

## CENTRAL ABERDEENSHIRE LICENSING FORUM

GORDON HOUSE, INVERURIE, 24 JUNE, 2009

**Present:** Ms Kim Shearer, (Chair); Mrs Grace Ball; Mr Jim Blackhall; Mr Neil Cable; Mr William Duncan; Mr Paul Robinson; Ms Alison Stokes; Mr Alistair Strachan; Councillor Joanna Strathdee; Mr Andrew Sutherland.

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

The Convener welcomed all to the Forum meeting and asked Members to introduce themselves, explaining briefly which area of membership or organisation they represented.

### 1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Mr Paul MacLennan and Inspector Gillian Milne, Grampian Police.

### 2. MINUTE OF MEETING OF 25 MARCH, 2009

The Minute of Meeting of 25 March, 2009, had been circulated and was approved.

### 3. MATTERS ARISING

Update of Membership of Forum – With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 25 March, 2009 (Item 4 (5)), the Principal Committee Officer advised that he had written to Ms Biggs and Mr Ritchie regarding their membership to the Forum. The Principal Committee Officer advised that he had received a response from Ms Biggs stating that she wished to resign from the Licensing Forum and, as yet, had not received a response from Mr Ritchie. The Forum agreed that Mr Ritchie be removed as a member of the Forum as he had not attended any meetings in 2008/09.

With regard to recruiting new members to the Forum it was noted that there was good representations from the licensed trade but there was little representation from persons having functions in Health, Social Work and Education. It was noted that there were no young people or representatives from the Off-Sales sector. It was agreed that a letter would be sent to the managers of Off-Sales stores in the Inverurie, Huntly and Westhill areas to inform them of the existence of the Licensing Forum and invite applications for membership.

### 4. LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2005 – UPDATE FOR BOARD MEMBERS

There had been circulated a report by the Legal Manager (Central) on the progress made to date in processing applications under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005. The Legal Manager (Central) summarised the information contained in the report and asked members to note the information reported.

The members **agreed** to note the information contained within the report.

Councillor Strathdee advised that the Central Division Licensing Board would support the Depute Clerk in dealing with applications by meeting monthly.

There followed a discussion on applications for Occasional Licences and the effect the application process would have on local galas and other fundraising events. The Legal

Manager advised that guidance notes for Occasional Licence applicants were to be collated for those applying for licences after September, 2009. Any applications for Occasional Licences under the current legislation were being honoured. The Legal Manager also commented that the new legislation did not affect the licence so much as it did the public entertainment aspect. Mr Strachan commented that additional first aid and security provisions, such as fencing, were now required and questioned whether the new policy is cost effective for charities seeking an Occasional Licence.

Councillor Strathdee commented that the Licensing Forum was not represented on Community Planning Forums. It was agreed that the Forum would further discuss the issues raised on this matter at the next meeting of the Forum.

## **5. LICENSING STANDARDS OFFICER UPDATE – OVERPROVISION POLICY AND FINDINGS**

There had been circulated a copy of the draft Overprovision Policy Statement by Mr Sutherland, who provided the Forum with a brief review of the findings of the sub-group. He welcomed questions and comments on the content of the report.

Mr Robinson commented that he had made representations to get information from the Anti-Social Behaviour Group which he attended. He was concerned about the blanket response from Grampian Police and felt that to rely on market forces was not the best way of looking at overprovision. The Convener commented that this could be raised with Grampian Police at the next meeting. The Legal Manager advised that overprovision must be reviewed next year and perhaps this could be considered during investigations.

Mr Duncan commented that the 20% reduction in the number of licensed premises operating under the new Act was cause for concern. He questioned whether this was due, in part, to the current economic climate and how this drop would affect local communities in the longer term.

The Convener asked Mr Sutherland how the role of the Licensing Standards Officer would develop after 1 September, 2009. Mr Sutherland advised that he would work on a shift system with the other Licensing Standards Officers, enabling evening and weekend visits to be made to licensed premises throughout Aberdeenshire.

## **6. POLICE UPDATE**

Due to the absence of Inspector Gillian Milne, Grampian Police, no update was provided.

## **7. FUTURE WORK PLAN**

With reference to the Minute of Meeting of 25 March, 2009 (Item 10), it was noted that none of the suggestions for possible areas of action had been developed so far. The Convener asked the Assistant Committee Officer to circulate the template work plan and guidance notes to members. Members were asked to select which area of action they were interested in and email their completed work plan to the Assistant Committee Officer. The Convener commented that overprovision should continue as an area of action. It was agreed that sub-groups would be formed to develop the areas of interest further and each group would report back at the next meeting with proposals for how each area could be taken forward.

With reference to the work plan, the Convener read out an email she received from the Assistant Committee Officer regarding website development with the Aberdeenshire Licensing Forums. The Convener commented that web development was an area the Central Licensing Forum had been considering for some time.

Mr Robinson advised that he was interested in establishing contact with local Community Councils in order to increase communication and networking. The Assistant Committee Officer agreed to provide Mr Robinson with the contact details of the secretaries of the Community Councils in the Central Aberdeenshire area.

#### **8. ANY OTHER COMPETENT BUSINESS**

Mr Blackhall advised that he was a member of Pub Watch and stated that “booze cruising” was an issue that had been discussed there previously. He suggested that Mr Sutherland could perhaps attend a Pub Watch meeting in the future. The Convener commented that it would be interesting to gauge the public perception on “booze cruising” within Central Aberdeenshire.

Mr Strachan commented that the Best Bar None awards were approaching.

Ms Stokes advised she would be interested in joining the “Young People Drinking” sub-group.

The Assistant Committee Officer advised that the suggestion by the Central Forum Convener and the Central Board Convener of a meeting between the three Forum Conveners and three Board Conveners had been well received by the North and South Forums. Arrangements would be made regarding a suitable date and location for this meeting.

#### **9. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was agreed that the next meeting would be held on Wednesday 28 October, 2009, in Gordon House, Inverurie.

**Kim Shearer  
Convener**