

ABERDEENSHIRE COUNCIL

CENTRAL ABERDEENSHIRE LICENSING FORUM

THE BUNKER, GORDON HOUSE, INVERURIE, 30 JUNE, 2010

Present: Mr Paul MacLennan, (Convener); Mr Paul Robinson, (Vice Convener); Ms Grace Ball; Mr Neil Cable; Sergeant John Main, Grampian Police; Mr Alistair Strachan; Ms Joanna Strathdee; and Mr Andrew Sutherland.

Officers: Sandy Munro, Senior Solicitor (Licensing); Jill Joss, Senior Solicitor (Licensing) and Arlene Kelday, Assistant Committee Officer.

The Convener welcomed all to the meeting of the Central Aberdeenshire Licensing Forum and asked everyone to introduce themselves explaining which organisation or area of membership they represented.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence had been received from Mr Bill Duncan.

2. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 24 MARCH, 2010

There had been circulated and **approved** the minute of the meeting of 24 March, 2010.

3. MATTERS ARISING

Training Resource – The Assistant Committee Officer advised that she had received a training resource from Alcohol Focus Scotland which could be used to train Licensing Forum members at a local level. She explained that this resource was made up of a DVD and exercise booklet and provided information on the five licensing objectives and community engagement. She referred to a suggestion to hold a joint training session between all three Aberdeenshire Licensing Forums and enquired whether members would be interested in taking part in such an event. The Assistant Committee Officer also advised that the South Aberdeenshire Licensing Forum had suggested that the training take place in September. It was **agreed** that a joint training session would be beneficial and that a date in September be identified to hold the training event.

Membership of Grampian Fire & Rescue Service – The Assistant Committee Officer advised that she had written to the Chief Fire Officer of Grampian Fire & Rescue Service regarding its membership on Aberdeenshire's Local Licensing Forums. She explained that a response to this letter had been received from the Head of the Aberdeenshire Command advising that the Fire Service was in the process of reviewing its attendance at partnership meetings, which included the Licensing Forums. The letter further explained that the number of meeting forums which the Fire Service was asked to contribute to far outweighed its capacity to do so but that a watching brief was kept over the Forum's agendas by the Aberdeenshire Command Station Manager so that the Service could attend meetings where it could contribute to discussion.

The Forum recognised that input from the Fire Service was important to its work but also identified the issues associated with membership capacity and quorum. Thereafter, it was agreed that Grampian Fire & Rescue Service would be removed as a member of the Forum but that the Station Manager would continue to receive a copy of the agenda to enable the

Service to retain a watching brief over the Forum's work and to observe meetings as appropriate.

Boogie Buses – Sergeant Main advised that the Area Inspector had held a meeting with one of the bus operators and the Inverurie and District Pub Watch to discuss the issues associated with Boogie Buses. He explained that areas of best practice had been discussed and it was found that some operators had been taking measures to tackle some of the problems which had been highlighted by the Pub Watch. It was commented that these bus operators should be applauded in their efforts to resolve the issues and it was suggested that the areas of best practice should be shared among all bus operators.

4. RESIGNATION OF MR GRAHAM WATT

There had been circulated and **noted** a letter which notified the Forum of Mr Watt's resignation as a member due to the relocation of his employment.

It was suggested that the Forum should seek applications for membership from the off-sales sector as there was now a vacancy in this area of membership. The Assistant Committee Officer advised that all of the off-sale managers in the area had been written to regarding Forum membership and it was suggested that the store managers could be written to again to enquire whether they would be interested in applying for membership.

5. MEMBERSHIP – APPLICATIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

The Forum had before it three applications for membership.

5.1 MR DEREK THOMPSON

There had been circulated an application for membership of the Forum from Mr Derek Thompson, a person having a function relating to education and resident in the Forum area.

On consideration of the applicant's background and experience, the Forum agreed to **accept** the application for membership.

5.2 MISS EMMA MCLEAN

There had been circulated an application for membership of the Forum from Miss Emma McLean, a young person resident in the Forum area and a member of the Aberdeenshire Youth Council.

On consideration of the applicant's background and experience, the Forum agreed to **accept** the application for membership.

5.3 MISS REBECCA COX

There had been circulated an application for membership of the Forum from Miss Rebecca Cox, a young person resident in the Forum area and a member of the Scottish Youth Parliament.

On consideration of the applicant's background and experience, the Forum agreed to **accept** the application for membership.

CONSIDERATION OF APPLICATIONS HELD ON FILE

With reference to the minute of 24 March, 2010, the Forum agreed to re-consider the two applications for membership which had been held on file. The Forum noted that (1) these applications had been made by holders of premises licences and (2) following the annual general meeting that there was a vacancy for a licence holder on the Forum.

5.4 MR JAMES STUART SINGER

There had been circulated an application for membership of the Forum from Mr James Singer, a person resident in the Forum area and the holder of a premises licence.

