

STROUD

No response nec.

**National Alcohol Strategy Consultation Process
Meeting held on 22 January at Stroud District Council Offices, Ebley Mill**

Present

Alison Hustwitt, DAAT
Jo Miller, Community Safety Officer, Forest of Dean District Council
Debbie Powell, Community Safety Assistant, Forest of Dean District Council
A/Ch Inspector Mac McGarry, Gloucestershire Constabulary
Trevor Gladding, Community Safety Officer, Cheltenham Borough Council
Phil Sullivan, Community Safety Officer, Stroud District Council
Derrick Ind, Environmental Health, Stroud District Council
Derek Harrison, Police Architectural Liaison Officer

This meeting was arranged originally because Carol Sweetenham of the Cabinet Office Advisory Group requested a meeting as part of the consultation process on the National Alcohol Strategy. In the event Carol's visit was postponed until 30 January, but Phil Sullivan suggested that this group should meet to discuss the issue in preparation for the meeting with Carol. However, anyone able to also attend on 30th would be welcome.

Phil informed the group that the proposed National Alcohol Strategy will possibly mean funding will be available, in the same way as CADI money resulted from the national strategy for tackling drugs. We have been asked to examine the problems regarding the way in which alcohol affects rural communities, for example the issue of late night transport.

Trevor Gladding said that licencing seems to be being pushed in the direction of Local Authorities, which will mean more work for them. The night time economy causes enormous problems in Cheltenham, some with drugs but mostly alcohol. Jo Miller said that the problem is linked to transport – many young people from the Forest go to Cheltenham for nights out and have problems getting home. Derek Harrison asked who was the problem, but Trevor pointed out that it was sheer numbers. Now that clubs have a staggered turn out at 2am and 4am there are now two trouble spots. There is a high concentration of clubs in Cheltenham, less in Gloucester, then Stroud.

Mac McGarry said that deregulation could mean that disorder is reduced eg on New Year's Eve, and we should try to steer the Government in that direction. Derek Harrison asked why this was so – it is the spread of spending, and more flexibility with limited funds. Derrick Ind pointed out that rural public houses will not have the option to stay open longer hours as there is not the custom to warrant it, and staffing could be a problem. Trevor said that having one licencing authority could make things easier. Phil Sullivan said that the Alcohol Referral system was working. Alison Hustwitt suggested that the youth culture of binge drinking should be tackled through education. Trevor said that this culture is encouraged by the clubs, and businesses should be more responsible.

Derek Harrison said that Planning Departments are keen to push business into towns but have not got to grips with it properly in the sense of dealing with people regarding toilets, transport etc. Trevor said that a study had been done on the financial implications of the night time economy by the College in Cheltenham.

Phil pointed out that we should be encouraging the Government to do something that will assist with education, business assistance and protection from the abuse of alcohol. (eg glasses being made of toughened glass)

The group then ran through the questions in the document relation to Crime and Disorder.

23. Trevor will supply a copy of the document produced by the College. Mac said that there is no real evidence – it is mostly anecdotal and statistics don't properly capture it. Brian Lawson of the Alcohol Referral scheme could possibly provide evidence. Jo Miller also has a youth survey done recently in the Forest. Mac gave the figures for the last five years regarding drunk and disorderly conduct across the county.

Year	Total
1998	306
1999	271
2002	225
2001	253
2002	296

24. Yes. Violent crime, disorder, damage, shop lifting, anti-social behaviour. Alison Hustwitt said that Victim Support figures could support this.
25. Brian Lawson at GDAS can provide figure – 35%. This is an accurate perception.
26. Agree. Local Authorities have responsibility under Section 17 and should recognise this. Planning and design is a major issue eg toilet facilities. There can be conflict with building appropriately in AONB eg Cadet premises in Stroud. Breweries, licencees, off-licencees all also have a responsibility. Planning legislation should allow Local Authorities to make planning decisions around volume and local impact.
27. Urban: sheer volume on the street at night. Two different economies at work. Resources are available eg police and CCTV, sometimes diverted into town centres from outlying areas. Rural: Lack of transport, isolation, lack of resources. Problems can arise in play areas, park benches through the 'known drunk'. Off-licencees can have an incapacity to manage sales to young people if staff are young and easily influenced or scared to refuse. Perhaps the minimum age for alcohol sales should be higher for lone staff. National ID cards are thought to be a good idea.
28. Give support to licencees to encourage bottles and glasses to be made differently eg toughened glass.
29. The Partnership is well down the line with this:
- Behave Or Be Banned scheme
 - Street drinking ban
 - Test purchasing
 - Multi – agency approach at all times
 - Gaining Beacon Council award

Should be a major offence to serve drunken people. Voluntary co-operation is ideal, but at some point enforcement is necessary. It sends a message out.

There should be a training requirement for bar staff, and stringent control over premises and staff. Trevor described 'Night Safe', a voluntary arrangement in Cheltenham whereby licencees agree to co-operate.

Perhaps the conditions for issuing a licence should be more stringent – more consideration given to the quality of applicants.

It is important that Section 17 is reinforced by Government, perhaps through an audit process, to MDs, Chief Exec's, etc and all agencies eg Health.

30. No. Everyone.
31. Yes. Deregulation
32. Existing controls are effective but not sufficient. Training requirements, more control on licencees, off-licencees. Greater penalties on offending eg under-age drinking. The street-drinking ban has worked well. It has been policed with discretion, and has had an impact on environmental issues as well – no broken glasses or empty bottles around.
33. Yes.
34. Don't drink and drive. It was thought that perhaps young people take more notice now, and it is not so socially acceptable, but education is still vital. Derrick Ind pointed out that there was still no way to test for 'drug driving'.
35. Yes, it is still a factor, but is one of many. Again education is vital. Mediation and counselling could be useful, also use of ASBOs
36. and 37. Both the young and old can be affected.
38. Health and accommodation are an important issue. 'Wet' accommodation especially, as 'dry' accommodation will not help those still drinking. Without accommodation further help cannot be obtained. Institutes have been closed and those suffering are out in the community. Special sheltered accommodation should be revisited. Also floating support.
39. Yes. GDAS, People For You. Lack of funding is an issue that gets in the way. Eg precepts set by Parish Councils can only be spent in their own area.
40. GDAS, Nelson House, Alcohol Referral Scheme, CCP.

Carol Sweetenham will be coming to Ebley Mill on 30 January at 11am. Phil said that anyone who felt that they would like to attend the next meeting would be most welcome. Trevor Gladding, Alison Hustwitt, and Mac McGarry will be attending.