

MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE LICENSING ACT 2003 SUB-COMMITTEE (A) HELD IN COMMITTEE ROOMS 2/3, CIVIC OFFICES ANGEL STREET BRIDGEND CF31 4WB ON TUESDAY, 23 MAY 2017 AT 1.00 PM

Present

Councillor DRW Lewis – Chairperson

PA Davies DG Owen

Apologies for Absence

Officers:

Katia Daw Lawyer
Mark Galvin Senior Democratic Services Officer - Committees
Yvonne Witchell Team Manager Licensing

7. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None

8. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

9. LICENSING ACT 2003: SECTION 105 TEMPORARY EVENT NOTICE 35 MARKET STREET, BRIDGEND

The Corporate Director – Operational and Partnership Services submitted a report, which asked the Sub-Committee to consider an Objection Notice submitted by the South Wales Police in respect of a Temporary Event Notice served on the Licensing Authority in respect of the above premises known as Tom’s bar.

The Team Manager – Licensing summarised the report for the benefit of those present, and advised the Sub-Committee that one further document had been submitted since the agenda and report had been dispatched, which was a Door Supervisor Incident Book. She asked if any developments had taken place between the applicant and the South Wales Police since the papers for the meeting had been circulated, to which both parties replied that no agreement had been reached in respect of the TEN.

In terms of the process to be followed at today’s Hearing, the Team Manager – Licensing advised Members that the Police would firstly give their submission, as it was an Objection Notice in response to an application for a TEN. She also referred to the current hours of operation at the premises which was referred to in paragraph 4.2 of the report, and Appendix A to the report, ie a copy of the Objection Notice that had been served on the Premises User of the premises.

Following this introduction, the Chairperson asked the Police representatives to present their case.

PC Rees advised that on Thursday 11 May 2017, South Wales Police responded with an objection notice to a Temporary Event Notice which was applied for by Mr Zahid Rasul for an event at 35 Market Street Bridgend.

This Premises was formally Toms bar and was now displaying the signage as Eden, however, the local authority to date had received no notification of the change of premises name, which is required under Section 33 of the Licensing Act 2003.

South Wales Police strongly believed that allowing the above Premises the TEN so applied for, would undermine the Licensing Objectives and have a detrimental effect on Bridgend Town Centre and Market Street in particular, which was within the saturation area of the town centre, on a Public Holiday weekend where alcohol related crime will be increased and further demands made upon the Emergency Services.

South Wales Police wanted to support late economy of Bridgend, however, it had a responsibility in keeping the public safe, and this TEN he believed if granted, would increase the possibility of disorder within the town and have an impact on Public Safety.

Market Street as stated is within the saturation area which was a description created, in view of the unacceptable high levels of crime, anti-social behaviour and alcohol related disorder in this general location of Bridgend, and South Wales Police had an obligation in protecting the quality of life to residents and making the Town Centre safe for visitors.

The TEN has asked for an increase in its trading hours which at present allow the premises to open until 3.00am on a Sunday morning leading from Saturday night, and 02.00am on a Monday leading from Sunday night on a Bank holiday which South Wales Police felt was adequate.

The TEN requests the sale of alcohol until 5.00am on Sunday 28 May, with a cooling down period of 30 minutes, meaning the premises would operate until 5.30am. The applicant had also requested an extension of hours on Monday 29 May from 2.00am until 4.00am with a cooling down period of 30 minutes, meaning that the premises would operate until 4.30am, and this request was not supported by the conditions set out in the Operating Schedule which stated that there would be no admissions/ re-admissions to the premises after 12.20pm on Sundays.

PC Rees proceeded by confirming that no persons should be allowed entry to the premises after this time which caused the Police concern, as the Conditions were put in place to help the premises operate safely. If the applicant abided by this Condition, then there was a further concern that at 02.00am, a large crowd could gather outside the premises waiting for entry and this had a realistic prospect of having an increase in alcohol related crime. He added, that it would be difficult for the Prevention of Crime and Disorder to be fully controlled due to such potential of an increase in drunken persons congregating in one area at such a late hour. He further added, that the Prevention of Public Nuisance would be further experienced in this residential area at an unacceptable hour due to persons leaving the premises so late ie in the early hours of the morning.

