

Minute

Orkney Local Licensing Forum and Orkney Islands Area Licensing Board

Friday, 3 November 2023, 11:20.

Council Chamber, Council Offices, School Place, Kirkwall.



Present

Orkney Local Licensing Forum:

Nick Blowfield, Angela Chambers, Barry Cockerham, Andy McGinn, David McGroarty (via Microsoft Teams), Bob MacKenzie, Chief Inspector Scott Robertson and Malcolm Stout.

Orkney Islands Area Licensing Board:

David Dawson, Steven B Heddle, W Leslie Manson, Owen Tierney and Duncan A Tullock.

Clerk

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

In Attendance

- Orkney Islands Council:
 - Gavin Mitchell, Head of Legal and Governance and Clerk to the Orkney Islands Area Licensing Board.
 - Elaine Sinclair, Legal Clerk.
 - Lillian Rendall, Legal Clerk.

Apologies

- Orkney Local Licensing Forum:
 - Kelly-Marie McGuigan.
 - Dr Louise Wilson.
- Orkney Islands Area Licensing Board:
 - Rachael A King.
 - Kristopher D Leask.
 - Gwenda M Shearer.

Not Present

- Orkney Local Licensing Forum:
 - Jean Tulloch.

1. Appointment of Chair

The Clerk asked for nominations for Chair.

Duncan A Tullock was appointed Chair for this meeting and took the Chair.

2. Minute of Previous Meeting

There had been previously circulated the draft Minute of the Joint Meeting of the Orkney Local Licensing Forum and Orkney Islands Area Licensing Board held on 6 November 2019.

On the motion of Duncan A Tullock, seconded by Andy McGinn, the Minute of the Joint Meeting of the Orkney Local Licensing Forum and Orkney Islands Area Licensing Board held on 6 November 2019 was approved as a true record.

3. Matters Arising

Andy McGinn advised that, although the Licensing Forum had wished to see membership of Pubwatch as a mandatory condition on licences, the Licensing Board had subsequently agreed not to undertake a consultation exercise (requiring that membership of Pubwatch be a local condition attached to premises licences) but rather encourage licensees to become members of Orkney Pubwatch, having regard to their particular type of premises and/or licensable activities, as reflected in the Board's Statement of Alcohol Licensing Policy.

4. Pubwatch

The Chair of Pubwatch was unable to attend the meeting of the Licensing Forum held earlier in the day, as well as this joint meeting, but had provided the following update:

“Unfortunately, the momentum within Orkney Pubwatch has been stagnant. We have encountered challenges in rallying individuals to sign up and take on crucial roles within the group. This lack of participation has hindered our ability to advance the objectives of Orkney Pubwatch effectively.

Furthermore, Police Scotland has informed us of a forthcoming shift in resources which will result in the departure of our preventions and interventions officer, a role previously held by Sgt Hay. Sgt Hay, whose efforts were pivotal in initiating the work of Orkney Pubwatch, has been finding it increasingly difficult to allocate time towards Pubwatch amidst his other responsibilities.

Additionally, due to unforeseen personal circumstances, I have been away and unable to contribute much of my time towards the pubwatch.

Despite these hurdles, we remain hopeful and committed to rejuvenating Orkney Pubwatch and will continue to strive for better engagement and effectiveness in the near future.

Anyone with any idea and offers of help would be greatly appreciated.”.

All those present were supportive of Pubwatch continuing and it was commented that, as it was known Pubwatch was not as active as previously, incidents within licensed premises had increased, as there was no “deterrent”. It was also commented that the linked mobile phones were a useful tool, with Street Pastors often called to defuse a situation, which could, on occasion, prevent the requirement for Police Scotland resources to be deployed.

Chief Inspector Scott Robertson advised that, although the role of preventions and interventions officer was disappearing, he was proposing that someone would oversee allocation of duties to the teams, therefore someone would be responsible, and he was keen to get Pubwatch back up and running. Also, as this group had not met since 2019, he referred to Sergeant Simon Hay’s national award which he had received earlier in 2023, for his work with Pubwatch.

5. Orkney Street Pastors

Barry Cockerham gave the following presentation on the work of Orkney Street Pastors.

“We patrol the streets of Kirkwall in a team of at least three people on Saturday night between 11pm and 2am or until the crowd at the harbour end of Bridge Street disperses. Each team must consist of at least one female. We currently have 10 female and 8 male fully trained Street Pastors available for the rota. They are all volunteers and active members of a local church.

Good relationships are maintained with the local police. We are able to respond to situations with which the Police are reluctant to get involved. For instance, we can assist intoxicated revellers to telephone for and get into taxis before they become a nuisance. We provide a very important and necessary shoulder on which people can vent their emotions. We listen, care and help. Anti-social behaviour and injuries caused by broken glass in Kirkwall have definitely been reduced since we started our patrols.

Our records show that in the first 9 months of this year (2023) we have helped close to 500 people which includes:

- Providing support for 50 people.
- Calming the situation in 15 incidents.
- Administering basic first aid to 9 people.
- Helping people into taxis on 6 occasions.
- Calling an ambulance to 3 incidents.
- Bringing 8 incidents to the attention of the Police.

On average each month we have handed out:

- 330 lollipops as tension breakers.
- 7 pairs of flip-flops to young ladies having difficulty in walking. This is down significantly since Fusion closed probably due to no dancing venue available.
- 10 bottles of water.
- Picked up over 85 discarded bottles and drinking glasses. About 10% on average are broken. This is a significant increase since the night club closed.

Our annual expenditure is of the order of £3,000, the majority of which is donated by local churches with Street Pastors in their fellowships.”.

In response to a query from Duncan Tullock regarding funding for the Street Pastors, Barry Cockerham confirmed that they did receive some ad hoc donations, however, as a religious organisation, any external funding was difficult to access, therefore they relied on churches with Street Pastors to provide any funding.

Leslie Manson was aware of the work of the Street Pastors in Aberdeen, where data had shown that the requirement for a police presence on Friday and Saturday nights had reduced, due to the good work of the Street Pastors, who were far more effective in defusing the situation.

Chief Inspector Scott Robertson commented that the Street Pastors were viewed very favourably in Orkney. The number of incidents within licensed premises in Orkney was very minimal compared to other areas where he had worked, which indicated well run licensed premises. He also referred to the recently published Chief Constable’s annual report, which indicated there were no “problematic” premises within Orkney.

Barry Cockerham confirmed that the Street Pastors had a very good working relationship with the police locally, making them aware of potential situations which could become more problematic. As most activity on a Saturday night/Sunday morning was now concentrated around the Harbour Street/Bridge Street area, this was easier to patrol.

Duncan Tullock advised that the issue of broken glass and street cleansing had been raised at the Licensing Forum and it appeared that the Council had more cleaners out during the summer months, but no cleaning took place outwith normal working hours on Friday afternoon to Monday morning and suggested that perhaps this should be looked at.

Barry Cockerham advised that the danger was gone by the time the street sweepers came round at 09:00 on a Sunday morning during the summer – the danger was at 02:00 when injuries could occur.

On behalf of the Licensing Forum and the Council respectively, Andy McGinn and Duncan Tullock thanked the Street Pastors for their outstanding services.

6. Any Other Competent Business

Members had no other competent business to raise.

7. Date of Next Meeting

It was agreed that the next joint meeting be held on a date to be confirmed.

8. Conclusion of Meeting

There being no further business, the Chair declared the meeting concluded at 11:50.