

Response from Building Standards re: Safety Certificate for Somerset Park – 10 July 2025

In reference to your recent consultation in relation to the two occasional licences for Somerset Park, I would comment as follows.

Somerset Park is a designated sports ground under Safety at Sports Ground Act 1975, and as such requires a general safety certificate to be issued. The current certificate was issued on the 1st of July 2025 and is in place until the 30th June 2026.

Having reviewed the information submitted, I can confirm that the proposals for the temporary hospitality area within the main stand of the stadium would be in breach of the current safety certificate. Both in relation to layout alterations which include the erection of temporary hoarding to form the proposed hospitality area and in regard to reduction in capacity numbers for disabled viewing. Whilst neither the Main Stand or overall stadium capacity numbers will be exceeded, tickets for the proposed hospitality area will be available to any home fan to purchase. This means there will be a migration of fans between the North Stand and Somerset Road Stand to access the hospitality area within the Main Stand at the half time interval.

Myself and Susanne carried out an inspection yesterday of the proposed hospitality area along with the Ayr United safety officer (Roy Provan) and Managing Director (Graeme Mathie).

Having reviewed proposals and discussed identified breach of the current Safety Certificate we note that the club propose mitigation measures as noted below to manage the associated risks;

- Access/Exit to the hospitality area will be via a dedicated stewarded entrance. All fans will leave the hospitality area 15mins prior to kick off. They will enter the stadium via their allocated turnstile as identified on their match ticket
- Increased stewarding provision to prevent unauthorised entry to the hospitality area and to ensure access to the disabled viewing area and the accessible toilets are not compromised for disabled fans
- Messaging via the PA system to advise fans not to migrate towards the hospitality area unless they are in possession of a valid pre-paid ticket
- Hoarding to be securely fixed to ensure lateral stability

Having considered the above on the basis of a temporary arrangement for the two identified football matches only as part of a trial exercise being managed by SFA we have no formal objection to the proposal. We would note however that the club must commit to managing the associated risks using an event specific management plan and apply a dynamic risk based approach to any challenges. Stewards must be fully briefed and equipped to move the temporary hoarding in the event of an incident.

We have asked the club to provide calculations to demonstrate the proposed capacity numbers for both the proposed hospitality area and the reduced disabled area in accordance with guidance set out within the current version of the Green Guide. These calculations should be included within the event management plan and should be provided prior to issue of an occasional licence

Ayr United Football Club, Somerset Park, Ayr
Occasional Licence Application – 19th & 22nd July 2025
Report by Licensing Standards Officer

I refer to the Occasional Licence application made on behalf of Ayr United Football and Athletic Club Ltd, which operates from premises at Somerset Park in Ayr. The applications are to cover the use of a temporary bar area within the stadium building during two football matches to provide pre-ordered alcoholic refreshments pre-match and for the 15 minute half time period. Therefore a licence is requested from 12 noon until 4.30pm on Saturday 19th July and 5pm until 9pm on Tuesday 22nd July to cover football matches between Ayr United v Arbroath and Ayr United v Forfar which are expected to attract overall crowds of approximately 1100 persons per day.

As members will be aware alcohol cannot be purchased or consumed in a football stadium or grounds in Scotland with the exception of hospitality areas but not whilst a match is in play. Additionally, the Criminal Law (Consolidation) (Scotland) Act 1995 makes it illegal to consume alcohol within sight of a football pitch.

Alcohol was additionally banned in football stadiums due to the riots which happened at the Scottish Cup Final match between Celtic and Rangers in 1980 where alcohol was considered to be a contributory factor and as a result the Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 1980 introduced restrictions.

In order to understand the applications and the request for alcohol sales within a specific area I met with Graeme Mathie the Managing Director of Ayr United to see the identified site and discuss the proposal in more detail.

I understand that the Scottish Professional Football League (SPFL) have approached a total of 8 Scottish Clubs to 'trial' the idea of alcohol within Stadiums at matches with anticipated lower attendance and less controversial pairings.

In most cases the application refers to the 'concourse' area, however at Ayr United Stadium the area that has been identified is the 'accessible area' for people who use wheelchairs and other movement aids. The plan is to section off a large section of this area with the use of 'heras' fencing panels which will be secured together and then covered with a thick tarpaulin type banner emblazoned with the sponsor. The intention of this is to ensure the pitch cannot be seen from the 'bar area' and to separate it from the main stadium. It is proposed that the serving area will be formed by using the mobile bar from the premises licensed to Ayr United known as 'The Hub' which is next door to the stadium.

