informed the Sub-Committee that Thames Valley Police have already imposed the requirement for the premises to hold regular risk assessments for this matter. The Chair asked whether the premises could obtain additional door staff on short notice, should a risk assessment show this to be suddenly necessary. Mr. Thomas confirmed this would be possible and that they expect they would be able to manage sudden influxes.

The Chair invited the applicant to make a closing representation to the Sub-Committee.

Mr. Thomas reiterated that the application rests on the licensing objectives and whether the Sub-Committee believes that the applicant has given careful thought to the viability of the updated licence. He also acknowledged the value of the 17 additional conditions imposed by Thames Valley Police and the lack of objections to the application within this hearing.

*Mr. Amos, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Pretorius, the Senior Licensing Compliance Officer, and the Licensing Compliance Officer left the meeting to allow the Sub-Committee to reach a decision.*

The Sub-Committee considered:

- That they were impressed by the professionalism and thoroughness of the application and representations within the meeting.
- That the application had been thoroughly scrutinised through questions, and that the representations responded sufficiently to the questions asked.
- That although slightly concerned about noise issues associated with the proposed smoking area to the rear of the premises, there had been no complaints or objections regarding noise to the rear of the premises. However, it was acknowledged that there were representations from interested parties which mentioned noise at the front relating to people entering and leaving and general

noise disturbance, as well one concern that noise may generally increase with extended hours.

- That the licence holder has implemented systems to manage noise associated with the proposed smoking area, such as signage and door staff.
- That the proposals of the new licence holder demonstrated significant improvements to the previous licence and the premises and that as a result, the venue is likely to be more popular.
- That the 1 May exemption for opening hours had been correctly applied for.

*Mr. Amos, Mr. Thomas, Mr. Pretorius, the Senior Licensing Compliance Officer, and the Licensing Compliance Officer rejoined the meeting to hear the Sub-Committee's decision.*

**The Sub-Committee resolved to:**

- **Grant** the application in full, including the request to extend opening hours in the morning to 8AM, the exemption for 1 May as applied for, and to grant subject to the inclusion of the additional conditions put forward by Thames Valley Police.

The Chair also notified the applicant that the Sub-Committee had decided to formalise the conditions set out in the email received from Mr. Thomas on 18 March 2025. These conditions would require the following additions to the operating schedule of the premises as follows:

- A limit of 10 persons is maintained in the smoking area after 11PM on Fridays and Saturdays.
- No alcoholic drinks are permitted in the smoking area after 11PM on Fridays and Saturdays.
- The front area of the premises is closed to smokers after 11PM on Fridays and Saturdays.
- Regular risk assessments of crowd capacity are completed.
- Extra door staff are engaged, as necessary.

The Chair and the Senior Licensing Compliance Officer notified Mr. Amos, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Pretorius that they would have 21 days to appeal the decision made during the hearing via the Magistrates Cour from the date of receiving the decision notice. This would include anyone party to the proceedings, including the objectors as noted in the report.

Mr. Amos, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Pretorius thanked the Sub-Committee.

*Mr. Amos, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Pretorius left the meeting.*



## **42. Dates of Future Meetings**

The Sub-Committee noted the dates of future meetings.

**The meeting started at 6.05 pm and ended at 7.40 pm**