There being a vacancy for a premises licence holder and on consideration of the applicant's background and experience and links with the Licensed Trade Association, the Forum agreed to **accept** the application for membership.

5.5 SIR ARCHIBALD GRANT Bt.

There had been circulated an application for membership of the Forum from Sir Archibald Grant Bt., a person resident in the Forum area and the holder of a premises licence.

On consideration of the applicant's background and experience, the Forum agreed not to accept the application for membership and to continue to hold the application on file as membership requirements were better suited to another applicant on this occasion.

6. AMENDMENT TO CONSTITUTION

There had been circulated a report dated 11 May, 2010, by the Assistant Committee Officer, which informed members of the process which was to be followed when altering the Forum's constitution. The report advised that the Forum had suggested that consideration be had to reducing the minimum age at which a person may become a member and provided that the Forum shall have the power to alter its constitution at any of its meetings by due intimation of such proposed alterations having been sent to each member at least seven days before such a meeting. The report proposed that the Forum note the process which was to be followed when making alterations to its constitution and requested that the Forum consider (a) whether it wished to alter its constitution so to reduce the minimum age at which a person was eligible to apply for membership; and (b) to determine what that minimum age should be.

The Forum discussed the benefits which could be had by reducing the minimum age and the importance of gaining the opinions of young people. It was suggested that reducing the minimum age may encourage pupils from secondary schools in the area to apply for membership. It was also suggested that the consideration should be had to ensuring the agenda was interesting for young people.

Thereafter, the Forum **agreed**:-

- (1) to note the procedure which was required to be followed when making alterations to the constitution; and
- (2) after consideration, to reduce the minimum age at which a person may apply for membership from eighteen to sixteen.

7. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH'S CONSULTATION ON ALCOHOL LABELLING

There had been circulated and **noted** the Forum response to the Department of Health's consultation on alcohol labelling proposals. With reference to the minute of the meeting of 24 March, 2010, the Assistant Committee Officer explained that she had received responses from Mr MacLennan and Mr Watt in relation to the consultation and had used these to compile the response which had been submitted by the Forum to the Department of Health.

8. WORK PLAN

The Forum discussed three items of work in relation to its work plan.

8.1 COMMUNICATION AND NETWORKING

There had been circulated the Forum's work plan in relation to Communication and Networking. The aims of the work plan were to improve current levels of community engagement and facilitate the gathering of local community views in relation to the impact of Licensing Board decisions by attending Community Council meetings in the Central Aberdeenshire area.

With reference to the minute of 24 March, 2010, and the decision to prepare a presentation for these meetings, there had been circulated a draft presentation which detailed information relating to the role of the Forum, the meeting and membership structure, and the Forum's contact details. It was advised that this presentation was a first draft and members were asked to provide the Assistant Committee Officer with their comments by 14 July, 2010.

With reference to Community Council Forum meeting dates, the Assistant Committee Officer advised that she had contacted the Garioch, Marr and Formartine Area Manager's Offices and explained that Marr did not have a Community Council Forum, the date for the next Garioch Community Council had not yet been arranged and that the next Formartine Community Council Forum meeting would take place on 18 August, 2010. Mr Strachan advised that he could attend the Formartine Community Council Forum meeting and Mr Robinson added that he could attend Community Council meetings in Marr. There not being a Marr Community Council Forum it was recognised that the Forum might have to attend a number of local Community Council meetings in the Marr area, the dates and venues of which were not yet known.

Thereafter, it was **agreed** that the Assistant Committee Officer would make arrangements for representatives of the Forum to attend the meeting of the Formartine Community Council Forum. The Assistant Committee Officer added that she would also advise the Forum of the date of the Garioch Community Council Forum meeting when it had been arranged.

8.2 OCCASIONAL LICENCES – AMENDMENT TO APPLICATION FORM: DISCUSSION

With reference to the minute of 24 March, 2010, and a request from the Licensing Board to consider the terms of the current Occasional Licence form, there had been circulated a work plan which aimed to assist the Licensing Board in making suggestions to the Scottish Government as to the current form for Occasional Licence applications.

The Assistant Committee Officer advised that the South Aberdeenshire Licensing Forum had been tasked with the same project and explained that a sub-group of this Forum had drafted a possible alternative to the current form. This document was circulated for comment and it was suggested that it be used as a basis for the Forum to make further proposals to the Licensing Board.

It was commented that it was important to have the primary information, such as the date and venue of the licensed activity, in the first section of the form as this assisted the Board in immediately identifying whether the application had been made within the required timescale. The Forum also agreed that it was important that the applicant detailed how children and young persons would be protected from harm as this was a key element of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005.

Thereafter, it was **agreed** that the Forum would provide the Assistant Committee Officer with any additional comments by 14 July, 2010 and further discussion would be had on this matter at the annual joint meeting of the Licensing Board and Forum on 11 August, 2010.