PC Rees advised that there were 8 Licensed Premises close to the premises subject of the application, and the granting of the TEN would see the premises operating later than any of the other late night establishments nearby, which was a potential cause for concern. He added that the operating hours at the premises as it stands, would see the premises close at the same time as two other premises on the Sunday morning, and at the same time as one other premises on the Monday morning, which allowed for the flow of customers from the town centre more easily, and therefore was safer for persons operating Taxi and Food vendors, as access to these facilities would be more in the way of a steady flow.

PC Rees proceeded by confirming that though the hours of the TEN may not amount to much of an increase in the operating hours of the premises, to ensure the safety of the public at this late time in the early hours of the morning, was both demanding and costly on the Emergency Services, as coinciding with these increased hours, the Police expected a rise in alcohol related crime and disorder due to an anticipated increase in the number of persons still consuming alcohol at both this and other late night premises from one evening into the early hours of next day. PC Rees added, that even persons supplying a service to the public such as taxi drivers and food outlets may be affected, as patrons would have consumed alcohol for a longer period than would normally be the case. In this condition with possible diminished faculties, those who would not normally offend may do so, as they could make different choices and behave differently due to an excessive consumption of alcohol.

PC Rees then referred to Occurrence 1700150438 which took place at 05.25am on 24 April 2017 at Market Street where a female customer had been abusive to a taxi, hence quantifying what he had mentioned earlier in the meeting regarding premises being allowed to open later than their Premises Licence permitted, constituting to an increase in crime and disorder toward services such as taxi proprietors and owners of premises that served food into the early hours, for example at Kebab and other takeaway premises. He added that though the above incident was not necessarily linked to the premises subject of the application, the Police wished it brought to the Sub-Committee's attention, as this was a typical type of incident that took place in the town centre on weekend evenings and into the early hours of the morning in and around those premises that had later opening hours, and particularly in the saturation area.

The late night economy was also an ideal place for persons to supply controlled drugs also, and like any town, Bridgend was not immune from this problem. With the possibility of later opening hours at the premises, this could appear attractive to persons involved in the supply of drugs and also for persons to take drugs in a social environment, an activity that often led to incidents of serious crime and disorder.

South Wales Police had noticed that there has been a steady increase in violent crime and alcohol related incidents at Market Street, and this was prior to the opening of 35, Market Street, (ie previously Tom's Bar) Bridgend, and the Police had also noticed that a high level of these type of incidents take place after 3.00am. An example of such occurrences were outlined as follows:-

Occurrences on Market Street

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2017</u>
Jan	18	21
Feb	20	22
Mar	17	18

At this point in proceedings Mr. Parry Solicitor acting on behalf of the applicants, advised the Sub-Committee that the Police in their submission were referring to information and incidents in particular that had not been previously circulated to parties as part of the Objection Notice from them that accompanied the meeting agenda/report. He enquired if this was new evidence, and if so, clarification that this had been served on all interested parties in advance of the meeting.

The Legal Officer advised that representations originally made by the Police could be expanded upon, however, if they relied on any fresh information being shared with the Sub-Committee, then this should have been circulated prior to the meeting commencing on all parties involved in the Hearing.

The Team Manager – Licensing advised that the Police had advised that they wished to refer to 4 separate incidents (known as Occurrence Details) that had recently taken place in or around the vicinity of the premises and show a photograph of the exterior of 35 Market Street, which was showing the premises to be named Eden Club and Live Lounge. She advised that these documents had been served on the local authority last week and on Mr. and Mrs. Rasul this morning.

The Chairperson following the receipt of legal advice, suggested that the meeting stand adjourned, in order to see if all further evidence that had/was going to be referred to by the Police, had in fact been served on all parties prior to the meeting, and if so, whether or not the applicants had any objections or representations to the Panel considering the extra evidence referred to, prior to a decision being taken by the Sub-Committee on this matter.

The meeting was therefore adjourned at 1.22pm, and reconvened at 1.30pm.

Mr. Parry advised that his client had now received all the extra information that the Police wished to submit before the meeting, and he confirmed that his clients were happy to proceed on this basis.

The Chairperson therefore invited the Police to continue with the submission of their evidence.

PC Rees asked that before the Sub-Committee makes a decision upon the application, the South Wales Police wished Members to be aware of the following incidents which took place on the previous Public Holiday, in the early hours of Monday morning, information upon which had now been agreed to be tabled at the meeting as late supplementary documentation.

