

THE FIFE COUNCIL - FIFE LICENSING FORUM- REMOTE MEETING

12 August, 2021

2.00 p.m. – 2.50 p.m.

PRESENT: Jeff Ellis (Convener), John Barclay, Jim Bett, Ian Davidson, Neil Ewing, Fiona Rattray and Paul Smith.

ATTENDING: June Barrie, Manager - Legal Services and Elizabeth Mair, Committee Officer, Legal & Democratic Services

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: David Henderson, Susan Normansell and Joy Tomlinson, NHS Fife

1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Jeff Ellis, Convener, welcomed members to the meeting. It was noted that there was not a quorum of members present and that any decisions would require to be ratified at the next meeting.

2. MINUTE

The Forum considered the minute of meeting of 3 June 2021.

Decision

The Forum agreed to approve the minute.

3. APPOINTMENT OF NEW MEMBER

The Forum was asked to ratify the decision taken at the meeting on 3 June recommending that Ian Davidson, Lead Nurse, NHS Fife Addiction Services, be accepted as a member.

Decision

The Forum agreed to confirm the appointment of Ian Davidson to the Forum, for ratification at the next meeting subject to a quorum of members being present.

4. UPDATES FROM FIFE LICENSING BOARD

The Forum considered a report detailing the business of the Fife Licensing Board - "List of Decisions" from the Board meeting of 19 April 2021, which was sub-divided into: Provisional(s); New Grant(s); Variation (Major)(s); Personal Licence Review(s); and Premises Licence Review(s). June Barrie advised that there had also been Licensing Board meeting held in June but the meeting report papers had not yet been finalised. The meeting scheduled for August had been cancelled and the next meeting would therefore be held in October.

Decision

The Forum noted:-

- (1) the decisions of the Board meeting on 19 April; and
- (2) the information given relating to the Board meetings.

5. CONSTITUTION & MEMBERSHIP

The Constitution of the Forum had been circulated for information and included details relating to membership. Jeff Ellis advised that he might have to resign as changes in his personal circumstances meant that he could not guarantee his attendance at future meetings. Members discussed options and were advised that there was only one more meeting scheduled in 2021 and that the appointment of a Convener would be considered at the Annual General Meeting which would be the first meeting in 2022.

Decision

The Forum:-

- (1) agreed that, should Jeff not be able to attend the next meeting, John Barclay would substitute as Convener for that meeting; and
- (2) noted that the appointment of a Convener would be considered at the Annual General Meeting in early 2022.

6. UPDATE ON CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC IMPACT

There was discussion around the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic and the impact on licensed premises. It was reported that letters sent to the Scottish Government and Party Leaders had received no replies other than from Willie Rennie.

There was general agreement that the continuing requirement to wear a face covering when moving around licensed premises, especially nightclubs and pubs, was very difficult to enforce as there were exemptions for people with certain medical conditions. Neil Ewing advised that the Police had been encountering incidents regarding wearing of masks and that they would speak to premises owners if complaints were made. A common sense approach was being taken by the Police and the Licensing Standards Officers.

Finally, it was also reported that some premises had not opened immediately after 9 August due to the uncertainty over ongoing requirements such as recording of customer details and social distancing but that more were reopening gradually. Premises were generally being well supported and most customers were well behaved.

Decision

The Forum noted the current position.

7. ALCOHOL FOCUS SCOTLAND - EFOCUS NEWSLETTERS

The Forum noted that eFocus newsletters could be accessed directly through the Alcohol Focus Scotland website and a link was provided.

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8. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

- (1) Licensing

John Barclay asked about checks to ensure that licenses had been kept up to date and the situation regarding Licensing Standards Officers (LSOs). June Barrie advised that there were currently two LSO's but that recruitment of LSO's was under consideration. Neil Ewing advised that he was in contact with the LSO's and that they were trying to visit all licensed premises as soon as possible. In response to a query regarding the number of renewal applications, June advised that she was aware of new personal licence applications being submitted and she would check the number of renewals to see if there were fewer than normal. Neil Ewing advised that he was aware that the number of applications being submitted was starting to pick up.

(2) **Coronavirus Case Numbers**

Ian Davidson advised that it was difficult to demonstrate any direct correlation between the increased opening of hospitality venues on 9th August and case numbers as there were many factors to consider. There were reports that the rate might still be coming down but it was too early to tell.

9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The Forum noted that the next meeting would be held on 25th November 2021 at 2.00 p.m. and that the Council would be considering a report in September on the arrangements for holding meetings in future.
