

FALKIRK COUNCIL LICENSING BOARD

**Subject: OCCASIONAL EXTENSION OF PERMITTED HOURS FOR
FESTIVE PERIOD**
Meeting: LICENSING BOARD
Date: 29 October 2008
Author: CLERK TO THE LICENSING BOARD

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 It has been the Board's practice over a number of years to grant additional opening hours during the Christmas and New Year Festive period, to those premises where *bona fide* festive functions are being held. This has been effected by way of a block occasional extension for a period of approximately three to four weeks. Applicants are required to pay a fee for each evening required (currently £17.00).
- 1.2 The relevant period, consistent with the Board's previous decisions on the matter, for the 2008/2009 festive period would be from the evening of Thursday 4 December 2008 until the morning of Saturday 3 January 2009.

2. POLICE OBSERVATIONS

- 2.1 The Chief Constable has submitted a letter by e-mail dated 22/10/2008 a copy of which is attached as appendix 1. The letter raises a number of issues with regard to the operation of festive extensions, the duration of the period within which these have been granted in the past and the general impact that such extensions has on the policing of the wider community. The letter raises in particular the Chief Constable's concern that in recent years that there has been little evidence of festive functions in some premises which have been granted festive extensions. The Chief Constable further proposes that in regard to the 2008/09 festive period, the Board give consideration to restricting the period within which festive extensions are granted to Friday 12th December 2008 – Thursday 1st January 2009.

3. RECOMMENDATION

For decision .

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Clerk to the Licensing Board

Date: 14 October 2008

Contact Officer: Robert Watson, Licensing Co-ordinator

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

1. Nil

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Central Scotland Police
Together for safer communities

Kevin Smith
Chief Constable

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22nd October 2008

Clerk to the Licensing Board
Falkirk Council
Abbotsford House
David's Loan
Bainsford
Falkirk
FK2 7YZ

Dear Madam,

Extension of Licensing Hours – Christmas 2008

Traditionally Falkirk Council Licensing Board has allowed licensed premises throughout the district to apply for extended hours during the festive period. This has normally allowed premises to operate for an additional hour on top of any regular extension they may have during the relevant period. We understand that under the Board's policy any additional hours should only be granted where bona-fide festive functions are being promoted.

Central Scotland Police have generally supported this policy, taking into account the significance of the festive period as a time of celebration. There is however a significant impact on late night policing of both Falkirk Town Centre and the outlying areas as a result of any such additional hours. Accordingly, we are keen to ensure that a balance is struck whereby those who wish to participate in festive celebrations may do so, without this having a disproportionate negative impact on policing of the wider community.

We also have some concerns that in recent years we have found little evidence of festive functions taking place in some of the premises which have been granted extended hours. Our resources do not permit officers to check every premises on every occasion they are granted extended hours however we are of the opinion that it should be made very clear to applicants for extended hours that they must be promoting some form of festive entertainment to justify additional hours.

All correspondence should be addressed to the Business Services Unit, Area Command Headquarters, West Bridge Street, Falkirk, FK1 5AP (Telephone 01786 456000) and not to individual stations/departments.

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I would request that the period during which extended hours be granted should be restricted to Friday 12th December 2008 – Thursday 1st January 2009. I am of the opinion that this would cover the period when the vast majority of festive functions take place, taking in the two weekends prior to Christmas Day and the weekend between Christmas and New Year. By restricting the period during which festive extensions are permitted Central Scotland Police would be in a better position to maintain levels of policing in other parts of the community without having to divert resources away from these areas to cover late night policing of licensed premises.

Should the Board convene a meeting at which this issue is to be discussed I would welcome an opportunity to be heard in amplification of these proposals.

Thank you for your assistance in this matter.

Yours faithfully

Robbie McGregor
Superintendent
Area Commander