There will only be pints of alcohol sold in this area which will be served in non-glass receptacles and pre-ordered. Entry will only be permitted to patrons who have a QR code to show their order and orders will be restricted to one drink per person. Whilst the application suggests a capacity of 75 persons, I have been advised by Mr Mathie that the anticipated capacity is 60. Additionally the applications request 4 hours, however the alcohol sales will only take place 2 hours pre-match and 15 minutes at half time and all alcohol will be consumed within the licensed area.

Considering the Board's policy statement and the current legislation in relation to alcohol sales and consumption within a football stadium, I request that the application for an Occasional Licence is not granted under delegated powers and is considered by the Licensing Board. In

support of this request, I would offer the following comments in relation to the Licensing Objectives:

Securing Public Safety

As this is an area within the grounds that would not usually be 'closed off' and it is the intention to do this on a temporary basis, the applicant may be able to provide the Board with details as to how this will be managed to avoid a crowd of people rushing to gain access via a temporary entrance during a short time period, such as the 15 minute half time break.

The Safety Certificate issued to Ayr United Football Club for the stadium at Somerset Park was recently considered at the Regulatory Panel (Licensing) and as a result the new document will be issued on 1st July 2025. Having consulted with the Building Standards Co-ordinator I am aware that any amendments to this would have to be considered by the Regulatory Panel (Licensing) and the introduction of a licensed area would require an amendment. Therefore, it would not be possible for this amendment to be made in time for the dates requested by the Occasional Licence application.

Issuing an occasional licence to allow alcohol to be sold in an area which had not been covered by the safety certificate would be contrary to the licensing objective 'Securing Public Safety'. The Board may also wish to satisfy themselves that sectioning off a part of the 'accessible area' will not compromise the safety or access of those who require to use the area.

Protecting Children and Young People from Harm

The applicant has been clear that access to the licensed area will be strictly for those aged 18 years and over and the alcohol management plan supplied provides details of how ID checks will be carried out and that staff will all be fully trained with a dedicated personal licence holder for the area. However, under 18's will be in attendance at the football match itself. The Board may wish to consider if granting a liquor licence which encourages use of the over 18's alcohol area during the half time period, would mean that children and young persons were potentially being left unsupervised whilst older companions went for a drink.

Additionally the Board may wish to consider if it is responsible to grant a licence which supports an alcohol sales/consumption area that is only open for 15 mins during half time, which would encourage people to consume the alcohol quickly and may also encourage people to rush in front of each other to gain early access to the area this potentially causing a challenge at the entrance.

If the Board were minded to grant the applications, I would suggest that some conditions were added to the licence for clarity, including the following;

- The capacity of the licensed area is restricted to 60 persons
- All alcohol must be pre-ordered
- Alcohol must be served in glass-alternative receptacles
- Each customer will only be served with one pre-ordered drink per visit

Catrina Andrew
Licensing Standards Officer
5th June 2025



Proposed location of mobile bar/servery

Entrance to area



Second Exit

Accessibility area



EVENT & ALCOHOL MANAGEMENT PLAN Ayr United Football Club (Disabled section)

19 July 2025 v Arbroath

and

22 July 2025 v Forfar

Service Overview

Capacity: - 60 persons

This will be open to match day home ticket holders on a first come first served basis.

TIMES – Saturday 19 July (3:00pm kick-off)

General Admission: 12.30pm – 2:00pm / 3.35pm – 4:00pm (halftime)

Alcohol Provision: 12.30pm – 2.15pm / 3.35pm – 4:00pm (halftime)

Overall closure: 2:30pm (pre-match) / 4:00pm (halftime)

