



MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE EAST LoTHIAN LICENSING FORUM

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WEDNESDAY 20 AUGUST 2025, 10AM
COUNCIL CHAMBER, TOWN HOUSE, HADDINGTON
& HYBRID MEETING SYSTEM

Forum Members Present:

Mr G Blaikie (Chair) (R)
Mr S Baxter
Ms K Harling
Stg S Miller (R)
Mr J Thayers (R)
Ms K Burke (R)
(R) = remote participant

Licensing Board Members Present:

Councillor F Dugdale
Councillor G McGuire

Council Officials Present:

Ms B Crichton

Visitors Present:

N/A

Apologies:

Mr A Podder

Declarations of Interest:

None

1. MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE JOINT EAST Lothian LOCAL LICENSING FORUM AND LICENSING BOARD HELD ON 21 MAY 2025 & MATTERS ARISING

The minute was agreed as an accurate recording of the meeting. There were no matters arising.

2. POLICE REPORT (VERBAL)

Sergeant Stuart Miller gave an update on sixty recorded licensing incidents over the last three months, and provided a geographical breakdown of the incidents, of which: 17 took place in Tranent, 11 in Haddington, ten in Musselburgh, nine in Prestonpans, four in North Berwick, three in Dunbar, and the remainder took place in small villages. The incidents included seven assaults, two of which were serious assaults, four disturbances, one incident of failing to leave a licensed premises, one noise complaint, and 41 thefts. He reported that no hate crimes had been recorded. He also reported that the National Policy Unit planned a visit to Queen Margaret University through Freshers' Week to discuss the dangers of overconsumption of alcohol.

Karen Harling, Licensing Standards Officer (LSO), raised concern over a breakdown in communication between Police Scotland and the Licensing Standards Officer, and pointed out that she had not received the information from the statistics Sergeant Miller had provided. Sergeant Miller undertook to discuss plans with the LSO that would address this issue.

3. LICENSING STANDARDS OFFICER REPORT

Ms Harling spoke to her report and explained the outcomes from the May and June 2025 Licensing Board meetings in detail. She also advised that seven premises had confirmed their provisional premises licences to operate on full premises licences, which represented a real step forward. She advised that several other premises would be brought before the Board for their continued use of occasional licences.

Ms Harling explained that she was marketing the Forum as well as she could, but noted that her visits to premises usually concerned compliance. She also advised of joint working with community police officers, specifically in relation to issues of the supply of alcohol to vulnerable persons.

Ms Harling also advised that training from Alcohol Focus could be provided to the Forum, but unfortunately this had not been able to proceed previously due to a lack of response from Police Scotland. She gave an account of the content of the training, which was about understanding the role of the Forum, and intended for this to be organised again in the near future.

Responding to a question from Councillor Dugdale, and a further question from John Thayers, Ms Harling gave an account of her work following receipt of a report of alcohol being supplied to a vulnerable person on credit. She provided strict guidance to the premises on never serving anyone who presented as being intoxicated, and never giving alcohol on credit. She explained that the information had come from other agencies, and that her role was to attempt to cut off the source by dealing with the premises. She reported that, based on the responses received, she considered that there was a wider issue of giving alcohol on credit; she advised that community police officers would also discuss the issue in other towns. Mr Thayers said he would pass this information onto the Vulnerable Adults Group, and added that it would be helpful to feed any specific areas of concern to the group and to Police Scotland.

The Chair and Councillor McGuire thanked Ms Harling for her extensive report and for the work she had undertaken.

4. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Responding to a question from Councillor Dugdale, Forum members discussed rules around consuming alcohol on buses, and Sergeant Miller undertook to feedback on the matter following a meeting with Lothian Buses.

Mr Thayers advised that development of alcohol standards was still awaited from the Scottish Government. He would contact Alcohol Focus for an update, and would share any information with the group.

Kat Burke advised that NHS Lothian had made representation to the Licensing Board in response to various licence applications, which was a new approach implemented over the last year. NHS Lothian would now review this approach and its impact, and would update the Forum in due course. Ms Burke reported that work was underway on commercial determinants in relation to public health. She also agreed that having a dedicated NHS Lothian update on Forum agendas would be of use going forward.

