

SOUTH AYRSHIRE LOCAL LICENSING FORUM

Minutes of the meeting of South Ayrshire Local Licensing Forum in County Buildings, Ayr on 29 March 2023 at 10.00 a.m.

- Present:** Catrina Andrew (Chair), David Cuthill, Janice Lindsay, Paul Zive, Alex Kelly and Sukhuinderjit Sangha
- Officers:** A Nelson, Co-ordinator, Democratic Services and Connie Griffiths, Assistant Committee Clerk.
- Apologies:** Rachael Rennie, Sandy Paton, Sheryl Syme (Police Sergeant), and Kathryn Thornton (Police Officer).

1. Welcome

The Licensing Standards Officer welcomed everyone to the meeting of the Forum and advised that whilst the Police representatives had now been identified, they had offered apologies for this meeting.

2. Minutes of Previous Forum meeting of 22 February 2023

All members were in agreement with the minutes of 22 February 2023 meeting. The chair advised members of the progress with the recruitment of new members and thanked committee services for introducing hybrid meetings which had been suggested at the last meeting of the Forum.

Janice Lindsay approved the minutes.

Sukhuinderjit Sangha seconded.

3. Licensing Board meeting of 9 March 2023

Whilst the minutes of the Licensing Board meeting of 9 March are not yet available, the chair invited those who attended on the day to share their view of that meeting. Members provided positive feedback regarding the way the board meeting was conducted, and the joined-up approach shown by Board members. Forum members felt that the meeting did not appear to be political but was more concentrated on the content of the applications. It was noted however, that was difficult to hear anyone at the meeting who attended remotely.

4. Consideration of Licensing Board's Current Policy Statement

The chair initiated a discussion among forum members regarding the boards current policy statement. There was considerable discussion surrounding several issues and each person in attendance was able to supply personal examples and relevant opinions. As the policy statement is vast and the draft is not yet available, the forum decided to concentrate their response to the board on a few specific areas that have been discussed at past forum meetings, this resulted in the following conclusions.

A) Children and young people in Licensed areas

Having considered the wording provided in the boards current policy statement, forum members agreed that a suggested change from the description of "bar area" to "bar counter" would be a positive change and eliminate any confusion. Forum members felt that they would not object to under 18's being in a "bar" for the purpose of food but did not think it would be appropriate to sit at a bar counter. In principle, the forum members agreed with the board's current statement which indicates that under 18's should mainly be on premises for the consumption of food. However, the forum did feel that there were circumstances where it would be appropriate for someone under the age of 18 to be on premises without food such as playing pool, or participation in other day time activities. The forum recognised that premises could change at certain times of the evening, and, when certain activities are taking place such as football being shown on the tv. The forum felt strongly that it was important that under 18's was exposed to alcohol in the correct way to ensure that when reacting that age of 18, they knew how to act responsibly in a licensed premises. Therefore, the forum agreed to respond to the boards consultation and suggest that there may be circumstances other than food for under 18's to be within a licensed premises.

B) Occasional Licence

The forum is aware of the increasing number of occasional licence applications and the number of large events planned to take place in South Ayrshire this year. There was considerable discussion amongst forum members about how they felt regarding alcohol at family-oriented events. After many different examples and personal experiences described by forum members, it was agreed that the majority of forum members were in support of alcohol provision at these events. The forum discussed whether a bar area should be defined and delineated at these events or whether it would be acceptable for those in attendance to "wander" throughout the event area with a container of alcohol. It was generally felt that during daytime hours (but from 12 noon onwards) it would be acceptable for alcohol to be consumed throughout this space to allow under 18's to gain an understanding of how alcohol can be consumed in a responsible way. The forum agreed to report their examples to the board as part of the consultation.

C) Off sales

The forum had an in-depth discussion regarding off sales as it was recognised by all members that drinking habits had changed significantly over the past few years, and notably as a result of covid. Having heard in the past from the NHS and police statistics regarding alcohol harm, the forum feels that off sales are responsible for the majority of alcohol related behaviour and harm. However, notwithstanding this concern, Forum members were unable to suggest any solutions and agreed simply to highlight their concerns and observations to the board.

As a result of all the discussions surrounding the current policy statement, the chair agreed to draft a response to the boards pre-draft consultation and circulate this by email to forum members so that it could be submitted by the required time scale.

5. Date and Time of the next Forum Meeting

There was a discussion surrounding the timeline in relation to the publication of the boards policy statement. The forum assumed that the draft statement would be available following the June board meeting of 13 June 2023, and therefore have set a provisional date for the next forum meeting of 21 June 2023 at 10am in County Buildings, so that they may consider the draft statement. The chair asked any forum member who found this date to be unsuitable to contact her as soon as possible.

The meeting ended at 11.30 am