

EAST LOTHIAN LICENSING FORUM

11 DECEMBER 2019

PUBLIC PAPERS



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EAST LOTHIAN LICENSING FORUM

TUESDAY 10 SEPTEMBER 2019
ESK ROOM 2, BRUNTON HALL, MUSSELBURGH

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Forum Members Present:

Mr G Hood (Chair)
Mr D Dickson
PC H Bowsher
Mr J Thayers
Mr S Baxter
Mr J Sherval

Clerk:

Ms S Birrell

Visitors Present:

Mr I Cameron
Mrs A Cameron
Ms M McKenzie

Apologies:

Ms C O'Brien
Ms C Cunningham
Mr A Leggat
Mr R Fruzynski
Mr R Ross

Declarations of Interest:

None

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EAST LOTHIAN LICENSING FORUM HELD ON 12 JUNE 2019 FOR APPROVAL AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes were approved as a true record. There were no matters arising.

2. LICENSING STANDARDS OFFICER REPORT

A written report had been submitted by the Licensing Standards Officer. PC Bowsher explained that Police Scotland had objected to major variations outlined on page 3 of the report in relation to the Rugby World Cup but they had been granted, with conditions, which were: that food would be served, that each event would be ticketed, and that premises would not exceed opening for more than 14 hours per day.

In response to a question from Mr Thayers, PC Bowsher explained that the Standard Operating Procedure had changed regarding test purchasing, which had resulted in a temporary interruption to test purchases in East Lothian.

The Forum discussed the grant of a provisional licence in the area.

Mr Dickson asked about the continuing large numbers of applications for occasional licences. PC Bowsher confirmed that this was again due to outstanding section 50 agreements but also that some applications had been processed recently which had led to a slight decrease (146 in the last quarter, compared to 275 in the quarter before). The Chair asked if the new style of form for occasional licences had improved the system. PC Bowsher agreed that the requirement for additional information on the new forms had made the processing of applications smoother.

The Chair drew the Forum's attention to the requirement of licence holders to settle their fees by 1 October.

Mr Thayers asked about the number of complaints received in the last quarter. PC Bowsher explained that most complaints received were regarding noise, which would usually increase during warmer weather over the summer.

The Chair noted that PC Bowsher would be retiring after the meeting in December and requested catering for December's meeting to mark the occasion. The Clerk clarified that there was no budget available for catering from the Local Authority, but agreed to find an alternative venue as food and drink were not allowed in the venue provided for the next meeting.

The Chair emphasised that the joint meeting between the Local Licensing Forum and the Licensing Board would take place on Thursday 26 September. Members were recommended to attend the full Licensing Board meeting from 10am.

Decision

The Forum agreed:-

- i) to request a change of venue for December's meeting, and
- ii) to arrange, between the membership of the Forum, catering for the December meeting.

3. POLICE REPORT

PC Bowsher reported on joint visits to licensed premises with immigration officials, and pending applications in the area that were of concern to the police.

She updated the Forum on the Best Bar None Awards: Alan Paul had been encouraging applicants and 29 had been received this year. She added that all licence holders were recommended to apply for Best Bar None as it was a good way to ensure licenced premises were carrying out the required tasks and an easy way to make improvements towards best practice.

In connection with the anticipated review of bye-laws relating to drinking alcohol in public places, PC Bowsher confirmed that this project was ongoing and a revised plan would be ready soon. The Chair emphasised that the bye-laws should be updated as soon as possible.

PC Bowsher reported on a new national campaign called 'You're asking for it,' that aim to raise awareness of the effects of older people and particularly parents purchasing alcohol for young people. She confirmed that some individuals who had been reported had been prosecuted. The Forum discussed problems that arose when young people were given alcohol by their parents, and also the risks involved in young people accepting alcohol purchased for them by other adults.

PC Bowsher referred to the Chief Constable's report which had been circulated to the Forum's membership, outlining that it represented a summary of how licensing had operated in the area between 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019. Mr Thayers asked if the report was presented with the same information across all local authority areas: PC Bowsher clarified that the foreward was the same, and some headings were the same in every report.

The Forum discussed the number of criminal incidents which took place on licensed premises, the new system for test purchases which now required surveillance authority, issues and training on fake identifications carried by young people and the input from the PSYV to the Forum.

Mr Sherval suggested that there might be a way to correlate the statistics on alcohol related violence included in the report with information that had been collated in local Accident and Emergency Departments. Mr Baxter agreed that it would be useful to see the information available from the NHS. PC Bowsher pointed out that it would be difficult to match home addresses with an incidence of violence that could have happened in a different local authority area, and pointed out that all licensed premises in East Lothian closed by 1am.

Mr Thayers noted that there had been a national increase in drink driving and asked if information on this could be brought to a future meeting.

In response to questions from Mr Dickson, Mr Thayers outlined issues and trends that MELDAP had found with regards to alcohol and drug use, including an increase in sales of prescription drugs such as Xanax and Etizolam. Combining drug and alcohol abuse led to a range of risky behaviours.

Decision

The Forum agreed:

- i) to request information on drink driving offences to be brought to a future meeting, and

- ii) to note the verbal and written reports.

4. PUBWATCH

The Chair reported that the date for the AGM of Pubwatch would be arranged soon, and highlighted that all members should make every effort to attend. PC Bowsher outlined issues with contacting the groups' representative.

5. FORUM'S JOINT MEETING WITH PSYV

The Chair invited the PSYV to attend the next meeting of the Forum. PC Bowsher agreed to pass on the invitation to the group.

Decision

The Forum agreed that PC Bowsher would invite members of the PSYV to attend the next meeting on 11 December at 10am, venue tbc.

6. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Mr Thayers reported that a new project to offer support and advice to young people with drug and alcohol problems, or those who were affected by others' drug and alcohol abuse. The scheme would employ two full-time members of staff who would work with young people across the six secondary schools in East Lothian. The project would be funded for two years and then continued for two additional years, with a hope that it could be extended further. The Forum asked questions about how young people would be referred and where the service would be based. Mr Thayers suggested the members of staff could be invited to a meeting of the Local Licensing Forum once they were in post.

Decision

The Forum noted the verbal report, and agreed that the members of staff who were employed for the project should be invited to a future meeting of the Forum.

7. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The date of the next meeting was confirmed as Wednesday 11 December 2019, at 10am.

Decision

The Forum agreed that the venue of the next meeting should be altered to allow for a catered celebration to mark PC Bowsher's retirement.