FUTURE MEETING DATES

Future meeting invites will be sent out electronically.

- Wednesday 19 November 2025, 10am (Joint meeting with the Licensing Board)
- Wednesday 18 February 2026, 10am
- Training session with Alcohol Focus, date TBC
- Wednesday 20 May 2026, 10am

Board Meetings

As Licensing Standards Officer, I have been involved in the following applications etc. as presented at the Licensing Board:

○ **August Licensing Board 2025**

- **Provisional Premises Licence – Herd Café, Balgone Estate**

Application for a provisional premises licence for a rural café. NHS response in relation to overprovision questioned by solicitor due to locality. Clerk asked by Board to write to NHS for more specific reports.

- **Provisional Premises Licence – 92 North High Street**

Application for an off sales premises. The premises is already a shop but has never sold alcohol. Granted by the Board and overprovision not considered a reason to refuse following representation from NHS.

- **Major Variation – Co-op, Longniddry**

Application to add deliveries to premises licence. Granted by the Board with standard deliveries condition.

- **Major Variation – The Cheese Lady, Haddington**

Application to increase capacity and add deliveries and online sales. Granted by the Board with standard deliveries condition.

- **Major Variation – Bombay Bar and Grill, Prestonpans**

Application to increase on sales hours, amend seasonal variations, remove dance facilities, theatres, films and gaming. Provide that the premises can open before 11am for certain events without alcohol, remove reference to microbrewery, add deliveries and takeaways and amend children and young person access. Granted by the Board with standard deliveries condition.

- **Major Variation – Fisherrow Tap, Musselburgh**

Application to convert premises into an on sales only convenience store. Granted by the Board with standard deliveries condition.

○ **September Licensing Board 2025**

- **Review of Premises Licence – The Stand, Musselburgh**

Premises brought back to a hearing by Board members for an update on any progression on works to reopen the premises. Update given by agent. Board agreed the premises licence can continue.

- **Occasional Licences – Bella Italia, North Berwick**
Multiple occasional licence applications submitted. It was established that the premises licence holder had died in 2022 and at that time the premises licence had not been transferred within 28 days, and so ceased to take effect. Premises continued to trade until August 2025. Occasional licences granted by the Board.
- **Occasional Licences – La Trattoria, Tranent**
Applications to for multiple occasional licences. The LSO submitted information that the occasional licences were applied for late, resulting in a gap. The premises continued to trade unlicensed. The applicant was warned by the LSO to stop. A further complaint was received that the premises still continued to trade, and held a ‘boozy brunch’ where alcohol was sold. Evidence was present of this from social media, as well as the advertising of alcohol at the premises whilst unlicensed. Police outlined there was an ongoing investigation. The Board granted the occasional licences following a casting vote by the Convenor after a 2 vs 2 split.
- **October Licensing Board 2025**
 - **Statement of Festive Extension Hours as per Statement of Licensing Policy**
 - **Review of three premises for non-payment of annual fees – Town House Fish and Chicken Bar, the Seaglass Inn, and Fair Price Food Store**
All given until 14 November 2025 to pay and to be reviewed at November Board meeting.
 - **Major Variation – The Craig House, Musselburgh**
Applications to remove accommodation. Granted by the Board.
 - **Provisional Premises Licence – Sweet and Smoky, Dunbar**
Application for new restaurant in Dunbar town centre. Granted by Board.
 - **Occasional Extension – Musselburgh Ruby Football Club**
Applications for an extension of hours for the Super Bowl Final. Granted with conditions recommended by the LSO.
 - **Review of Premises Licence – Auld Hoose, North Berwick**
Applications for review of premises licence from residents. Motion made by solicitor representing the premises licence holder that the application and process were not followed correctly and that a review was not competent. Board declined to take the review application forward and asked that all parties meet to discuss issues and complaints.