8.3 OCCASIONAL LICENCE POSTERS

There had been circulated a work plan in relation to the design and distribution of a poster which would support the Licensing Board's guidance notes for completing an Occasional Licence application form. The Convener advised that he had become aware of a similar project being undertaken by the South Aberdeenshire Licensing Forum and suggested that the Central Aberdeenshire Licensing Forum might wish to consider the aims of the project. The aim of the work plan was to provide potential Occasional Licence applicants with basic application information, such as application timescales, and incorporate this information in a poster which would be displayed in public halls in Central Aberdeenshire.

It was **agreed** that the style of the poster which had been circulated in South Aberdeenshire for the same purpose should also be adopted by the Central Aberdeenshire Licensing Forum to ensure consistency.

Thereafter, Assistant Committee Officer advised that she would arrange for a number of posters to be printed and would draft a list of possible public halls at which the Forum could arrange for the posters to be displayed.

9. POLICE UPDATE

Sergeant Main explained that there had been no test purchases in the area since the last meeting but that initiatives were planned for the near future. He advised that there may be a change in the reporting procedure which could result in premises being reported to the Procurator Fiscal upon their first test purchase failure and not upon a second failure as the procedure currently stood.

Sergeant Main explained that the summer months were a busy time for Grampian Police in terms of local shows and gala events, many of which the Board and Forum had been invited to attend. He highlighted statistical information relating to the recent gala events and this included the number of patrons ejected from the event, issues related to lighting and the volume of under-eighteens attending such events. Mr Robinson advised that he had attended a recent event and reported that it had been a good experience. He explained that he attended the briefing with the event officer and observed the arrival of patrons at the event. Mr Robinson added that he had gained a better understanding of the issues facing police officers and event organisers at such events. Mr Robinson asked that his thanks be passed to Grampian Police for the opportunity to attend this event. Sergeant Main advised that he would feedback any issues and successes arising from these events.

Sergeant Main also advised the Forum of a number of new initiatives in relation to (1) extending Pub Watch to shows and events; (2) a minimum standard for CCTV across Aberdeenshire and (3) the impact of the World Cup in licensed premises across Aberdeenshire.

10. LICENSING STANDARDS OFFICER UPDATE

Mr Sutherland advised that he had continued to visit and inspect licensed premises in the Central Aberdeenshire area. He added that he is on schedule for inspecting all licensed premises by 1 September, 2010. Mr Sutherland also explained that he had been attending local shows and gala events and advised that there had been high levels of compliance.

11. LICENSING BOARD UPDATE

Mr Munro advised that there had been one new premises application and two club applications were pending. He added that a number of variations to licences had also been received.

In relation to the Board's Policy Statement consultation, Mr Munro advised that the consultation documents could be viewed on the Council's webpage and that the deadline for all responses was 18 June, 2010.

Mr Munro referred to an email he had received from the Assistant Committee Officer regarding increased interaction between the Forum and the Board. He advised that the Board had agreed that, in response to this, it would issue its approved minutes to the Forum for information and if the Board Convener was unable to attend Forum meetings that another member of the Board would attend in her place. As background information, the Assistant Committee Officer explained that at a recent meeting of the Licensing Forum Conveners it was suggested that members should regularly attend meetings of the Board as this was the best way for the Forum to increase its knowledge of the role and work of the Board. It was advised that many of the Forum members were not aware that meetings of the Board were open to the public or that they could attend. Mr MacLennan advised that he had attended a recent meeting of the Board and explained that he had found it a useful experience.

Mr Munro also referred to an email he had received from the Forum in relation the possible introduction of a Social Responsibility Levy and the offer of the Forum to investigate the Scottish Government's proposals under the Alcohol etc, (Scotland) Bill. He advised that the Board would appreciate a report on these proposals and it was suggested that this be an area for discussion at the Board and Forum's annual joint meeting on 11 August, 2010.

Thereafter, it was **agreed** that a sub-group consisting of Mr Sutherland, Mr Cable, Ms Ball, Mr Duncan, be delegated authority to research the terms of a Social Responsibility Levy and prepare a report for the annual joint meeting. It was suggested that one of the Forum's new young members also be invited to participate in the sub-group.

12. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS

Review of Licensing Board Structure - The Assistant Committee Officer advised that Aberdeenshire Council had agreed to conduct a review of the Licensing Board structure in Aberdeenshire. She advised that the three divisional Licensing Forums would be consulted as part of this review and that information would be provided to the Forums when it was available.

Membership and Attendance – Mr MacLennan reminded members of the importance in submitting apologies when unable to attend meetings of the Forum.

13. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting of the Forum would take place on Wednesday, 27 October, 2010 at 10.30 am in Inverurie Town Hall, Inverurie.

Paul MacLennan
Convener