

Minute

Orkney Local Licensing Forum

Wednesday, 16 April 2025, 14:00.

Committee Room 1, Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall.



Present

- Representative of the Chief Constable of Police Scotland:
 - Chief Inspector Scott Robertson.
- Representative of Persons having functions relating to Health, Education or Social Work:
 - Cameron McConnachie (deputising for Katie Spence).
- Representatives of Persons Resident within the Forum's Area:
 - Angela Chambers.
 - Bob Mackenzie.
 - Andy McGinn.
- Licensing Standards Officer:
 - Nick Long.
- Representative of Scottish Fire and Rescue Service:
 - David McGroarty, Group Commander (via Microsoft Teams).

Clerk

- Hazel Flett, Service Manager (Governance), Orkney Islands Council.

In Attendance

- Orkney Islands Council:
 - Faith Reilly, Licensing Standards Officer.
 - Lillian Rendall, Legal Clerk.
- Police Scotland:
 - Sergeant Sarah Paterson, Licensing Officer, Highlands and Islands Area.

Apologies

- Representative of Holders of Premises Licences and Personal Licences:
 - Charlotte Foy (also representing Young People).
 - Jean Tulloch.

- Representative of Persons having functions relating to Health, Education or Social Work:
 - Katie Spence.
- Representative of Persons Resident within the Forum's Area:
 - Barry Cockerham (via Microsoft Teams).
- Orkney Islands Area Licensing Board (observers):
 - Duncan A Tullock, Convener.
 - Kristopher D Leask, Vice Convener.

Not Present

- Representatives of Holders of Premises Licences and Personal Licences:
 - Kelly-Marie McGuigan.
 - Malcolm Stout.
- Representative of local Health Board:
 - Dr Louise Wilson.

Chair

- Hazel Flett, Service Manager (Governance) (for Item 1).
- Andy McGinn, Convener (for Items 2 to 14).

1. Appointment of Convener

The Service Manager (Governance) welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that, in terms of the Constitution, as this was the first meeting in the calendar year, one of the members of the Forum must be elected to be the Convener.

The Service Manager (Governance) thereafter asked for nominations for Convener.

Angela Chambers, seconded by Bob Mackenzie, proposed Andy McGinn.

There being no other nominations, Andy McGinn was elected Convener of the Licensing Forum.

Andy McGinn took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

2. Appointment of Depute Convener

The Convener, seconded by Bob Mackenzie, proposed Angela Chambers as Depute Convener. There being no other nominations, Angela Chambers was elected Depute Convener of the Licensing Forum.

3. Minute of Previous Meeting

There had been previously circulated the draft Minute of the Meeting of the Licensing Forum held on 10 July 2024.

On the motion of Bob Mackenzie, seconded by Angela Chambers, the Forum resolved to approve the Minute of the Meeting of the Licensing Forum held on 10 July 2024 as a true record.

4. Matters Arising

4.1. Young People and Alcohol

The Convener advised that he would meet with Nick Long and arrange to visit UHI Orkney to speak to young people and report back to the next meeting.

4.2. Pubwatch

The Convener confirmed that, together with the Depute Convener, they had met Senga Flett to discuss the future of Pubwatch. Unfortunately, no one was willing to take on the responsibility of running the scheme, which was disappointing.

Sergeant Sarah Paterson advised that Pubwatch ran successfully in other areas of the Highlands, although GDPR did cause issues with data sharing but these could be overcome through data sharing agreements. There was also the possibility of a premises licence holder asking for a person to be excluded from a premises, which Police Scotland would support, if necessary.

4.3. Police Scotland – Licensing Officer Visit to Orkney

Sergeant Sarah Paterson reported that she had been in Orkney on 27 and 28 September 2024 and carried out 15 in-depth inspections, lasting up to 45 minutes, and six walk through checks, of licensed premises. In-depth inspections included checking age verification policies, operating plans and promotion of the licensing objectives. There was generally good compliance locally with only minor administrative matters to address. She noted that none of the licensed premises operated a refusal book, which was one matter she would advocate for. Further inspections would be carried out the following week and she would report back to the next meeting of the Licensing Forum. It was clarified that the inspections focused on on-sale premises.

5. Orkney Islands Area Licensing Board

The Legal Clerk reported that there was nothing of significance to report to the Licensing Forum. However, the Clerk to the Licensing Board had issued four applications for extended hours covering the period of the Island Games (12-18 July 2025), with some premises extending their hours to 01:00 and others to 02:00. No objections had been received to those applications and therefore all were agreed under powers delegated to the Clerk to the Board.

The Legal Clerk confirmed that any application should be submitted at least six weeks prior to the event and would encourage even earlier submission so that, if an objection was received, a meeting of the Licensing Board could be convened at fairly short notice.

