

THE FIFE COUNCIL - FIFE LICENSING FORUM – BLENDED MEETING

Committee Room 2, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

9 March, 2023

3.00 p.m. – 4.30 p.m.

PRESENT: John Barclay (Convener), Catherine Chudleigh, Izzy Corbin, Ian Davidson, Gillian Dewar, Neil Ewing, Gregor Hannah, Douglas Hardaker, Stewart Ness, Paul Smith and Jo Worrall.

ATTENDING: Councillor Tom Adams, Chair of Fife Licensing Board, Nicky Corletto, Licensing Standards Officer, Rebecca Shovlin, Policy Officer, Health and Social Care, Kimberley Langley, Solicitor and Elizabeth Mair, Committee Officer, Legal & Democratic Services;

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Jim Bett, Clare Campbell and Jeff Ellis.

ABSENCE:

100. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

John Barclay welcomed everyone to the meeting. This was the first blended meeting since the Covid pandemic and some members and attendees were in the room with the others joining remotely through Microsoft Teams.

101. CONVENER'S ANNUAL REPORT

The Forum considered a report by the Convener giving an overview of the work of the Forum over the past year. The report highlighted various issues, including difficulties arranging meetings, the rising costs of fuel and subsequent effect on businesses, along with the proposed introduction of the deposit recycling service and changes to alcohol advertising and sponsorship. Some discussion followed, with members expressing varying opinions on the issues raised.

Decision

The Forum noted the report.

102. APPOINTMENT OF CONVENER

In accordance with the constitution, nominations were sought for the appointment of the Convener for the following year.

First Nomination

Izzy Corbin, seconded by Paul Smith, nominated John Barclay.

Second Nomination

Ian Davidson, seconded by Stewart Ness, nominated Izzy Corbin.

Third Nomination

Peter Reid, seconded by Neil Ewing, nominated Gregor Hannah.

Vote/

2023 FLF 2

Vote

Third Nomination - 3 votes

Second Nomination - 3 votes

First Nomination - 5 votes

As there was no clear majority, a further vote was then taken between the nominations with the lowest number of votes.

Vote

Third Nomination - 7 votes

Second Nomination - 4 votes

Having received the lowest number of votes, the second nomination fell and a further vote taken between the first and third nominations.

Vote

Third Nomination - 7 votes

First Nomination - 4 votes

Decision

Accordingly, Gregor Hannah was appointed Convener for the following year.

103. APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS

It was reported that Catherine Chudleigh had replaced Paul Madill as the NHS Fife Consultant and that Gillian Dewar had replaced Fiona Rattray as the Social Work representative.

Decision

The appointments were noted.

104. RESIGNATION

It was reported that Chris Dickson had resigned from the Forum. John Barclay and Rebecca Shovlin put forward suggestions for a replacement member. Ian Davidson advised that he was retiring soon and this would be his last meeting.

Decision

It was agreed that the filling of vacancies be considered at the next Forum meeting. Expressions of interest should be submitted in writing 14 days prior to the meeting.

105. MINUTE

The Forum considered the minute of the meeting of Fife Licensing Forum of 11 August 2022.

Decision

The Forum agreed to approve the minute.

106./

106. CHIEF CONSTABLE'S ANNUAL LICENSING REPORT 2021/22

The Forum considered the Chief Constable's Annual Licensing Report 2021/22.

Decision

The report was noted.

107. POLICE REPORT

Neil Ewing advised that the 2022/2023 Chief Constable's annual licensing report was due to be completed shortly. He reported that the police service was stretched but that good work continued to be carried out.

Catherine Chudleigh mentioned issues with groups of youths congregating in some areas, especially Glenrothes bus station and Neil advised that he thought discussions were ongoing with Rebecca Shovlin's team and he would follow this up. It was suggested that the young person's bus pass might be contributing to the issue but Neil advised that this area had been a problem for a long time. There were similar issues with groups congregating in Templehall, Kirkcaldy.

Decision

The Forum noted the report.

Stewart Ness left the meeting following consideration of the above item.

108. FIFE LICENSING BOARD ANNUAL FUNCTIONS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The Forum considered a report by the Head of Legal and Democratic Services presenting the Fife Licensing Board Annual Functions and Financial Statement. Kimberley Langley highlighted points in the report.