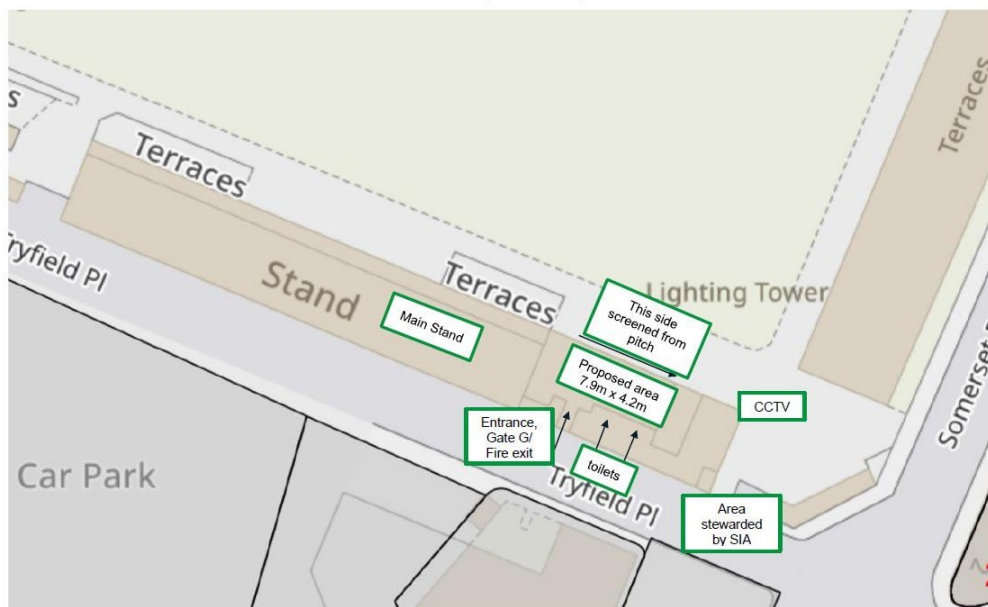
TIMES – Tuesday 22 July (7:45pm kick-off)

General Admission: 5.15pm – 7:00pm / 8.20pm – 8:45pm (halftime)

Alcohol Provision: 5.15pm – 7.00pm / 8.20pm – 8.45pm (halftime)

Closure: 7.15pm (pre-match) / 8.45pm (halftime)

Site Plan & Photos





The holding capacity figure was worked out using recognized workings from the Green Guide issued by The Sports Ground Safety Authority (SGSA) and is as follows,

I based it on each person having 0.5m². The area is 33.18 metres², so 33.18 is divided by 0.5 = 66 persons. We further agreed after meeting with the licensing board to reduce the capacity to 60 people, which would offer customers more room.

The area for disabled fans situated in front of the pop-up bar is 16 metres in length and 3.6metres in width. Taking the width as 1.5 metres to allow 2.1 metres walkway, would give 16m x 1.5m = 24m². Allowing 1m² for each person, 24m² x 1m² = 24(wheelchair users and carers) for these two games. It also allows sufficient space for movement in front of the barriered pop up bar.

Advertising banners will be secured to the fencing panels to block out any sight of the pitch and the panels will, as well as being bolted together, be cable tied to the metal uprights shown in the photographs.

Community & Residents

The Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 and the five Licensing Objectives will be fully applied and managed by Ayr United Football Club.

There will be dedicated SIA stewards and supervisors on site to control crowd and drinking consumption.

There will be a minimum of two SIA stewards, with additional staff supervision.

The ground has at least 20 SIA stewards (will be more for larger games) – 18 stewards in-house, and the remainder third party.

The stewarding plan will be amended on a dynamic, risk-assessed basis.

No excessive noise will be created – there will be background music only and the area will only operate within limited times during the day and early evening.

Anti-Social behaviour will be monitored and managed by Ayr United Football Club Safety management and SIA stewards.

Excessive drinking will be monitored and discouraged by servers, management & SIA stewards.

The club will liaise through the usual channels to discuss match day and fan zone operations with Police Scotland, local community and residents.

A statement will be pushed out on social media/ website and the PA system telling supporters that only home fans in possession of prepaid tickets for the pop-up bar will be allowed access to it, both before the game and at halftime. This will be repeated at regular intervals.

CCTV

The area to be licensed is covered by CCTV, with a dedicated CCTV camera.

Further CCTV cameras located both inside and outside the stadium to manage any issues, these are monitored constantly from the matchday control room.

Bar & Area

Bar – there will be a small bar located against the East wall of licensed area, which will be manned by Ayr United bar staff.

Due Diligence

There will be a folder on site containing the following information, for access by the necessary stakeholders during the event:

- Occasional licence
- Copy of Personal Licence Certificates
- Copy of relevant staff training records as per Scottish Licensing Act 2005 - Schedule 3, Paragraph 6
- Refusal logs
- Accident Reporting Form

Staff Briefing

The manager on site will be George Paton, Hospitality Manager, Tel.07903599258.

