

**MINUTES of MEETING of LOCAL LICENSING FORUM held in the COUNCIL CHAMBER,
KILMORY, LOCHGILPHEAD
on WEDNESDAY, 11 APRIL 2012**

Present: Kenneth Harrison (Chair)

Alistair Davidson, Strathclyde Police
Eric Dearie, Licensing Standards Officer
Raymond Park, Licensing Standards Officer
Calum MacLachlann, Licensed Trade
Fred Bruce, Community Representative
Raymond Boyle, Community Representative
Sheila Johnston, Community Representative

Attending: Peter Robertson, Argyll and Bute Council
Graeme Forrester, Argyll and Bute Council
Shona Marshall, Argyll and Bute Council
Linda Bowie, Alcohol Focus Scotland
Caroline Church, Alcohol Focus Scotland
J Woods, Alcohol Focus Scotland

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Martin Donovan, Tim Saul, Eric Box, Cath Cakebread, Catherine Dobbie, Roanna Clark, Caroline Smith and Elaine Garman.

Brian Kupris, who had been a member of the Forum since its inception, had tendered his resignation due to work commitments. It was noted that a letter of thanks would be sent to him for his contribution to the work of the Forum.

2. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting of the Local Licensing Forum held on Tuesday 24 January 2012 were noted.

3. ALCOHOL FOCUS SCOTLAND

Linda Bowie, Senior Officer (Public Health & Licensing), Alcohol Focus Scotland gave a presentation on Local Licensing Forums (LLFs), as viewed by her organisation.

She outlined the background to LLFs and;

- Legislation on membership of Forums
- Legislation on the function of Forums
- Limitations to the role
- The function of the Licensing Board
- How the role could be approached
- The links between public health and licensing
- How Forums were performing

- Why some Forums worked better than others
- What the learning points were; and
- Working together.

Alcohol Focus Scotland (AFS) was available to provide advice to LLFs if requested, but a Forum was under no obligation to contact them. However, AFS was unable to tell a Forum on how it should operate within their area.

She went on to suggest that the Forum consider the 5 Licensing Objectives and identify a key area(s) from which a particular issue(s) could be identified for development and recommendation to the Licensing Board (LB). This could potentially involve individual members taking ownership of a topic, discussing and researching the issue within their own and partner organisations and bringing it together in a cohesive format for presentation to the LB.

When presenting proposals to the LB, she suggested that the Forum put it in writing in a clear and concise manner, collect evidence and provide two or three recommendations for consideration. This would go some way to ensure improved communication and understanding between the Forum and the LB, and potentially help prevent the difficulties previously encountered during discussions.

She concluded her presentation by highlighting that the key to a successful relationship between a LLF and LB was communication. Members were then invited to ask questions.

Responding to a query on why some LLFs performed better than others, it was highlighted that they tended to be Forums which had dedicated administrative support, and members who had the time and capacity to collate evidence and present it to the LB in a cohesive format.

Decision

The Forum noted what Linda had said and thanked her for her interesting, informative and helpful presentation.

4. RE-THINKING OF ALCOHOL LICENSING - INTRODUCTION OF CURFEWS AND STAGGERING OF VENUE CLOSING TIMES

The Chair referred to a letter received from Mary Ellmers, Head of Training and Development, Alcohol Focus Scotland. In it she referred to the meeting of the Forum held on 26 October 2011 and the discussion held on the “Re-thinking Alcohol Licensing” report.

She wished to clarify to the Forum that the report was concerned with the links between licensing and the significant rise in the consumption of alcohol from the 1960s onwards and the associated rise of alcohol-related harms. The report did not contain any support for the idea of extending licenses hours and she was surprised that discussion on the report had led to a discussion on the possibility of extending licensing hours.

The Chair explained that there had been discussion at the meeting on Argyll and Bute Local Licensing hours, but that this had not taken place directly in conjunction with the report. It was noted that the Chair would respond to her concerns.

Discussion then followed on the correlation between pre-loading at an off license, extended opening hours for nightclubs, and the resultant harmful impact of these on public health. Linda Bowie referred to Dumfries and Galloway where earlier closing times for licensed premises had shown a direct link to a reduction in the statistics for health related problems in the area.

The Forum was of the opinion that it would be beneficial to have a discussion with the LB on what the actual policy was for granting extensions or changing opening hours for licensed premises.

As a new policy was being drawn up for implementation in 2013, it was suggested that the LLF should raise any recommendations or comments with the LB on the proposed policy as soon as possible to enable meaningful discussion.

Decision

The Forum noted that;

- (i) the Chair would respond to Mary Ellmers, Head of Training and Development, Alcohol Focus Scotland;
- (ii) an Item be placed on the Agenda for the next meeting of the Forum which would bullet point topics the Forum wished to discuss for presentation in a cohesive format to the Licensing Board for consideration; and
- (iii) a draft list of these topics be passed to C MacLachlann prior to the meeting to enable him to have an informal discussion with licensed premises representatives and bring their comments to the Forum.

5. ALCOHOL:THE FACTS IN FIFE 2011

Linda Bowie explained that the report was an example of a piece of work carried out by a Forum for which they had taken ownership, and had organised their thinking along the 5 policy objectives. This was their first attempt at gathering such information and intended for it to be carried out on a yearly basis. This would help the Forum to identify trends and shape strategies for discussion.

The report was not a model document for each LLF to follow, but was an example of Forum members working together and using the resources available to them.

Decision

The Forum noted that similar information could be gathered for the Argyll and Bute Area. A decision would have to be taken on who would pull the information together.

6. POLICE STATISTICS

There was tabled information on the “Number of Visits to Licensed Premises, LB Sub Division Jan 2012 – March 2012”.

Inspector Alistair Davidson spoke to the report on the Summary of Storm Incidents, January – March 2012.

Following this, Raymond Park, LSO, explained that visits by the police to licensed premises tended to take place following notification from a LSO.

There had been an increase in licensee holders attending training, such as courses run by Servewise, which had helped to reduce problems in premises. Licensees had a better understanding and awareness of their responsibilities for persons within and leaving their premises, and the impact on the surrounding neighbourhood.

Decision

Noted that the position and that further police statistics would be brought to the next meeting of the Forum.

7. UPDATE FROM LSO

The Forum noted the update from Eric Dearie.

Decision

Members noted the position and thanked him for his report.

8. ISSUE TRACKER

The Forum noted the following updates;

- (i) National Outcomes for LLF – Second interim report would be out shortly;
- (ii) Promotion of LLF – work was on going;
- (iii) Local Licensing Forum Conveners – Linda Bowie invited the Chair to attend these meetings; and
- (iv) Educational DVD – Don't make the same mistakes we did – Ongoing

Caroline Church gave an update on the National Communities Project. She provided a range of statistics which had been gathered from the questionnaire issued to local residents in the Lochgilphead/Ardrishaig area. These were subject to change as further responses were returned.

9. FUTURE MEETING DATES

The Forum noted the following future meeting dates;

- Wednesday 18 July 2012
- Wednesday 17 October 2012