

FALKIRK COUNCIL

Minute of meeting of the Falkirk Local Licensing Forum held by video conference on Thursday 29 October 2020 at 3.30 p.m.

Present

Forum members David Gibson (Social Work); Aileen Holliday (Health); Lindsay Fyfe (Licensing Standards Officer); Madelene Hunt (Public); Andy Kane (Public); Liam Livingston; Gordon Emslie (Trade); Ian Lovie (Trade), Mark Stevenson (Trade), John Hamilton (Trade), Thomas Ross (Licensing Standards Officer); Chief Inspector Christopher Stewart.

Apologies Michael Kleist (Public).

Chair: Gordon Emslie.

Also present Alison Barr, Consumer Protection Manager; Brian Pirie, Democratic Services Manager; and Antonia Sobieraj, Committee Services Officer.

1. Opening Remarks

In the absence of the Convener, nominations were sought to Chair the meeting.

Gordon Emslie volunteered to Chair the meeting and this was **AGREED**.

2. Minute

The Democratic Services Manager confirmed that the correct Forum minute dated 25 August 2020 would be issued to all members prior to the next meeting.

3. Impact of New Covid-19 Restrictions

Alison Barr provided members with an update on the impact of the new Covid-19 restrictions and the work of the Licensing Board.

The new Coronavirus (Scotland) Act 2020 had made changes to legislation due to the Covid-19 pandemic including the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005. These changes were temporary and aimed to assist the Board carry out its functions.

Alison highlighted:-

- The operation of occasional licence applications for sale of alcohol outdoors and the establishment of a corporate group including Food Safety, Trading Standards and Police Scotland as required in line with covid 19 regulations;
- The work to improve the information on the licensing website;
- The initial closing of offices and the revised arrangements to processing applications;
- The business as usual from licensing staff home working and the attendance in the office on an ad hoc basis as required;
- The local office presence on an ad hoc basis;
- The meetings of the Licensing Board on a virtual basis for routine matters;
- The continued receipt of applications for variations and provisional licences; and
- The processing of renewals under covid legislation.

General discussion included the following issues:-

- The frustration amongst the licensing trade at the lack of information, clarity and support from Councillors, MP's and MSP's during the covid 19 restrictions;
- The significant loss of revenue within the licensing trade;
- The lack of clarity of the different tier levels, covid cases in each area and the tier levels; and
- The concern at the different rules for café and licenced premises.

In response, Alison confirmed:-

- The establishment, in recent months, by the Town Centre Management Group of a Joint Group to support the town centre and including Town Centre Management, Planning, Food Safety and Economic Development;
- The operation of the tier system under covid regulations from 2 November 2020 relation to local authority boundaries and not health board areas;
- The operation of fees during the covid restrictions; and
- The imperative for the Council's Licensing section to operate strictly in line with all covid 19 requirements and work in partnership with all relevant other services including Food Safety, Environmental Health and Police Scotland as required.

Noted.

4. Dates of Licensing Forum Meetings 2021

The dates for Forum meetings during 2021 were agreed as undernoted and to take place at **3.30 p.m.** in the event that they continue on a virtual basis until further notice due to covid 19 restrictions:-

- Tuesday 23 February;
- Thursday 22 April;
- Tuesday 24 August; and
- Thursday 28 October.

The date for the joint meeting between the Licensing Board and Licensing Forum would be confirmed early in 2021.

5. Any other Competent Business

There were no other items of business raised.