

Minutes

of a meeting of the

General Licensing Panel



held on Monday, 17 April 2023 at
10.00 am in Meeting Room 1, Abbey
House, Abbey Close, Abingdon,
OX14 3JE

Open to the public, including the press

Present in the meeting room:

Councillors: Ian Snowdon (Chair), Peter Dragonetti, and Jo Robb
Officers: Sarah Commins (Legal Officer), Simon Turner (IT Programmes Manager), Sally-Anne Worsley (GIS Team Leader and Street Naming and Numbering Officer), Emily Barry (Democratic Services Officer) and Darius Zarazel (Democratic Services Officer)

1 Election of a chair

A motion, moved and seconded, to elect Councillor Ian Snowdon as chair of the panel was carried on being put to the vote.

RESOLVED: that Councillor Ian Snowdon be elected as chair of the panel.

2 Welcome and introductions and Chair's announcements

The chair welcomed everyone to the meeting, outlined the procedure to be followed and advised on emergency evacuation arrangements.

3 Apologies for absence

There were no apologies for absence.

4 Declaration of interests

There were no declarations of interest.

5 Minutes

RESOLVED: to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 4 December 2020 as correct records and agree that the Chair signs these as such.

6 Procedure

The chair confirmed that all parties present understood the procedure.

7 Proposal to add White Lane into 7 property addresses in Bix

The chair outlined the application and then invited the street naming and numbering officer and the IT programmes manager to present their report.

Officer's report

The IT programmes manager informed the panel that the proposal was to add White Lane into seven property addresses in Bix where a street name plate was already erected on the corner of the street, but that the street name had not been recognised by Royal Mail.

The IT programmes manager then emphasised to the panel that street name plates and prominent house numbers existed for residents' safety, particularly to allow for the effective access for the emergency services. As the street naming authority, South Oxfordshire District Council were responsible for the first two lines of addresses and applying street name plates and that the Royal Mail were responsible for applying the remainder of the address. It was also noted that some rural settlements had no street name, but where a settlement had more than one unnamed street, the emergency services may find an exact property location difficult to find.

On the background to the hearing, the IT programmes manager clarified to members of the panel that the original consultation to include White Lane into the seven property addresses was conducted in 1998, in response to a request from Assendon Parish Council. The District Council conducted the appropriate consultation and the then Community Services Committee, on 18 March 1999, resolved to approve the addition. Although the street plate was installed, Royal Mail did not add the name to their postal addresses. However, by the time this was noticed it was too late to add the line without another consultation.

Therefore, when a request was made by a resident of one of the properties in White Lane to include the street name in the address, another consultation was carried out. This consultation ran from 12 January to 10 February 2023 and during that period two objections were received from the same household.

The IT programmes manager emphasised that it was crucial for the Royal Mail addresses and the street name address to be aligned and therefore, in order to ensure consistency, he confirmed that either the 'White Lane' street name be added according to the name plate or that the addresses remained the same and that the name plate be removed. Overall, as officers believed that the inclusion of the name, as previously agreed by the District Council, was appropriate and to the benefit of the residents, the IT programmes manager recommended that the panel uphold the previous decision and add White Lane into the seven property addresses.

Councillor Ian Snowdon then asked the officers if any of these addresses included businesses and the street naming and numbering officer confirmed there was one business registered and that if the recommendation was resolved, they would have to update their business details.

One of the objectors, Ted Walker, asked the officer why this process was occurring, and the IT programmes manager confirmed that it was to correct the address anomaly.

The objector

Ted Walker, an objector, then presented their case to the street naming panel. The objector highlighted that, in their opinion, the change was unnecessary as there had been no difficulties for people to find the houses along the road and that the amount of administration involved in the change would be very burdensome. They also informed the panel that if the other resident had not asked for the addition, the sign could have remained in place and that there would have been no issues.

Members of the panel questioned the objector noting that they would not be obliged to change their address if the street name was added but could instead keep referring to their property by the previous name. In responses however, the objector informed the panel members that they believed that the change would have broader impacts, potentially affecting their business and credit rating.

At this stage, members asked a question of clarification from the GIS Team Leader and Street Naming and Numbering Officer whether the parish council had responded to the consultation or if there had been any further representations beyond the two objections. In response, the officer confirmed that there had been no further representations.

The GIS Team Leader and Street Naming and Numbering Officer and the IT programmes manager had no questions for the objector.

Final submissions

The chair then invited each party to present their final submissions and the objector, Ted Walker, concluded by stating that the change was unnecessary and that it should be dismissed, especially given the lack of response from the parish council to the recent consultation.

The street naming and numbering officer and IT programmes manager clarified that the application was put forward in order to try to correct the anomaly with the Royal Mail, and was a change originally requested by the parish council.

Finally, the chair invited all the relevant parties to confirm that they had been provided with a fair opportunity to put their respective cases to the panel and each party confirmed that they had received that opportunity.

The panel then retired and excluded all the people from the meeting room apart from the democratic services officers and the legal officer while they deliberated on the proposal.

Deliberation

The panel then deliberated the proposal and considered the written and oral evidence of the officers and objectors. The panel also considered what would be reasonable and proportionate having regard to the evidence and the Council's naming and numbering policy.

The panel considered the historical evidence of the name change and the apparent administrative error by Royal Mail being the reason for the anomaly occurring and 'White Lane' not being formally added into the property addresses as requested. The panel noted that the parish council had requested the change in 1998 to facilitate access to the properties affected and the panel agreed that the inclusion would be of benefit to anyone looking for the properties on the road, including delivery operators and statutory undertakers and, of particular importance, the emergency services looking to access the houses on the road in case of emergency. The panel agreed that the interests of residents could be adversely affected if the anomaly was not rectified and therefore that 'White Lane' should be added to the seven property addresses in Bix as proposed. The panel also noted that the name of the houses and the postcode would stay the same so the key identifiers of the houses would be unchanged

The panel, having reached a decision, called all members of the hearing back into the meeting room.

Decision

The chair then read out the decision; that the panel agreed to add White Lane into five residential addresses and two commercial addresses in Bix, and formally recognise the name, as originally intended.

The chair then informed all individuals present that the decision would also be sent to them in due course.

The meeting closed at 10.30 am