All event staff will be reminded that the Occasional Licence and Alcohol Management Plan must always be followed.

All bar staff will have received the required 2 hours training in line with the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005.

There will be a minimum number of four personal licence holders in area, personal licence holder working at the disabled area will be George Paton.

There will be around two bar staff, working at the disabled area.

In the event of evacuation, all staff must comply promptly with any instruction given in an emergency by the Safety Officer, Event Management, Supervisor or Police Officer.

The 5 Key Licensing Objectives

- Preventing Crime & Disorder
- Securing Public Safety
- Protecting children & young persons from harm
- Preventing public nuisance
- Protecting & improving health

The licensing objectives provide a framework for everyone selling or serving alcohol in Scotland to follow. They aim to ensure alcohol is consumed sensibly and safely and served in a responsible way.

Staff must refuse to sell or serve alcohol to anyone who appears drunk and they must inform the manager and/or steward as soon as possible.

Staff must ensure all refusals are recorded in the refusal log provided.

Staff must ask for ID for anyone under the age of 25, in line with the Challenge 25 programme. If the customer cannot provide suitable ID, no alcohol can be sold to that customer.

A copy of the occasional licence will be displayed at the relevant bar/kiosk area.

Section 110 notices will be displayed at the relevant bar/kiosk area, in line with the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005, advising that it is an offence to purchase alcohol for under 18s.

Challenge 25 notices will be displayed.

Children and Young Persons – Children (ages 5-15) and Young Persons will not be permitted access.

Full plastic/paper cups service for the fan zone area.

All bars are expected to stay open as specified. However, should demand reduce sooner than this, we may opt to partially or fully close bars. Senior staff will decide if the bar is to close early and customer dispersal managed appropriately.

First Aid point will be available and signposted for all fans. Staff will be trained to confirm the location and assist with any accidents.

All staff will be required to report any hazards/incidents to the appropriate manager.

Challenge 25

Challenge 25 notices will be displayed.

Five Step checking Process

- Check the ID - Is it genuine?
- Check the photograph. Does it match the person in front of you?
- Check the date of birth. Is the person old enough?
- Check the ID card. Has it been tampered with?
- Check the person. Are you satisfied about the person's age? If not, refuse to sell.

Stewards Briefing

In addition to the staff briefing information, Licensed Stewards will be briefed on the following points:

- Ensure that queuing is done in an orderly and controlled fashion.
- The Occasional Licence should be displayed at each bar, in line with the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005.
- Carry out all instructions given by the event management, Safety Officer or Police / Licensing Officer in relation to the security and safety.
- Liaise with managers before, during, and after an incident.
- Be vigilant to assist customers with disabilities
- Any customers with a medical issue must be immediately & sensibly directed to appropriate staff.
- Assist in dealing with incidences of rowdiness within the area.
- Advise customers to keep the noise level to minimum and respect their neighbours.
- Report any incidences of excessive alcohol consumption & behaviour that may require further action or possible ejection.
- Ensure and monitor that no persons under the age of 18 years are consuming alcohol within the premises.
- Carry out ejections for failure to comply with safety or security instructions or any other incidences as instructed by senior staff. This must be logged in the incident/refusals book and Match Safety Officer informed.
- Comply promptly with any instruction given in an emergency by the Safety Officer or Police Officer.
- Liaise promptly and sensibly with any requests from Police or Licensing Standards Officers.
- Assist as required in the evacuation of the Area should the need arise.
- Comply with the alcohol licensing laws in line with the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005.
- Ensure that no customers leave the grounds with alcohol.
- Be familiar with the bar rules to assist customers to drink responsibly.
- Introduce themselves to the bar manager or other senior staff during the event as needed, and liaise with them about steward positioning to ensure any change is communicated.
- Stewards present in this area will be shown how to take away the barriers to create more space and allow quicker egress in the case of emergency evacuation.

Steward Deployment

Stewarding levels will be managed on a dynamic, risk-assessed basis.

There will be roving stewards throughout the site, with a minimum of two SIA stewards within the disabled area, and additional stewards within the wider site who can be called upon, as required.

Evacuation

In the event of an emergency, the match safety officer will raise the alarm and summon Scottish Fire and Rescue to the premises.

Guests will be instructed to leave to the muster point which is the rear of the main carpark.

Stewards on duty will assist in directing guests to a safe area outside the premises and provide physical assistance to ambulant and wheelchair disabled guests, they will remove barriers if required to help this process.