Occurrence 1700164300 referred to a female victim of assault as she is thrown to the floor in Market Street.

Occurrence 1700164480 referred to a female being grabbed to the throat again at the same street at 1.15am. This resulted in the arrest and detention of a male person. PC Rees added that the patrons involved in these crimes were associated with the premises and the matters went unreported, but the aggressor had been intoxicated.

Occurrence 1700155002 referred to a male having been ejected from 35 Market Street and then he caused an instance of public nuisance in the street where he was warned of possible arrest by a Police Officer. This patron claimed that he had been assaulted at the premises in question, though there was no subsequent firm evidence of this.

South Wales Police did not feel that the imposing of any Conditions on the TEN would assist in the event running safely and due to this, objected to the TEN being granted.

PC Rees confirmed that 400 additional patrons in this area of town as a result of the TEN being granted, would have quite an impact due the late hours applied for by the applicants, and therefore, should the TEN be granted, it would be difficult to police the area and control the extra number of patrons anticipated in the town, many of which would be vulnerable due to excessive alcohol consumption.

South Wales Police in light of the above, therefore objected to the application on the grounds of if the TEN was granted, crime and disorder would in all probability increase, and if so, this would have a detrimental effect on the locality.

PC Rees concluded by stating that the objection of the South Wales Police was based on the incidents which had occurred and were referred to above, and the Police considered these recent incidents to be relevant in respect of the application in terms of meeting the licensing objectives.

Mr. Parry referred to an incident raised by the Police, namely the case reported on 1 May 2017 of domestic violence where it was stated that a patron assaulted his former girlfriend after which her friend remonstrated with the man in question and she too was assaulted, at a time of 1.15am. He noted though that this did not happen in the premises subject of the application?

PC Rees advised that it was linked to the premises as the man who committed the assault had recently been drinking at these premises.

Mr. Parry contested this, adding that the incident did not happen inside the premises nor immediately outside it.

PC Rees replied that the incident had taken place close to the premises.

Mr. Parry reminded the Sub-Committee that one of the driving factors of Premises Licence in place at any premises, was to manage, control and operate the premises effectively. This meant either in or immediately within the curtilage of the establishment, and that any incidents that took place outside this vicinity was not the responsibility of the Premises Licence holder.

PC Rees replied by stating that the management of any late night establishment not only needed to manage activities that took place inside the premises, but also at the frontage of the premises ensuring that patrons that were in this vicinity were also safe.

Mr. Parry asked PC Rees where the above incident had taken place.

PC Rees advised that it had occurred at Market Street/York Street, approximately some 20 feet from the premises.

Mr. Parry asked if the incident in question happened outside the view of Door Control staff at 35, Market Street.

PC Rees confirmed that he was not aware if staff at the premises had viewed the incident or not.

The Chairperson asked if York Place was situate between Market Street and Wyndham Street, to which PC Rees replied that it was.

The Chairperson noted that there were 8 other late night establishments in the town centre, and he asked which one of these was furthest away from 35, Market Street.

PC Rees confirmed that this would either be Sax or the Wyndham Hotel, both of which were located in the designated saturation area of the town.

A Member noted that in the Police Objection Notice, it made reference to Occurrence 1700155002, an incident that had taken place at or near the premises at 3.00am on 1 May 2017, when a TEN was successfully applied for in respect of the premises. Obviously the hours of opening at the premises that evening into the early hours of next morning had been extended by virtue of the TEN. She asked if certain premises in the saturation area all closed at approximately the same time that evening/morning, and if

this had any impact on crime and disorder that particular evening/morning or generally speaking over Bank Holiday periods.

PC Rees confirmed that the above incident had taken place on the May Day Bank Holiday, and the only TEN that had been successfully applied for by any of the premises included in the saturation area on this occasion was 35, Market Street. However, other premises had opened later than this that weekend under the provisions of their Premises Licence, though some also had closed earlier. The incident referred to above had taken place and had been logged by the Police, however, he was not aware offhand if any other serious incidents of anti-social behaviour or crime and disorder had taken place in the saturation area over this Bank Holiday weekend. He added that when a number of premises closed at approximately the same time in the town centre especially over a weekend, then this inevitably led to a large congregation of people in the same place at the same time, some of which would be highly intoxicated, and such a situation could incite problems.

