

CENTRAL ABERDEENSHIRE LICENSING FORUM

COUNCIL CHAMBER, GORDON HOUSE, INVERURIE, 28 OCTOBER, 2009

Present: Ms Kim Shearer, (Convener); Mr William Duncan; Sergeant John Main, Grampian Police; Inspector Gillian Milne, Grampian Police; Mr Keith Simpson; Mr Andrew Sutherland.

Officers: Shirley Watt, (Legal Manager (Central)); Mr Sandy Munro (Senior Solicitor); Alastair Nicol, (Principal Committee Officer); Arlene Kelday, (Assistant Committee Officer).

The Convener welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Central Aberdeenshire Licensing Forum. The Convener explained that as the meeting was inquorate no formal business could be transacted but proposed that the meeting continue on an informal basis. The Convener emphasised the importance of submitting apologies in advance of a meeting to help ensure that meetings were not inquorate.

With reference to the applications for membership, the Principal Committee Officer advised that the Forum could neither approve nor reject the applications whilst inquorate but explained that, following discussion of the applications, the applicants could be advised if the Members present were minded to accept the applications.

The Convener advised of the death of Mr James Blackwell, who had been a member of the Forum since January 2008.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mrs Patricia Florence; Mr Paul MacLennan; Mr Paul Robinson and Ms Joanna Strathdee.

2. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 24 JUNE, 2009

The Minute of Meeting of 24 June, 2009, had been circulated. Those members of the Forum who were present confirmed that the Minute was an accurate record of the meeting.

3. MINUTE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF LICENSING BOARD AND FORUM OF 10 JUNE, 2009

The Minute of the Annual Meeting of the Licensing Board and Forum of 10 June, 2009 had been circulated and was **noted**.

4. MATTERS ARISING FROM MINUTES

Update of Membership of Forum - The Convener confirmed that a letter had been sent to Mr Ritchie advising of the Forum's decision to remove him as a member of the Forum.

Letter to Off-Sales Managers – The Convener confirmed that a letter had been sent to the managers of off-sales stores in the Inverurie, Huntly and Westhill areas inviting applications for membership. She advised that this had resulted in an application for membership being submitted for consideration.

Meeting of the Forum and Board Conveners – The Convener advised that there had been a meeting of the Conveners of the Licensing Boards and Licensing Forums in September. She commented that there had been round the table discussions and the Forum Conveners

informed each other of the work being undertaken in their Area. The Convener added that the three Forums worked differently and had varying topics of discussion.

5. MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

The Forum had before them two applications for membership for consideration.

5.1 MS JANET HOOD

There had been circulated an application for membership of the Forum from Ms Janet Hood, a person resident in the Forum area. The Convener highlighted that Ms Hood was the head of the professional body for the licensed trade and had 25 years experience in licensing law.

After discussion, the Forum **agreed** to continue consideration of the application at the next meeting.

5.2 MR GRAHAM WATT

There had been circulated an application for membership of the Forum from Mr Graham Watt, a holder of a personal and premises licence in the off-sales sector. It was highlighted that the off-sales sector was not represented on the Forum and that it was important for this area to be represented.

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

The Convener asked that Mr Watt be invited to attend the next meeting of the Forum.

6. NATIONAL LICENSING DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

There had been circulated a report by the Assistant Committee Officer regarding the appointment of a National Licensing Development Officer by the national agency, Alcohol Focus Scotland. The report highlighted the key areas which had been identified for development and requested that members provide feedback where necessary.

The Convener commented that it was good to have a Licensing Officer on a national basis and suggested that Mr Cohen be invited to attend a future meeting of the Forum.

Mr Duncan added that the Local Licensing Forums played an important role in the implementation of national licensing legislation

Thereafter, the Forum **noted** the content of the report and agreed to discuss the proposal to create a national database of members at the next meeting.

7. REPORT TO FORUMS ON PUBLICITY CAMPAIGN

There had been circulated a report by the Assistant Committee Officer providing members with information relating to the steps taken to establish an effective publicity campaign to highlight the role of the Forums within local communities. The report detailed the progress made with regard to the production of promotional material and other methods of publicity, including a press release, Forum web page and email address and advertisements on Aberdeenshire Live.

The Convener commented on the importance of continuing to highlight the role and work of the Forum in local communities.

Thereafter, the Forum **noted** the content of the report.

