

THE FIFE COUNCIL - FIFE LICENSING FORUM – BLENDED MEETING

Committee Room 2, Fife House, North Street, Glenrothes

5 September, 2024

2.00 pm – 3.15 pm

ATTENDING: Gregor Hannah, (Convener – Premises/ Personal Licence Holder), Ewan Brown (Premises/Personal Licence Holder), Clare Campbell (NHS Fife), Neil Ewing Licensing Sergeant (Police Scotland), Douglas Hardaker, Lead Officer, Environmental Health (Public Protection), Helen Hutton (Fife Alcohol Support Service - FASS), Stewart Ness (Fife Resident), Peter Reid (Fife Resident), Rebecca Shovlin (Policy Officer, Health and Social Care Partnership), Paul Smith (Premises/Personal Licence Holder), James Torrance (Premises/Personal Licence Holder) and Jo Worrall (Twist Training/Licensing Training).

ALSO ATTENDING: Kimberley Langley, Solicitor, Wendy MacGregor and Elona Thomson, Committee Officers, Legal and Democratic Services.

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE: Councillor Tom Adams, Izzy Corbin (Fife Resident), Dr. Esther Curnock and Susanna Galea-Singer (NHS Fife), Gillian Dewar (Education), Jeff Ellis ((Premises/Personal Licence Holder) and Nicky Corletto, Licensing Standards Officer.

39. WELCOME AND APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Convener, welcomed everyone to the meeting and noted apologies for absence. Members of the Forum introduced themselves outlining their interest and membership on the Forum.

40. MINUTE

The Forum considered the minute of the meeting of the Fife Licensing Forum on 2 May 2024.

Decision

The Forum agreed to approve the minute.

41. MEMBERSHIP -

In line with the terms of the Constitution of the Fife Licensing Forum, members considered a personal statement submitted retrospectively, by Ewan Brown, appointed as a member of the Forum at the meeting on 2 May 2024. The Forum also acknowledged the resignation of Helen Hutton, Fife Alcohol and Support Service from 6 September 2024.

The Committee Officer provided a verbal update, advising that following the resignation of Helen Hutton, the Forum would have one vacancy on the membership and that there had been interest shown from three people who wished to become members on the Forum.

Contact had also been made with the Clued Project to invite a young person to join the Forum meetings with the intention they may become a member of the Forum in the future. Discussions indicated if a young person could be identified with an interest in attending the Forum meetings, a long period of support from colleagues would be required to encourage confidence and participation in future meetings.

Decision

The Forum noted:-

- (a) the personal statement from Ewan Brown;
- (b) the resignation from Helen Hutton, Fife Alcohol Support Service, leaving one vacancy on the Forum and thanked Helen for her contribution during her term as a member on the Forum;
- (c) noted that Marie Crombie, Head of Services, Fife Alcohol Support Service had noted her interest in becoming a member on the Forum and that two other individuals had also advised of their interest in joining the Forum as members; and
- (d) noted the update from the Committee Officer in relation to the vacancy on the Forum and agreed the Committee Officer would contact the interested parties to request personal statements which would be submitted as an item for discussion at the next meeting of the Forum on 21 November 2024..

42. FIFE LICENSING BOARD ANNUAL FUNCTIONS AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT 2023-24

The Forum considered the Fife Licensing Board Annual Functions and Financial Statement 2023-24. The Forum noted there was a deficit this year, Kimberley Langley, Solicitor, advised that the licensing fees were set by legislation with the majority of fees being set at the highest level. The position would be monitored by the Board and if a deficit position continued, licensing fees may be reviewed or increased where possible, if the Board felt this was necessary.

Decision

The Forum noted the contents of the report and update by Kimberley Langley.

