



Northern Ireland Assembly

COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITIES

MINUTES OF PROCEEDINGS

Tuesday 6 December 2016
Room 29 Parliament Buildings

Present: Colum Eastwood MLA (Chairperson)
Michelle Gildernew MLA (Deputy Chairperson)
Steven Agnew MLA
Andy Allen MLA
Jonathan Bell MLA
Naomi Long MLA
Fra McCann MLA
Nichola Mallon MLA
Adrian McQuillan MLA
Christopher Stalford MLA

In Attendance: Kevin Pelan (Assembly Clerk)
Claire McCanny (Senior Assistant Clerk)
Ashleigh Mitford (Assistant Assembly Clerk)
Paula Best (Clerical Supervisor)
Stewart Kennedy (Clerical Supervisor)
Stephanie Wilson (Clerical Officer)

Apologies: Carál Ní Chuilín MLA

The meeting commenced in open session at 10:37 am

The Chairperson declared a family interest in licensed premises.

1. Apologies

Apologies are recorded above

2. Chairperson's Business

No items were raised

3. Licensing and Registration of Clubs (Amendment) Bill – Consideration session with the Department for Communities

The Committee noted a draft issues paper from the Clerk, correspondence from the Department, Asda, the PSNI, Golf Holdings Ltd and The Institute of Public Health in Ireland.

The following departmental officials joined the meeting at 10:38 am

- Liam Quinn
- Carol Reid

The Committee and the Department discussed issues set out in the paper.

Nichola Mallon left the meeting at 10.42am

Clauses 1 and 16 Additional Hours at Easter

The Committee noted that the Minister is content with the Clause but was mindful of points made by stakeholders. After discussion:

Question proposed by Steven Agnew:

‘That the Bill should be amended to provide for the normalisation of opening hours on the Saturday before Easter Day’.

The Committee divided

Ayes	Noes	Abstained	Not voting
Colum Eastwood	Adrian McQuillan		
Steven Agnew	Christopher Stalford		
Andy Allen			
Fra McCann			

The proposal carried.

Michelle Gildernew joined the meeting at 10:45am

Christopher Stalford left the meeting at 10:45 am

Clause 2 Additional Hours: applications to court

The Committee discussed options around an appropriate number of late additional openings.

Question proposed by Fra McCann:

'The Committee is of the view that the Bill should be amended the to allow for an additional 52 late night openings per annum.'

The Committee divided

Ayes	Noes	Abstained	Not voting
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Colum Eastwood

Michelle Gildernew

Steven Agnew

Andy Allen

Fra McCann

Adrian McQuillan

The proposal carried.

Clause 4 Additional Hours: police authorisations

No concerns were raised in relation to this Clause

Clause 5 and 17 Extension of "Drinking-Up" Time

Question proposed by Steven Agnew:

'The Committee would wish to see the removal of the sunset clause at the end of the proposed one-year trial but that the Bill should retain regulation making powers to revert back to the 30 minutes drinking up time if appropriate.'

The Committee divided

Ayes

Noes

Abstained

Not voting

Colum Eastwood

Michelle Gildernew

Adrian McQuillan

Steven Agnew

Andy Allen

Fra McCann

The proposal carried

Clause 6

No concerns were expressed in relation to this clause.

Clauses 8 and 19 Underage Functions

Members are supportive of this clause in that it removes existing barriers to providing functions for this age group.

Clause 12 Restrictions on off-sales drinks promotions

Naomi Long joined the meeting at 10:56 am

Jonathan Bell joined the meeting at 10:59 am

While the Committee discussed the merits of the policy intent of preventing impulse buying, it is also mindful of concerns expressed by retailers.

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek the views of Minister on the merits of amending the clause so that it applies to pubs which have an off-sales attached to their premises and to discuss at a subsequent meeting.

Clause 20 Young People in sporting club premises

Christopher Stalford joined the meeting at 11:03 am

Question proposed by Fra McCann:

'that the months of the year where young people can remain in sporting club premises until 11pm should be extended from the proposed period of June – August to include the months of May and September.'

The Committee divided

Ayes	Noes	Abstained	Not voting
Colum Eastwood			Jonathan Bell
Michelle Gildernew			Adrian McQuillan
Steven Agnew			Christopher Stalford
Andy Allen			
Naomi Long			
Fra McCann			

The proposal carried

Fra McCann left the meeting at 11.18am

The need for a new clause to provide for children attending family occasions after 9.30 pm

The Committee is considering an amendment to the Bill to allow persons under 18 to remain after 9.30pm when attending special ‘family’ events, for example, wedding receptions. It was clear that significant thought would need to be given to the scope of and definitions contained in such an amendment.

Agreed: The Committee would seek advice on options from the Bill Office and for the views of the Minister in order to inform its consideration of the issue.

Addition of Penalty Points to Schedule 10A of the Licensing Order

Agreed: The Committee agreed to seek the views of the Minister on the request made by Northern Ireland Turf Guardians Association. The Association has requested that '*aiding and abetting illegal gambling on a licensed premise*' should be added to Schedule 10A of the Licensing Order (penalty points for offences punishable with level 3 fine).

Drumbo Park

Question proposed by Michelle Gildernew:

‘That the Committee is supportive of Drumbo Park Greyhound Stadium’s request that the Bill be amended to provide patrons with the choice of an alcoholic beverage on a Sunday at their racing venue within restricted hours’

The Committee divided:

Ayes	Noes	Abstained	Not voting
Colum Eastwood			Steven Agnew
Michelle Gildernew			Jonathan Bell
Naomi Long			Adrian McQuillan
Andy Allen			Christopher Stalford

The proposal carried

Micro-breweries/distillers etc.

This fast-growing sector is seeking an amendment to allow producers to provide samples to visitors touring their premises and also permit them to sell their produce both on and off their premises e.g. country markets, trade fairs. There has been wide support in relation to this request.

Agreed: The Committee will ask the Minister to consider amending the Bill accordingly.

Events

The Committee noted that Departmental officials are scheduled to meet with the PSNI to discuss their proposals in relation to an amendment for outdoor events.

The Committee also discussed views of some stakeholders that the Bill should be amended to provide for special events that require a liquor licence but fall outside normal trading hours or outside the scope of an existing licence type. Examples include the MTV Awards and the Good Food event.

Christopher Stalford left the meeting at 11:40 am

Andy Allen left the meeting at 11.48am

Agreed: The Committee would seek the views of the Minister on such an amendment, taking into consideration options within the current licensing regime as an alternative to introducing a new type of licence.

The Committee emphasised that it is not its intention that such provision would lead to a free-for-all of applications and that the policy behind any amendment to the Bill would be to provide for special/exceptional events.

Minimum Unit Pricing

Members discussed options for addressing this evolving issue but noted that there is little scope to address the issue within this particular Bill.

Agreed: The Committee agreed that the Clerk draft a letter to the Minister, setting out the Committee's position on a number of issues in relation to the Bill. For expediency the Committee agreed that the letter be approved by the Chairperson.

The officials left the meeting at 11:54am

The session was recorded by Hansard

4. AOB

No items were raised

5. Date, time and location of the next meeting

The next meeting of the Committee for Communities will take place on Thursday 8 December 2016 at 10.00 am in room 29, Parliament Buildings.

The Chairperson adjourned the meeting at 11:54am

Chairperson, Committee for Communities

8 December 2016