Provisional Licences Outstanding Confirmation

Provisional Grant Date	Premises	Comments re Section 50 Certs.	Confirmed
31/03/2022	Broxmouth Courtyard	Ongoing work on Section 50	Expires Mar 2026
25/08/2022	The Mart, East Linton	Ongoing work on Section 50	Expires Aug 2026
27/10/2022	The Tap Room, Haddington		Now Confirmed
30/03/2023	Buck and Birch	Ongoing work on Section 50	Expires Mar 2027
28/09/2023	Carfrae Farm shop	Ongoing work on Section 50	Expires Sep 2027
23/11/2023	Garden City, Longniddry	No update, not selling alcohol	Expires Nov 2027
23/11/2023	The Tiffin Box, North Berwick	No update, not selling alcohol	Expires Nov 2027
25/04/2024	One Stop, Tranent	Just opened with occasional licences	Expires Apr 2028
23/05/2024	Tesco Express, Wallyford	No update, not selling alcohol	Expires May 2028
29/08/2024	Papple Steading	No update, not selling alcohol	Expires Aug 2028
29/08/2024	Costcutter, Tranent	No update	Expires Aug 2028
27/02/2025	Yarrow Cookery School	Recently granted	Expires Feb 2029
24/04/2025	Carlo's Fish Bar and Restaurant		Now Confirmed
24/04/2025	La Trattoria	Recently granted	Expires Apr 2029
22/05/2025	Gilmerton House	Recently granted	Expires May 2029
22/05/2025	Premier Gifford	Recently granted	Expires May 2029
22/05/2025	Margiotta, Longniddry	Recently granted	Expires May 2029
25/09/2025	Herd Café	Recently granted	Expires Sep 2029
25/09/2025	92 North High Street, Musselburgh	Recently granted	Expires Sep 2029
31/10/2025	Sweet and Smoky	Recently granted	Expires Oct 2029
Confirmation	Outstanding	18	

Two premises have confirmed their provisional premises licence to operate on a full premises licence.

Marketing the Forum

The LSO has been promoting the Forum whilst on visits.

Joint working – LSO and Community Police Officers

Visits have been conducted in town centres, giving guidance about safe sales of alcohol to staff and highlighting any issues found. This will continue across East Lothian over the coming months.

Forum training update

Becky Crichton as our new Clerk offered to help assist in organising forum training from Alcohol Focus Scotland. Unfortunately, this training is no longer available.

Seasonal Capacity Checks

Over the festive period, checks on off sales capacity and MUP will be conducted at off sales premises.

Karen Harling

Licensing Standards Officer

LSO@eastlothian.gov.uk

11 November 2025

EAST LoTHIAN LOCAL LICENSING FORUM



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SCHEME OF ADMINISTRATION

This Scheme of Administration replaces any pre-dated documents previously entitled “East Lothian Licensing Forum Constitution”

East Lothian Licensing Forum (the Forum) has been established in accordance with section 10, section 11 and schedule 2 of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 (the Act). East Lothian is the area administered by East Lothian Council incorporated under the Local Government etc (Scotland) Act 1994.

The Act legislates for the way that the Forum operates and this document outlines the actual procedures in more detail. Current and future legislation will over-ride this Scheme of Administration as appropriate.

East Lothian Licensing Forum is a separate entity from East Lothian Licensing Board and supports and promotes the licensing objectives outlined in the Act, namely:

- Preventing crime and disorder
- Securing public safety
- Preventing public nuisance
- Protecting and improving public health
- Protecting children and young persons from harm

A REMIT AND POWERS

The functions of East Lothian Local Licensing Forum are:

1. to keep under review the operation of the 2005 Act in the East Lothian area, and in particular, the exercise by the East Lothian Licensing Board (the Board) of their functions;
2. to identify key issues affecting licensing in East Lothian and provide advice and recommendations to the Board on how to address these;
3. to ensure that the interests of all parties affected by alcohol licensing are represented by actively maintaining contact with constituents and groups, and arranging public meetings and other events to ascertain local views and encourage engagement;
4. to respond to Board consultations regarding the review and creation of Board policies;

5. to ensure that the Forum membership is representative of the parties set out at **B2**, and to run recruitment and other campaigns to attract and maintain the full mix of members;
6. to review and revise the Forum's Scheme of Administration and provide East Lothian Council with updated copies.

The Forum cannot make recommendations on individual cases or licensing applications, and members cannot use the Forum to champion their own organisation, views and interests.