On site Medical Staff will attend in the first instance to deal with any casualties.

Key Contacts

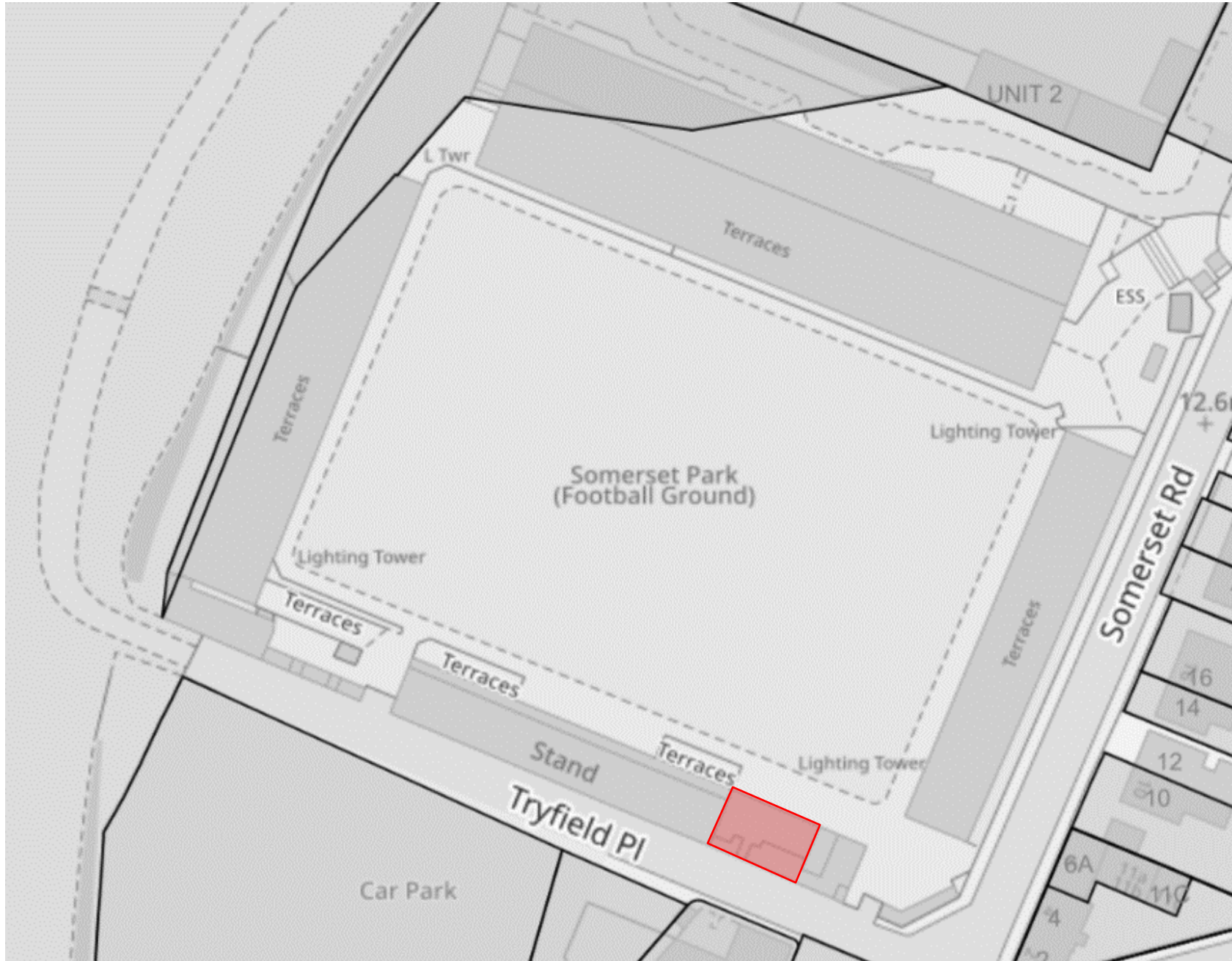
George Paton, Hospitality Manager, tel. 07903599258

Roy Provan, Stadium Manager/ Match Day Safety Officer, tel. 07545904428

Stevan Houldsworth, Matchday Deputy Safety Officer, tel. 07718789070

Graeme Mathie, Managing Director, tel. 07961787074

Somerset Park, 13 Tryfield Pl, Ayr KA8 9NB



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