As this concluded questions on the submission of the South Wales Police, the Chairperson asked the applicants and their legal representative to present their case.

Mr. Parry commenced by reminding Members that what his clients were requesting today was a TEN over the forthcoming Bank Holiday weekend which meant in real terms, that the hours of operation at 35 Market Street would be extended by a maximum of two hours of opening on both Sunday 28 May and Monday 29 May 2017.

He continued by advising that other premises located in the 'saturation area' of Bridgend town centre were open into the early hours of the morning, particularly over the weekend period, under the provisions of their Premises Licences. These included Roof (open until 4.30am) Sax (open until 4.30/5.00am), and both The Star and The Phoenix both (open until 2.30am.) His clients therefore were just looking for parity with these other premises, in order to achieve a little extra business and the income this would generate over the Bank Holiday period.

Mr. Parry noted from the evidence submitted by the South Wales Police, that they claimed that the increase of hours applied for as part of the TEN, would generate an extra 400 patrons visiting the saturation area of the town centre. This however he strongly considered would not be the case. He was more of the opinion that the same number of patrons would visit the town centre over the forthcoming weekend as normally would, regardless of whether or not a TEN was granted at 35 Market Place. It would be more the case he felt, that the existing number of customers visiting the town centre on the above evenings would just have more flexibility in terms of where they could enjoy an evening out with friends, spending their money socialising and having a good time, and this after all was what the younger generation wanted Mr Parry added.

He noted that in the Police Objection Notice, it made reference to the fact that the South Wales Police believed that the sale of alcohol was not ancillary to substantial refreshments and music and dancing at the premises. However, he felt that this was not the case and made reference to the old licensing regulations (ie the 1964 Act) which superseded the new Licensing Act 2003 to substantiate this point, where premises if they had a Music and Dancing Licence could apply for an extension of opening hours to the Magistrates Court for the sale of alcohol (under a Special Hours Certificate). Ordinarily this would also be granted, other than in rare accentuating circumstances.

Mr. Parry then advised that he would respond to some of the concerns raised by the Police, including incidents that had allegedly taken place at or in the immediate vicinity of the premises, either been referred to in the Police Objection Notice attached at Appendix A to the report, or tabled at the meeting following its previous adjournment.

He firstly referred to Occurrence 1700155002 where reference was made to a male patron having been ejected from 35 Market Street, subsequently causing a public nuisance on the street for which he was warned that he could be arrested if he continued. He alleged that he had been assaulted whilst in the premises, though this was unproven. The premises had logged this incident as having taken place at 2.00am, a time whereby the premises could ordinarily remain open to trade under its existing Premises Licence in any event, as opposed to having its hours extended under a TEN. At this time, there had been a group of approximately 6 or so young males who all were acquainted with one another, and the one that had started the argument was a large individual around 6 feet 4 inches tall who resembled in terms of his size, a rugby player. He had become aggressive whilst with the other individuals and initiated a fight following which, a Door Control Person escorted him and one of his friends from the premises. The victim had been allowed to remain there by staff for his own protection. Mr. Rasul had observed what had happened, and had seen the aggressor interacting with Police outside the premises complaining he had been assaulted when in fact he had actually assaulted someone else there. Mr. Parry advised Members, that issues such as this could happen in any nightclub environment at virtually any time. The important thing was, that staff at the premises had handled the situation in an effective and responsible manner and he asked the Sub-Committee if they could note this.

Mr. Parry continued by advising the Sub-Committee that Mr. Rasul always ensured that he had sufficient door staff on duty at the premises during busy occasions such as Bank Holidays, and all of these were trained to SIA standard.

In respect of the second Occurrence 1700164300, Mr. Parry explained that that this led to a further offence namely Occurrence 1700164480. Both of these he advised were cases of domestic violence, the first being an assault by a male to an ex-girlfriend and the second a further assault to his ex-girlfriend's friend. It was a sad fact of life Mr. Parry confirmed, that domestic violence did take place within society. He added however that in both these instances, the offences took place out in the street and not within or in the immediate vicinity of 35 Market Street. It was therefore not the responsibility of his clients to manage the situation that led to these offences, nor was it his clients fault that they occurred in the first place. If these events had taken place at or in the immediate location of the premises, Door Control staff would have intervened and protected the 2 females in question. None of the staff had actually seen these incidents take place, so Mr. Parry felt it was unfair for the Police to object to the application for a TEN being made on these grounds.

