

## Minutes

**Petition Hearing –  
Cabinet Member for Finance and Business  
Services  
16 July 2009  
Meeting held at the Civic Centre, Uxbridge**



**Published on: 4 August 2009  
Come into effect on: 5pm, 11 August 2009**

1.	<p><b>PETITION REGARDING USE OF THE STABLES, MANOR FARM COMPLEX, RUISLIP</b></p> <p>Councillor Bruce Baker attended the meeting and spoke as a Ward Councillor in support of the petitioners.</p> <p><i>Concerns and suggestions raised at the meeting included the following:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <i>Although the current licence holder, Mrs Cunnington, advised the Council in October 2008 that she would be surrendering the licence for the Manor House Montessori School from 15 July 2009, she had not told the staff and parents until May 2009;</i></li><li>• <i>The current Deputy Principal had been in post for almost 7 years and had been running the school for a significant time as the Principal had been absent and suffering from a long term illness;</i></li><li>• <i>The Deputy Principal had contacted the site manager to establish whether she would be considered for a licence once the property became vacant and was given verbal reassurances to that effect;</i></li><li>• <i>Petitioners insisted that the continued operation of a pre-school facility at the Stables would not restrict access and community use of the Manor Farm site as the facility only operated from 8am to 4pm Monday to Friday. It was suggested that the venue be used by other organisations such as farmers markets;</i></li><li>• <i>Petitioners queried whether there was a robust business plan in place for the site and questioned why the residents had not been involved in deciding its future use;</i></li><li>• <i>It was thought that the majority of parents with children at the school were finding it difficult to find a place for their children elsewhere in time for the start of the September 2009 term;</i></li><li>• <i>Petitioners recognised that there were other education providers within the Borough but expressed concern about their suitability and travelling distances;</i></li></ul>	<p><b>Action By:</b></p> <p>Pat Holmes, Finance and Resources</p>
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- *Concern was expressed that moving children to placements further away would prohibit their ability to walk to school;*
- *Parents were worried about the unsettling effect a change of school would have on their children;*
- *The Ofsted approval and registration process for setting up the school at a new location would take approximately six months which would be after the start of the September 2009 term;*
- *Petitioners requested that the school be granted a temporary short term licence as it was thought that the licensing and planning processes that would need to be undertaken by the Council to change the use would be quite time consuming. It was thought that this would enable the Council to generate an income rather than leaving the building unoccupied for a length of time and prevent it from falling into disrepair;*
- *It was noted that an alcohol/entertainment licence for the Great Barn was being considered by the Council on 6 August 2009. Petitioners were concerned that the noise created by the regular use of the site for functions would be a nuisance to residents. It was also suggested that refusal of the licence would leave the site empty and failing to generate income; and*
- *The Ruislip Residents' Association had expressed its support for the petitioners.*

Councillor Jonathan Bianco listened to the concerns of the petitioners and responded to the points raised. He had received a number of emails from residents supporting the petition but had also received some objecting to it.

Although the Council did not have a duty of care to private companies, officers had investigated the possibility of building a new school in Whiteheath Avenue. Unfortunately, it was believed that the charges that would be levied on this building would be prohibitive to the school.

It was noted that, although the Great Barn was a listed building, The Stables was not. It was thought important to ensure the continued use of the site whilst also attempting to generate enough income to reduce the financial burden on Borough residents. Maximising the income generated by the site would demonstrate the Council's ability to properly maintain the premises. Although the school paid £16k for the use of the site, this was a small proportion of the £165-170k needed to break even.

With regard to acquisition of planning permission and licensing for the change of use of the site, Councillor Bianco advised that

	<p>these decisions would be made impartially by the relevant Committees. It was noted that these decisions would be made in the next 8-10 weeks. As this was not a significant amount of time, it was decided that a temporary licence should not be granted.</p> <p>Petitioners were advised that there were currently 30 places available for September 2009 at Montessori schools within approximately two miles of The Stables. Officers had compiled a list of school vacancies in the area.</p> <p><b>Resolved -</b> That the Cabinet Member:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. noted the concerns of the petitioners; and</li> <li>2. refused the request by Mrs Angela O’Shea for a licence for The Stables.</li> </ol> <p><b>Reasons for Recommendation</b> Under the Constitution, the Cabinet Member should formally consider a petition within their portfolio area. In this case the petition asks that The Stables building be “leased” to Mrs Angela O’Shea once the current agreement is surrendered by the Manor House Montessori School in July.</p> <p><b>Alternative Options Considered</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. When the current agreement is surrendered in mid July, the building is assessed as to maintenance issues, leading to alternative future Council use.</li> <li>2. When the building reverts to the Council in mid July, the building is assessed as to maintenance issues, any works are carried out and the premises are marketed.</li> <li>3. Consideration was given to granting a temporary licence.</li> </ol> <p><b>Relevant Ward:</b> Eastcote and East Ruislip</p>	
	<p><b>Meeting closed at: 6.30pm</b></p>	
	<p><b>Executive Scrutiny Call-in</b> The above decisions may only come into effect on 11 August 2009 unless called-in by the Executive Scrutiny Committee. The Committee will notify the Head of Democratic Services its wish to call-in any decisions by this date.</p>	<p><b>Action By:</b> Democratic Services</p>

These are the minutes of the above meeting. For more information on any of the resolutions please contact Nikki Stubbs on 01895 250472. Circulation of these minutes is to Councillors, Officers, the Press and Members of the Public.