6. Licensing Standards Officer

Nick Long introduced Faith Reilly, who had been appointed as the Licensing Standards Officer on a part-time basis, currently working afternoons, but with scope to work outwith those hours with the Police going forward, once fully trained.

There had been previously circulated a report on the work of the Licensing Standards Officer during the period 1 November 2024 to 31 March 2025.

In response to a query from the Convener regarding the number of occasional licences, the Legal Clerk confirmed that the number depended on the number of events occurring over the summer, including galas, fetes and agricultural shows.

7. Orkney Street Pastors

There had been previously circulated a written update from Barry Cockerham on the work of the Orkney Street Pastors, the contents of which were noted.

8. Public Health

There had been previously circulated further data obtained by NHS Orkney's Public Health team from the Scottish Government on the breakdown of hospital admission by age groups of 11-15, 16-20 and 21-25 for the years 2020/21 to 2022/23, which showed a decreasing trend and was spread evenly across two age groups (16-20 and 21-25).

Cameron McConnachie advised that the Public Health team had done some work in secondary schools in different formats supporting teachers and pupils in raising awareness of alcohol and drug matters. It was hoped that visits to the three Junior High Schools in the isles would take place in the next few months.

The Public Health team had also attended community events to raise awareness and was also in the early stage of developing a programme for parents and carers to feel more comfortable and confident in raising issues and speaking with children. The reducing trend of hospital admissions could be attributed to education and awareness raising and working with schools and other organisations.

Although the figures provided (up to 2022/23) were the most recently available, it was hoped that the next year of data would be available shortly and show a similar trend.

In response to a question from Nick Long, Cameron McConnachie confirmed that, due to small numbers, Public Health Scotland had suppressed the "count of admissions" column where numbers were below two, therefore a count of zero could be zero, one or two. The reason for the suppression was to mitigate against the release of personal identifiable information.

9. Police Scotland

Sergeant Sarah Paterson presented the Orkney Licensing Report for 2023-24, on behalf of the Chief Constable, copies of which had been previously circulated, and highlighted the following:

- The report was specific to Orkney, with the next report (for 2024-25) in preparation.
- There was an increase in the number of inspections, which was due to a proactive local force, crucial for relationship building and testament to the low number of issues with licensed premises.
- Spiking, which was a national topic, included mixing non-alcoholic drinks with alcohol, mixing alcohol, adding drugs or by injection. Every report was taken seriously and investigated thoroughly.

- The escalation process, whereby advice was provided at an early stage, with licence holders happy to accept advice from Police Scotland and the Licensing Standards Officer at an early stage to avoid matters escalating.
- A national campaign in relation to proxy purchase, sending a clear message to adults that purchasing alcohol for children was not acceptable under any circumstances. The campaign was underway in Orkney in 2024 with plans to raise awareness within off-licence premises, promoting understanding in staff and customers.
- In excess of 800 inspections were undertaken, with 24 incidents recorded, all at a very low level.

In response to a query from the Convener as to why the report was never dated, although signed by the Chief Constable, Sergeant Paterson confirmed that each licensing board received a report specific to its area, meaning 32 separate reports required to be compiled and compliance checked for accuracy before sending to the office of the Chief Constable for signature. Sergeant Paterson undertook to ask the national policy unit why the annual report was not dated.

Regarding the number of premises licences in Orkney as at 31 March 2024, the Legal Clerk confirmed that the numbers quoted in the section on page 8 totalled 105 and not 99 as indicated in the report.

On page 10, it stated that, at present, there was only one Community Alcohol Partnership operating within Highland, in Lochaber, however, following a query from the Convener, Bob Mackenzie confirmed there was also one operating in Orkney.

10. Scottish Fire and Rescue Service

David McGroarty reported that another year had passed with no trends relating to alcohol being a contributing factor in accidental fires in private residences. Locally, Firefighter Alana Gordon had been appointed to join the team at the District Office in an auditing role, which was usually done outwith Orkney. Alana Gordon would also be working alongside the Community Safety Officer, engaging with licensed premises and offering support around risk assessments, so that they were not just a written document.

11. Any Other Competent Business

The Convener extended congratulations to Bob Mackenzie on his recent award in relation to the Orkney Community Alcohol Partnership.

12. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next meeting be held on Wednesday, 9 July 2025 at 14:00.

Dates for the remainder of 2025 were noted as follows:

- Wednesday, 5 November 2025 at 14:00.
- Wednesday, 5 November 2025 at 15:30 – joint meeting with Orkney Islands Area Licensing Board.

13. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Convener declared the meeting concluded at 14:45.