Decision

The Forum noted the content of the report.

109. UPDATES FROM FIFE LICENSING BOARD

The Forum considered the minutes of meetings of Fife Licensing Board of 29th August, 3rd October & 12th December 2022 and 6th February, 2023.

Decision/

Decision

The Forum noted:-

- (1) the minutes of the meetings; and
- (2) that the Board met every two months and that the meetings were public so anyone could attend.

110. LICENSING STANDARDS OFFICERS UPDATE

Douglas Hardaker advised that the Licensing Standards team was now up to full complement with four Licensing Standards Officers following the recent retirements and recruitment process. The team had been out visiting premises over the past couple of months and also reviewing their procedures.

Decision

The report was noted.

111. LOCAL LICENSING FORUM SURVEY REPORT

The Forum considered the report of the survey of the local licensing forums in Scotland which had been carried out by the Scottish Government, in conjunction with Alcohol Focus Scotland in 2022. This had highlighted that some areas had very low engagement in forum work.

Kimberley Langley advised that the Community Safety Minister had issued a letter to all local authorities seeking to ensure that all Forums were active and functioning successfully. Paul Smith was a member of three different forums around the country and advised that there were widely varying levels of engagement. There was some discussion around maximising support and engagement in the Forum and it was suggested that a small group could be set up to discuss the creation of a local action plan.

Decision

The Forum:-

- (1) noted the report of survey and the subsequent letter from the Community safety Minister; and
- (2) agreed that an item be placed on the agenda for the next meeting to consider setting up a sub-group to discuss a local action plan.

112. MEETING DATES FOR 2023

The Forum considered draft dates for meetings for the rest of 2022. A date for the joint meeting with Fife Licensing Board had not been set but it was suggested that this be held on 27 April.

Decision

The Forum agreed:-

- (1) that future meetings in 2022 be held on 25 May, 24 August and 23 November; and
- (2) that, subject to there being a quorum of members available from both the Forum and the Licensing Board, the joint meeting be held on 27 April.

113. 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.

114./

114. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

(1) NHS Updates

Catherine Chudleigh requested that a regular update by the NHS be added to future agendas. She advised that the NHS was currently reviewing the alcohol policy in collaboration with the Alcohol & Drug Partnership and was producing data sets for input to the policy. She suggested that the Forum and Licensing Board might be included in the consultation as they had been involved in previous issues such as minimum unit pricing and the Covid pandemic.

(2) Local Licensing Policy

There was a request for an update on the local licensing policy. Kimberley Langley advised that a report would be presented to the Licensing Board meeting in April and then there would be a pre-consultation with other organisations including the forum. Following this there would be a full consultation exercise over the summer. This process also applied to the overprovision policy and it was hoped to have both policies finalised and in place by November. It was noted that input from the Police Service would be submitted in conjunction with the Alcohol & Drug Partnership.

(3) Drinking in the Street

Izzy Corbin raised the issue of drinking alcohol in the street. She was aware of some licences which had been granted for this and she asked for clarification of the position. Kimberley Langley advised that there were local bylaws which prohibited this but the granting of licences overruled those. She advised that plans were available online for the permitted areas. Izzy advised that items placed on the street to delineate drinking areas were causing issues for blind and partially sighted people. Kimberley advised that objections could be made when the licence applications were advertised and that any issues could be reported to the LSO's. Licences allowed control over the areas and came with conditions to regulate the use. It was also reported that bylaws covered all main town centres but not the Old Course and West Sands in St Andrews.

Paul Smith left the meeting during the above discussion.

(4) King's Coronation General Extension

Kimberley Langley advised that a general extension to opening hours had been granted for the King's Coronation weekend. This covered on-sales licensed premises until 1.00 am during the nights of Friday 5th May to Sunday 7th May and full details were available on the Fife Council website Licensing Pages. Any extensions to this would require a separate licence.

(5) 'Man Sheds'

John Barclay mentioned the increase in 'man sheds' being erected in garden ground during the Covid pandemic for use for domestic drinking of alcohol which was not regulated and suggested that it could be considered as a future agenda item.

(6) Thanks to Convener

Gregor Hannah expressed thanks to John Barclay on behalf of the Forum for his work as Convener over the past year.
