

North Yorkshire Council

General Licensing and Registration Sub-Committee

Minutes of the meeting held on Tuesday, 7 January 2025 commencing at 10.00 am.

Councillors Derek Bastiman, Tim Grogan and Subash Sharma.

Officers present: Fiona Casson, Alan Fane, Angela Lacy and Nicki Lishman.

Copies of all documents considered are in the Minute Book

7 Election of Chair

Decision

That Councillor Tim Grogan be elected as Chair for the duration of the meeting.

(Councillor Grogan in the Chair)

8 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

9 Disclosures of interest

There were no declarations of interest.

10 Procedure for meeting

Decision

The Sub Committee agreed the procedure for the meeting as outlined by the Chair.

11 Cancellation of the General Safety Certificate for Whitby Town Football Club

The Corporate Director – Environment sought approval for the revocation of the previous determination that the Main Stand, The Football Stadium, Ufgang Lane, Whitby, North Yorkshire (the Main Stand) be a regulated stand and if the revocation was approved, to cancel the General Safety Certificate held by Whitby Town Football Club in respect of the Main Stand.

Part III of the Fire Safety and Safety at Places of Sports Act 1987 applies to sports grounds which:

- (a) Provide covered accommodation in stands for spectators, and
- (b) Is not a designated sports ground. Whitby Town Football Club is not a designated sports ground).

Whitby Town Football Club held a General Safety Certificate issued under Part III of the Fire Safety and Safety at Places of Sports Act 1987, for the Main Stand, which was a regulated stand. The Main Stand was comprised of 495 seats and a further six spaces for disabled spectators and six seats for their companions. The total capacity was therefore calculated at 507.

The Club then approached the Council with regard to cancel the General Safety Certificate.

In December 2024 an officer from the local authority carried out a visual inspection of the Main Stand and confirmed the capacity was 498. As the capacity of the Main Stand was now 498, the stand no longer met the definition of a regulated stand.

Part III, Section 29, of the Fire Safety and Safety at Places of Sports Act 1987 covers the cancellation of a certificate. It states that the local authority who has issued the safety certificate for a regulated stand at a sports ground:

- a) shall, if at any time it appears to them that the stand in respect of which it was issued is not or has ceased to be a regulated stand, revoke their previous determination and, by notice to its holder, cancel the certificate.

A safety certificate may be cancelled, either on the application of the holder or without such an application.

Scott Booth, the Chief Executive of the football club, explained the background to the decision to remove 9 seats from the stand. Removing the seats and ensuring that the exposed areas of the stand could not be utilised by standing/seated visitors improved the safety of the stand for users.

Mr Booth went on to outline the measures that the club had implemented to improve the health and safety of the ground and stand, which included the appointment of security guards on access and egress points, first aid training for 12 volunteers and a safety officer to be on duty at each match. In addition, the club was undergoing a period of cost saving and fundraising measures.

The Sports Ground Safety Advisory Group (SGSA) had been made aware of the reduced accommodation at the Main Stand and the proposal to cancel the safety certificate and had raised no objections.

The SGSA had an expectation that the Club would discuss their plans with the local authority and develop a shared understanding in relation to their continuing support, rights of entry, inspections, and any potential application of sections 10 and 11 of the Safety at Sports Ground Act 1975 Act.

Decision

1. That the revocation of the previous determination that the Main Stand was a regulated stand at the Football Stadium, Uppang Lane, Whitby, North Yorkshire be approved. The Football Club agreed to monitor the number of spectators in the main stand and record and retain that information.
2. That the General Safety Certificate for the Main Stand at the Football Stadium, Uppang Lane, Whitby, North Yorkshire be cancelled.

The meeting concluded at 10.45 am.