In their Objection Notice at Appendix A to the report, the Police had raised certain concerns with a Condition of the Premises Licence of Eden. This was Condition 8, ie 'No admission/re-admission to be permitted into the premises after 12.20am on a Sunday (into Monday morning)'. Mr. Parry assured the Sub-Committee that the management at the premises complied with this Condition in any event. He also reiterated something he had shared with those present earlier in the debate, which was that there was also never any queuing at the premises, a) because in terms of numbers of patrons visiting there, including at any one time, this had never reached capacity in the past and was unlikely to do so in the foreseeable future, and b) because most late night establishments these days did not charge patrons an entry fee including Eden. He asked the Members to note therefore, that Condition 8. of the Premises Licence would be complied with, and that there would be nothing like an 400 patrons visiting the premises should the TEN be granted.

With regard to Occurrence 1700150438 and a female flagging down a taxi 5.00am on 21 April 2017, Mr. Parry advised that once more this had nothing to do with his clients

premises, and therefore should not be included as Police evidence in the context of the TEN so applied for.

He advised the Sub-Committee that he had nothing more to add at this stage of the meeting, and therefore the Chairperson asked if anyone had any questions.

PC Egan asked Mr. Parry how long 35 Market Street had been in operation as a kind of extension to Eden.

Mr. Parry confirmed that the premises had been open approximately 4 weeks.

PC Egan advised that there had been issues at the premises previously relating to incidents of anti-social behaviour etc, including when a TEN had been granted there, ie the May Day Bank Holiday. She asked Mr. Parry how he could be certain that no extra patrons would visit late night establishments at Bridgend this coming Bank Holiday if they became aware from 'hear say' that some of these establishments would be open later, again by virtue of a TEN.

Mr. Parry replied that he had made such a judgement based on his previous experiencing of practising licensing law which was considerable, coupled with the number of patrons who had visited Eden including the adjoining premises at times previous TENS had taken place there.

PC Egan contested that Bank Holiday periods were a "hot spot" for activity, particularly in the saturation area of Bridgend, that gave the Police cause for concern as it impacted upon their resources. It was a proven fact that at these times crime and disorder did increase in Bridgend, due to extra patrons visiting Bridgend, particularly on Sunday evenings into Monday which were busier than Saturday evening into Sunday (on these weekends.)

Mr. Parry advised that it was difficult to say what night of the two above was the busier on Bank Holiday weekends, as this fluctuated from time to time. Even if a Sunday night was busier than a Saturday on these occasions, this would never amount to an extra 400 people visiting the Bridgend town centre in his opinion, let alone visiting his clients premises.

In terms of the Condition (8) that Police had raised concerns about, ie no admission/re-admission to be permitted to the premises after 12.20am on Sundays and how this would be managed, Mr. Parry confirmed that staff would ensure that this Condition was implicitly complied with, as they had in the past.

A Member asked Mr. Rasul how many persons were allowed in his premises at any one time, to which he replied 400 persons. Mr Parry added that there were two Door Control staff that covered the entrance to the premises, one with a clicker saying how many had come into the premises, and the other with a clicker counting those that had left. Taking one total from the other allowed staff to know how many patrons were in the premises at any one time.

The Chairperson noted from an incident referred to earlier in proceedings, that a man approximately 6 feet 4 inches tall and largely built, had been escorted from the premises the night he had caused trouble there by starting a fight. He asked if this person had been drinking at the premises all evening prior to this occurrence.

Mr. Rasul stated that he had entered his premises fairly late, and he had headed there from the general direction of the premises of either The Roof or The Railway, both of

which were late night establishments. After he argued with the group he was with, he was then asked to leave the premises.

The Chairperson asked if this person was heavily intoxicated, to which Mr. Parry replied that he had been consuming alcohol though staff were unsure whether or not he was actually drunk.

As this concluded debate on the application, the Chairperson asked both parties to sum-up.