B MEMBERSHIP AND ATTENDANCE

General

1. The membership of the Forum is set out in the Act and will be no less than 5 and no more than 21.
2. Forum members must meet the following eligibility criteria:
 - Aged 16 years or older
 - Able to demonstrate an interest in the alcohol licensing system
 - East Lothian resident

They must also be currently employed in, or be a formal representative of, one of the following groups:

- Premises Licence or Personal Licence holder
- Chief Constable, Police Scotland (or their nominated representative)
- Health, education or social work
- Young people (aged 16 and 17) in the East Lothian area

Membership of the Forum will cease for any member who no longer meets the eligibility criteria.

3. The appointment of the Convener of the Forum is for a period of one year. All other members are appointed to the Forum for a period of two years, although re-appointments are permissible.
4. There is a statutory requirement that East Lothian Council's Licensing Standards Officer (the LSO) is a member of the Forum. The LSO is a permanent member of the Forum and does not require to complete an application form.
5. The Chief Constable, Police Scotland (or their nominated representative) is a permanent member of the Forum and does not require to complete an application form.
6. It is the responsibility of the Forum to actively recruit new members and to ensure that the overall Forum membership includes a balance of members representing various groups.
7. Appointments to the East Lothian Licensing Forum are made by East Lothian Council Officers and not by the Forum itself. Members are appointed on such terms and conditions as the Council determine.

8. A Council Officer will produce and maintain a register of Forum member appointments, to include membership end dates, re-appointments and membership terminations.

9. **Election of Convener and Secretary**

At its first meeting in each calendar year the Forum will elect a Convener and a Secretary (should the Forum wish to appoint to the post of Secretary) from its members. Any member of the Forum can put themselves forward for these posts which require to be proposed and seconded by existing members. The posts will be filled on the basis of a simple majority vote of the members present at the meeting.

The posts will be for a period of one year.

Post-holders can seek re-election in subsequent or future years, subject to the full proposer, seconder and voting-in process.

Where a Convener or Secretary is retiring during their term of office, it is for the members of the Forum to elect a new Convener or Secretary at the earliest opportunity. The new post holder will be in post for the remainder of the current calendar year and will be eligible for re-election in the subsequent year, subject to the normal re-election processes.

10. **New Members - Application Process**

Membership application details can be found at www.eastlothianlicensingforum.co.uk

New applications will be assessed by a recruitment panel made up of Council Officers; the make-up of the panel will be determined by East Lothian Council.

Where an application is approved, Forum membership will be granted, and the applicant will be appointed as a member of the Forum. An appointment letter will be issued by East Lothian Council, incorporating the terms and conditions of the appointment. The appointment will only be final once the member has signed and submitted an Acceptance of Terms and Conditions document.

If the recruitment panel do not approve an application, a letter of decline will be issued by East Lothian Council.

11. **Membership Re-appointments – Application Process**

Members can apply for re-appointment by completing an abridged application form. Applications for re-appointment will be assessed by the Council's Forum recruitment panel. Applications for re-appointment should be submitted at least one month before the existing membership ends. It is the responsibility of Forum members to submit their application for re-appointment in a timely manner. Council Officers will write to members with the decision of the recruitment panel. Re-appointments will only be final once the member has signed and submitted an Acceptance of Terms and Conditions document.

Members will be re-appointed for a period of two years. There is no maximum number of times that a member can apply for re-appointment.

Applications for re-appointment that are not received in time to process them before the expiry of a current membership, will be treated as new applications and will require a full application form to be completed and submitted to the Council.

11. Termination of Membership – Non-attendance

Any Forum member who does not attend three consecutive quorate meetings of the Forum without good reason (as deemed acceptable and reasonable by the Convener), will be automatically removed from the Forum Membership as of the date of that third meeting. A Council Officer will issue a letter confirming that membership has been terminated due to non-attendance/breach of terms and conditions of membership.

The Forum may choose to issue a reminder of non-attendance to any member who has not attended two consecutive quorate meetings of the Forum.

There is no right of appeal against termination of membership in such circumstances.

12. Termination of Membership – End of Term

Membership will automatically end after two years if an application for re-appointment is not received. A Council Officer will issue a letter confirming the termination of membership.

13. Termination of Membership – No Longer Meets Eligibility Criteria

Membership will automatically end if a member does not continue to meet the membership eligibility criteria. A Council Officer will issue a letter confirming the termination of membership.

