

**THE FIFE COUNCIL - JOINT MEETING OF FIFE LICENSING BOARD AND FIFE LICENSING FORUM – REMOTE MEETING**

**22 April, 2021**

**2.00 p.m. – 3.20 p.m.**

**PRESENT:** Representing Fife Licensing Board

Councillors Carol Lindsay, John Docherty, Garry Haldane, Andy Heer, and Donald Lothian.

Representing Fife Licensing Forum

Jeff Ellis (Convener), John Barclay, Izzy Corbin, Neil Ewing and Gordon Hood (Police Scotland), Paul Madill, Consultant, Public Health, NHS Fife, Susan Normansell, Licensing Standards Officer (for Douglas Hardaker), Fiona Rattray and Paul Smith.

**ATTENDING:** Rebecca Shovlin, Policy Officer, Fife Alcohol and Drug Partnership; June Barrie, Legal Services Manager (Depute Clerk to the Licensing Board and Elizabeth Mair, Committee Officer, Legal & Democratic Services.

**APOLOGIES FOR** Fife Licensing Board

**ABSENCE:** Councillor Alistair Cameron

Fife Licensing Forum

Jim Bett, Douglas Hardaker, Lead Officer, Environmental Health and David Henderson.

**1. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Jeff Ellis, Convener of the Fife Licensing Form, welcomed members of both Fife Licensing Board and Fife Licensing Forum to the meeting.

**2. MINUTE OF JOINT MEETING OF FIFE LICENSING FORUM/FIFE LICENSING BOARD OF 26 NOVEMBER 2020**

Members considered the minute of the previous joint meeting held on 26 November 2020.

**Decision**

The minute of the Joint Meeting of the Fife Licensing Forum and Fife Licensing Board held on 26 November 2020 was approved.

**3. QUESTIONS TO THE FORUM BY THE BOARD**

How are Licensed Premised coping with current pandemic restrictions.

Members of the Licensing Forum gave an update on the current situation as regards licensed premises. Although licensed premises would be allowed to open from 26th April, the restrictions on opening hours, serving of alcohol and social/

social distancing meant that it would not be financially viable for many premises, especially pubs without outdoor areas. The closing time of 8.00 pm would mean

that premises would be shut at the time they would normally be taking the most income. There were also issues around the requirements to have prior bookings, collection of customer details and limiting the seating time. It was suggested that the Licensing Board could help by reducing the Licensing fees and being flexible with applications for occasional licenses. June Barrie advised that the fees charged were to cover the Licensing Board costs and she suggested that an approach be made to the SOLAR licensing group to discuss the position with other Local Authorities and any possible changes to the fee regulations by the Government. She also advised that any change to fees would apply to all sectors of licensed premises, including supermarkets. It was also noted that it was necessary to advise the Government of the economic effects of the restrictions so that the information could be used in considering what support could be offered.

### **Decision**

It was agreed that:-

- (1) a letter be sent to the Government following the forthcoming Parliamentary election, setting out the issues facing licensed premises. This would be sent on behalf of the Forum and any individual members of the Licensing Board who wished to add their name;
- (2) the SOLAR Licensing group be asked to consider whether to ask the Scottish Government to amend the Fees Regulations to enable differentiation of fees between on and off sales premises; and
- (3) the Licensing Board consider in discussion with the Clerk and Finance Services of Fife Council if there was any scope for a reduction in licensing fees.

*(John Barclay and Izzy Corbin joined the meeting and Councillor Haldane left the meeting during consideration of the above item.)*

#### **4. QUESTIONS TO THE BOARD BY THE FORUM**

No questions were raised by the Forum.

#### **5. IMPACT OF CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC ON THE LICENSED TRADE**

The impact of the pandemic had been covered earlier in the agenda but Neil Ewing, Police Scotland, gave a brief update on the position from a Police perspective, advising that he and Gordon Hood would be visiting licensed premises on Monday, 26th April to give advice as necessary on the re-opening of premises. Their role would be to maintain order relating to behaviour as per the Government regulations in respect of noise, nuisance etc. and they would not be policing issues such as time slots unless this was brought to their attention. Jeff Ellis advised that he was sure many licensees would welcome a visit to discuss best practice and get advice.

### **Decision**

The update was noted.

#### **6. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

No other competent business was raised.

**7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the next meeting of the Licensing Forum would be held on 3rd June 2021 at 2.00 p.m.

At this stage, members expressed their thanks and best wishes to Gordon Hood who was attending his last meeting prior to retirement.

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