PC Rees confirmed that South Wales Police have raised concerns over the application for the TEN, and were aware that the Sub-Committee had the following options in relation to what action they could take:-

1. To allow the event to take place;
2. To issue a Counter Notice and prevent the event from taking place
3. To allow the event, but to place additional Conditions on the Premises Licence whilst the event takes place

He added that the South Wales Police felt that there were no additional Conditions to impose in order to ensure that the event would operate safely, and they also felt that any such additional Conditions imposed as part of the TEN, would not in any event support the licensing objectives.

He concluded by stating that Conditions must be consistent with activity authorised as part of the TEN application, however, the Police had not been informed what the activity was that was to take place over the coming Bank Holiday other than to sell alcohol, which therefore made it difficult to put appropriate Conditions in place.

Mr. Parry advised that he had nothing to add as part of any summing-up, however, if the Sub-Committee required clarification on anything he had referred to as part of his clients submission, then he would gladly expand upon this.

The Team Manager – Licensing confirmed that Members could if they so wished, refer to the existing Premises Licence (in place at Eden) should.

Members then adjourned to consider the matter further, and upon their return, it was

RESOLVED:

The Sub-Committee considered the application for a TEN for licensed premises at 35 Market Street, Bridgend being Tom's Bar (which appears to be locally known as Eden Bar although no formal application to change the name has been made). The application relates to the late May Bank holiday, specifically for an event taking place from 03.00 hours to 05:00 on Sunday 28th May with opening hours of 03:00 to 05:30 hours, and for an event taking place from 02.00 hours to 04:00 on Monday 29th May with opening hours of 02:00 to 04:30 hours.

It noted that this is currently a running business that operates with a license allowing it open:-

Until 03.00am on the Sunday and 02.00am on the Monday, therefore this is in effect a 2 hour extension each day.

It have also noted the police objections to this application, being that allowing the TEN would undermine the licensing objectives of:

1. Crime and disorder
2. Public nuisance
3. Public Safety

It also noted that the premises was granted a similar TEN for the early May Bank holiday a matter of weeks previously and the Police have used evidence of the occurrences on this weekend to support their objections.

The Sub-Committee considered this evidence in supporting the concerns of the Police and will deal with each licensing objective in turn

Crime and Disorder

The Sub-Committee noted that there were two incidents of violence reported on the weekend the previous TEN was granted. The first related to a incident of a disturbance within the premises. It is accepted that this incident happened. The Premises Licence Holder suggests that the persons involved had not long been in his premises and were correctly dealt with. This is supported by the evidence showing the recording of the incident and subsequent removal of the persons concerns. Although it is concerning that any incidence of violence has occurred, the Sub-Committee noted the time of this incident as being during the normal opening hours and not in the extended hours covered by the TENs.

The second incident did not occur in the premises and occurred, on the Premises Licence Holder's submission, out of view of the premises. This incident has two occurrences recorded against it, but in effect it makes up one event. Again, the Sub-Committee are concerned to see any violence in the town centre however they balance this against the links which can be made with the Premises and again note the occurrence time as 01.15am.

The Sub-Committee have noted the Conditions in the premises license which apply to Crime and Disorder to minimise the risk of incident.

Public Nuisance

The main concern for public nuisance related to the potential for queues of persons to form in the street given the no entry policy that would be in operation for the entirety of the TENs. The Sub-Committee have considered this and noted that other premises would be open and therefore queues are unlikely to form as upon being advised entry is not possible the persons would disperse to other locations.

There was an ancillary concern regarding inebriated persons queuing for taxis, and the police supported this by referencing an

incident of the former bank holiday weekend. The committee have noted the late time of this incident being 05.25am therefore would be at the conclusion of the TEN.

Public Safety

This was not covered in detail by the Police but their concerns related in the main to the effects of the violence, as above, and the problems caused by queueing persons or those congregating upon egress. Therefore the Sub-Committee would repeat their above comments when considering these points.

Having taken into account all of the above, the Sub-Committee were happy to allow the Licensable Activity to go ahead imposing the following of the existing Conditions found in the existing License, those being those the Sub-Committee feel are consistent with the event and which it feels will promote the licensing objectives:-

General Conditions:
7, 8, 23

Prevention Crime and Disorder Conditions; (in their entirety)
which for the avoidance of doubt is:-
Conditions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9

The meeting closed at 4.20pm

The meeting closed at 4.00 pm