



Northern Ireland  
Assembly

Committee for Communities

# OFFICIAL REPORT (Hansard)

Licensing and Registration of Clubs  
(Amendment) Bill:  
Department for Communities

19 January 2017



been involved in the process are small businesses who gave very generously of their time and energy to shape something that would be practical and would assist them in growing their business and helping the economy. On that basis, we would not want them to be forced into having to start the process from scratch and go through all that again. They have given evidence and made clear what they want, and they now need action. I hope that whoever picks up the threads of this at whatever point in the future will be able to start from that point and take on board what they have already said so that they do not feel that their time was wasted. Their contribution to this, along with the other contributors, has been very impressive and, I think, gave us the bones of a Bill that would have reformed licensing in Northern Ireland constructively.

It is shame that we are where we are, but I thank you for chairing the sessions and thank those who came to give evidence, those who sent written evidence and those who gave advice to the Committee on the legislation. It has been interesting work, not least because we have found out about the social lives of the some of the Committee members in a level of detail that has probably never been recorded in Hansard before.

**The Chairperson (Mr Eastwood):** Most of them are not here to defend themselves.

Thanks very much, folks. We have said what we have to say on that. There is a copy of the letter from the Committee to the Minister at page 46. Liam, you are very welcome again. I am not sure how long you will be here with us in this session. The Minister has not responded to that letter, Liam. Do you have any further updates on the issues?

**Mr Liam Quinn (Department for Communities):** I do not, Chairman. The Minister is still considering the issues raised in your letter. At the last session when I was here, I mentioned that we were planning to meet the PSNI on the issue of large-scale events, which the police have some concerns about. That meeting took place, and we came up with a solution that was acceptable to the police and would lead to a potential amendment to the Bill, had it gone forward, about placing conditions on a licence for such events with consequences if the conditions are not complied with. The police also raised another issue around companies holding liquor licences. After they apply for the licence initially, the directors may change and there is no requirement to notify the court or the police that the directors have changed. The police have no opportunity to object that someone is not fit to hold a liquor licence because of previous convictions or involvement in criminality or whatever. Both those issues were resolved satisfactorily between us and the police with an opportunity to bring forward amendments to address them, but they will clearly not go forward now.

**The Chairperson (Mr Eastwood):** They seem to make sense, Liam, so hopefully the incoming Minister will take those issues up. Do members have any points to make? No.

Liam, thank you very much for your patience with us over the last few months and thanks for the work that you have done on this. Hopefully it will not have gone to waste.