

## LICENSING SUB-COMMITTEE 1

Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2009 at 10.00am  
in The Council Chamber, The Council House, Dudley

### PRESENT:-

Councillor Ryder (Chairman)  
Councillors Nottingham and Tyler

### Officers

Principal Solicitor (Legal Advisor), Mrs J Elliott (Licensing Officer) and  
Mrs K Farrington (Directorate of Law and Property)

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24                    DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No member declared an interest in accordance with the Members' Code of Conduct.

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25                    MINUTES

### RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting of the Sub Committee held on 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2008, be approved as a correct record and signed.

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26                    APPLICATION FOR CONSENT TO ENGAGE IN STREET TRADING – E G SKETT & CO – STOURBRIDGE FARMERS/FOOD MARKET 2009

A report of the Interim Director of Law and Property was submitted on an application received from E G Skett & Co, for the grant of a consent to engage in street trading for a farmers/food market in High Street/Lower High Street, Stourbridge.

Mr Skett of Skett & Co was in attendance at the meeting. Also in attendance was Ms H Rogers, Stourbridge Town Centre Manager, whose written representations were outlined in Appendix 3 of the submitted report. It was noted that Mrs J Jones, Commercial Operations Manager was not in attendance but had submitted written representation as set out in Appendix 2 to the report submitted.

Following introductions, the Chairman outlined the procedure to be followed.

Mrs J Elliott, Licensing Officer, Directorate of Law and Property, presented the report on behalf of the Council.

Ms Rogers expanded on her comments made at Appendix 3 to the report submitted, and in doing so, expressed support for the application. She also stated that E G Skett & Co was the leading market operator in the Country; had an excellent reputation for handling all aspects of markets and had a very strict farmer's market trading criteria which would lead to Stourbridge hosting it's first authentic, quality farmer's market.

Mr Skett then informed the Sub-Committee that E G Skett and Co successfully operate fourteen markets a month around the country. He stated that the market would consist of twenty-five stalls selling food and locally grown produce, therefore supporting local farmers and small businesses. He further stated that the market would be good for the town as it would increase footfall and create a positive atmosphere.

In response to questions from the Sub-Committee, Mr Skett reported that they wanted to work in partnership with the Council to ensure the market was a success. He informed them that each year an officer of the National Farmers Union visited local farms within a thirty-mile radius to ensure that the produce they received from them was genuine.

#### RESOLVED

That the application received from E G Skett & Co, for the grant of a consent to engage in street trading for a farmers/food market in High Street/Lower High Street, Stourbridge, be approved.

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#### GRANT OF HOUSE TO HOUSE COLLECTION PERMIT – SUPPORT DIRECT (THE COBRA GROUP)

A report of the Interim Director of Law and Property was submitted on an application received on behalf of Mr John Harris of Support Direct (The Cobra Group plc) for the grant of a House-to-House Collections Permit on behalf of the National Deaf Children's Society.

Mr Harris, Head of Licensing and Chief Promoter of Support Direct, was in attendance at the meeting.

Following introductions, the Chairman outlined the procedure to be followed.

Mrs J Elliott, Licensing Officer, Directorate of Law and Property, presented the report on behalf of the Council.

Mr Harris then presented his case, and in doing so, explained to the Sub-Committee that each fundraiser underwent a comprehensive two-week training programme followed by oral and written examinations. He stated that fundraisers had to pass all tests undertaken with 100% success rate, however, if that figure was not received, fundraisers would be asked to either re-take the examinations or they were told that they had not been successful with their application. He also stated that an experienced fundraiser also supervised them when they first went out on the road, to monitor performance. He reported that Support Direct had employed three Field Development Managers and their role was to complete random spot checks to check on fundraisers efficiency and the quality of training they had been given.

He then explained that Support Direct represented a dozen UK-registered charities in the Country. He stated that the charities engaged them to generate long-term support to their work by recruiting donors, who gave to the charities on an ongoing basis by way of direct debit. Donors could continue to make donations indefinitely but could cancel at any time. Mr Harris confirmed that once a form had been completed and signed by a donor agreeing for a direct debit to be given to a charity each month, company policy was that a courtesy call would be made to the customer thanking them for their support and that they would also be asked whether the fundraiser that had approached them had acted in a polite and professional manner. He reported that the form the donors were given confirming their approval of the direct debit contained information verifying the company they worked for and a telephone number, which donors could ring to check to see if the fundraiser was bona fide. He informed the Sub-Committee that they only represented one charity at a time and the entire proceeds of the collection went to the charity.

Mr Harris also commented that fundraisers tried to avoid knocking on elderly people's doors. If an elderly person answered the door, the fundraiser was polite and apologised for the disturbance before visiting the next house. He stated that each fundraiser was required to display a photo identification badge at all times, to demonstrate clearly that they were an officially appointed fundraiser.

He then informed the Sub-Committee that the charity that they were collecting for received 100% of the money donated. He confirmed that the charities agreed a figure to pay Support Direct at the beginning of each financial year regardless of how much money was collected for the charity. Fundraisers would be paid per donation they received.

Mr Harris then assured the Sub-Committee that identity theft or any other sort of theft would not be a problem as fundraisers were required to wear photo identification and a copy of each fundraiser's identification number was printed on the copy of the declaration form and by releasing that information to the main office of Support Direct, the fundraiser could be traced.

He then reported that the Police were always informed when collections were taking place. He stated that fundraisers names and the charity in which they were collecting for, together with vehicle registration numbers were provided. The reason for this was that police were aware that charity collections were taking place in the area and if they received a call from a worried donor regarding identity theft they would be able to confirm that the fundraisers were genuine and alleviate any concerns raised.

In responding to a question from the Legal Advisor, Mr Harris confirmed that they only represented one charity at a time but would like the option of working with different charities from time to time. He informed the Sub-Committee that he would contact the Licensing Office to ask permission if they could change the charity they were collecting for. The Sub-Committee expressed concern regarding this issue and reported that the application was for a house-to-house collections permit on behalf of National Deaf Children's Society only. In responding, Mr Harris confirmed that he wanted to work in accordance with the requirements of the Council and support the decision of the Council.

Members then sought and received confirmation of the information given in relation to the amount of money the charity received from collections; how Support Direct were paid by the charity they were collecting for and in relation to the training of potential fundraisers.

In responding to a further question from the Sub-Committee, Mr Harris reported that random spot checks were undertaken but stated that due to the small number of experienced team leaders, it was impossible to say how many checks were made in a specific time.

The Legal Advisor sought and received confirmation of the information contained in the declaration form potential donors had to complete following the agreement of money being donated each month to charity.

In summing up, Mr Harris assured the Sub-Committee that all fundraisers ceased collecting at 8.30pm each evening. He stated that he wanted to work with the Council and Police and confirmed that contact details were circulated to relevant authorities in the event of problems occurring. He also stated that he believed that Support Direct's method of collecting money was the most cost effective way for charities to earn money.

#### RESOLVED

That the application received on behalf of Mr John Harris of Support Direct (The Cobra Group plc) for the grant of a House-to-House Collections Permit on behalf of National Deaf Children's Society, be approved.

The meeting ended at 11.20 am.

CHAIRMAN