8. REPORT ON SCOTLAND'S LOCAL LICENSING FORUMS

There had been circulated a report by the Assistant Committee Officer which highlighted some examples of projects which had been undertaken by Scotland's Local Licensing Forums. The report also highlighted a number of areas of common interest affecting the Forums nationally.

The Convener explained that this report had been discussed at the meeting of the Forum and Board Conveners in September. She highlighted that the Local Licensing Forum in Moray had established an interactive discussion board which provided an opportunity for the public to comment on local licensing issues. The Assistant Committee Officer agreed to contact the ICT team at Aberdeenshire Council to find out more information about interactive discussion boards.

The Convener also highlighted common issues affecting membership, particularly in relation to recruiting young people, and the need to increase the interaction between the Licensing Board and Forum.

Thereafter, the Forum **noted** the content of the report.

9. CENTRAL LICENSING BOARD UPDATE

There had been circulated an update report by the Depute Clerk to the Licensing Board in relation to the applications which had been made under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005. Miss Watt provided the Forum with an update and advised that applications for clubs remained to be processed but that this would be undertaken at the meeting of the Licensing Board in January.

10. LICENSING STANDARDS OFFICER UPDATE

Mr Sutherland provided the Forum with an update and advised that the role of the Licensing Standards Officer (LSO) since 1 September was to ensure compliance of the legislation. He explained that the LSOs were now working on a shift basis which enabled them to build a picture across Aberdeenshire. With reference to compliance with the mandatory conditions, Mr Simpson explained that there seemed to be a lack of knowledge and understanding across Aberdeenshire with regard to signage and that training had not been fully addressed within the trade.

The Convener asked Mr Sutherland whether there were any particular areas with regard to compliance and training which the Forum could look at. Mr Sutherland explained that licence holders had received a large volume of information in the lead up to and following the commencement of the Act and felt that additional information could cause unnecessary confusion. He added that this could perhaps be looked at in the future.

With reference to training, Mr Duncan commented that whilst he understood the importance of the requirements to train staff he explained that there could be difficulties for small businesses in terms of the cost of training. He added that the training for personal licence holders had been very good and that it did get the message across that training was very important. The Convener added that because bar staff were the front face of a business it was important that they received proper training and explained that it was important to get this message across.

11. POLICE UPDATE

Inspector Milne provided the Forum with an update and explained that she had been involved in the drive to get applications through prior to the commencement of the Act. She explained that there had been some areas of the legislation which had not been tested or interpreted yet and said that test cases would clarify the position in the future. Inspector Milne informed the Forum of national intelligence sharing schemes and of an information sharing protocol which had been established with the Senior Licensing Standards Officer. She further explained that the three Chief Inspectors had met to discuss and develop local conditions, with the Chief Inspector of the Central area having already met with the Board. She also added that Occasional Licences was work in progress.

With reference to Test Purchasing, Inspector Milne advised that there had been a number of test purchases in Inverurie recently and explained that there had been two failures but that these premises had passed on the second visit.

Sergeant Main explained that he had been in post for 2 months and that his role was to assist and support the Licensing Inspector and to provide an overview of licensing administration across Aberdeenshire. Sergeant Main commented that the new Act was a comprehensive piece of legislation and that he had been spending time understanding the requirements of the Act. Sergeant Main also advised that he would be liaising with the Licensing Boards and attending Licensing Forum meetings.

12. WORK PLAN FOR FUTURE ACTIONS – DISCUSSION AND UPDATE

Booze Cruises – Mr Sutherland advised that he would be attending the next meeting of the Inverurie and District Pub Watch and intended to find out whether the licensees accepted Booze Cruises in their premises and how they were monitored. He advised that this information could be used to establish best practice but added that as far as he understood there was not a significant problem with the management of Booze Cruises in the area.

Best Bar None – Mr Simpson advised that he was aware that Best Bar None applications had been received predominantly from the North and Central areas, with all licensed premises in Westhill submitting an application. The awards ceremony would be held in February.

Communication and Networking – The Convener explained that contact had yet to be made with the Community Councils in the area but advised that she would contact Mr Robinson with regard to this.

Young People – As Mrs Ball and Mr Strachan were not in attendance an update on this action plan was not available.

The Forum **agreed** that work plans for each action should be submitted to the next meeting.

13. AOCB

There was no other business.

14. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 27 January, 2010, in Inverurie.

Kim Shearer
Convener