43. POLICE REPORT

Neil Ewing, Licensing Sergeant provided an update on the work which had been carried out since the previous meeting. Community Safety Officers had visited licensed premises across Fife to promote the Best Bar None Initiative. Thirty Four premises had signed up to Best Bar None and Community Safety Team were making attempts to increase the number of premises using this. Best Bar None ensures licensed premises follow the correct policy to make a night out safer using gold, silver and bronze awards. The initiative ensured all premises were working the same way in partnership with advice from the Safer Communities Team.

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A Bystander training event was also being organised by Safer Communities in September, showing participants how to promote a safe night out. A video clip, is shown to highlight where events had gone wrong during a night out, enforcing there is a collective responsibility to ensure an individual gets home safely at the end of the night and not left in a vulnerable position. The Community Safety Officer was also invited to run a Bystander event for premises in St Andrews in October which would also cover spiking of drinks, to promote a safer environment due to the large intake of students starting University in St Andrews in September.

Police Officers had continued joint visits to premises along with Environmental Health Officers and noted it had been a quiet period with no significant incidents to report. The Chief Constables Annual Report would be presented to the Licensing Board and Forum at a future date.

Decision

The Forum noted the update provided by Neil Ewing.

44. LICENSING STANDARDS OFFICERS UPDATE

Douglas Hardaker, Licensing Standards Officer, Environmental Health Service, provided an update advising that the main focus over the last year had been with off-trade businesses. Following the covid epidemic, many layout plans in premises had changed and were not complying with the terms of the license. There had been some issues with shop keepers taking more risks in the sale of alcohol, vapes, cigarettes, underage sales etc which was being monitored by Police Scotland and Licensing Standards Officers. There had been numerous occasions where licence holders had to apply to the Board for a variation in order to ensure they were compliant with the terms of the licence.

Reporting of noise complaints continued although it was noted there had been a change in people's habits and there were not as many noise complaints as there had been previously pre covid. If a noise complaint is reported, Licensing Standards Officers must visit the complainant to verify the terms of the complaint. There had been a rise in cases where complainants were more confrontational due to alcohol intake in the home and had refused the Licensing Standards Officers entry to their home. This caused issues for Licensing Standards Officers who are required to justify the grounds for a complaint before presenting a review of a licence to the Licensing Board.

Decision

The Forum noted the update from Douglas Hardaker.

45. PUBLIC HEALTH UPDATE

Clare Campbell, NHS Fife provided an update to the Forum advising that the Public Health annual figures for alcohol harm would be released later in September and that a full update would be provided at the November meeting. The information available to date, showed an increase in alcohol harm and in individuals presenting to Health Services for support. A full presentation would be provided at the meeting of the Forum on 21 November 2024.

Decision

The Forum noted the update from Clare Campbell.

46. UPDATES FROM FIFE LICENSING BOARD

The Forum considered the minutes of meetings of Fife Licensing Board of 15 April, 24 June and 26 August 2024.

A discussion followed, regarding conditions for supplying alcohol, included in the Statement of licensing Board policy, members were reminded a copy of this was available on the web page for the Fife Licensing Board and could be located at end of the policy statement.

Members agreed a joint letter by the Licensing Board and Licensing Forum would be formulated and send to Scottish Government highlighting concerns that there was no official requirement for training delivery drivers on the sale of alcohol. The Forum noted that a letter had been issued to the Scottish Government in 2019 addressing the same issue and this should also be highlighted. This was not an issue that was unique to Fife as concerns had been raised across other areas of Scotland.

Decision

The Forum:-

- (a) noted the minutes of the Fife Licensing Board meetings; and
- (b) agreed to include a draft letter at the next Forum meeting for discussion at the meeting on 21 November 2024

47. 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.

48. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

The Forum noted there was no further business for consideration.

49. DATE OF NEXT MEETING - 21 NOVEMBER 2024 AT 2PM

The Forum agreed that the next meeting would be held on Thursday, 21 November 2024 at 2.00 pm and the Convener reminded members that a strong attendance would be required due to the resignation of one member, in order to achieve the required quorum for the meeting.