14. Termination of Membership – Behaviour and Conduct

All Forum members must act as exemplars for the licensed trade at all times in their professional and personal lives. If East Lothian Council receives any complaints or negative feedback regarding a member, these will be investigated and information/evidence may be requested from third parties to validate or disprove the allegations.

If Council Officers are of the view that there has been behaviour or actions that do not support the work of the Forum, or which brings the Forum into disrepute, they will decide on a course of action which could include termination of Forum membership. In the event of termination of membership, the Convener will be advised and a Council Officer will issue a letter stating that membership has been terminated due to a breach of the Terms and Conditions of membership.

There is no right of appeal against termination of membership in such circumstances.

15. Termination of Membership – Resignation

Members wishing to resign their membership, should do so in writing to the Convener and to meetings@eastlothian.gov.uk or in writing to Democratic and Licensing, East Lothian Council, John Muir House, Haddington, EH41 3HA, giving a minimum of four weeks' notice.

16. Reporting of Membership Changes

New member appointments, re-appointments, resignations and membership terminations will be reported to the next meeting of the Forum, for noting. The report will be prepared by a Council Officer. This will enable members to consider if they need to recruit new members and to check that the membership will not fall below the minimum of five.

Council Officers will advise the Convener about any membership changes as they occur.

C Quorum

1. The quorum for a meeting of the Forum is half of the number of members (rounded up), and no fewer than three.
2. No business will be carried out at a meeting unless a quorum of members is present.
3. If, fifteen minutes after the time a meeting is due to start, the quorum has not been met, the Convener will postpone the meeting until a date and time to be determined. The minutes of the meeting will record that no business was carried out due to the lack of a quorum.
4. If, after the meeting has started, the number of members falls below the quorum, the meeting will be adjourned and the minutes of the meeting will state the reason for the adjournment.
5. Decisions taken during any part of the meeting where there was a quorum present are valid.

D Apologies, Substitutes Declarations of Interest, and Voting

1. Members must submit apologies to meetings@eastlothian.gov.uk and the Convener as soon as possible prior to the meeting. Members submitting apologies are requested to provide a reason for non-attendance.
2. Members who have submitted apologies in advance of the meeting shall be entitled to nominate a substitute to attend any meeting of the Forum. Substitute members must satisfy the membership eligibility criteria. Substitute members will be identified at the beginning of any meeting and their attendance will be recorded in the minute of the meeting. Substitute members will have full voting rights.
3. Any Forum member who has an interest (financial and or non-financial) in any matter that is under consideration at a meeting will disclose their interest at the start of the meeting and may be excluded from the meeting for the debate and vote on that item.
4. All Forum members or their nominated substitute, who are present at a meeting, are entitled to vote. All items of business requiring a decision will be decided by a show of hands of a simple majority. The Convener has a casting vote and they may use this where there are an equal number of votes for and against any matter to be determined.

E Meetings

1. There is a statutory requirement that the Forum must hold at least four meetings in each calendar year. The meeting dates are to be scheduled in conjunction with East Lothian Council.
2. In advance of meetings, a Council Officer will contact members to seek agenda items. Contributions are encouraged from all members and may include allocating time to discuss the progress and work of the Forum. Members are permitted to raise matters under any other business.
3. The agenda and reports for each meeting will be issued to members by email and published on the Council's website in advance of the meeting, ideally 14 days before the meeting, and no less than 7 days before the meeting.
4. A special meeting of the Forum can be called in writing at any time by the Convener or by a majority of members. The request should be made to Council Officers at meetings@eastlothian.gov.uk who will determine the date of the meeting in conjunction with the Convener.
5. Meetings of the Forum must be held in public and are open to the press.
6. There is a statutory requirement for the Forum to hold a joint meeting with East Lothian Licensing Board at least once a year.
7. Meetings of the Forum are to be chaired by the Convener. If the Convener is not present, the meeting will be chaired by any other member present.
8. All members must behave respectfully at any meeting and should not behave in a manner that is improper or offensive, or disrupts the business of the meeting. The Convener may take appropriate action against any member disregarding the authority of the Convener, obstructing the meeting or being discourteous to members, Council Officers, and members of the public or press. Such action may include asking the member to refrain from speaking during the remainder of the matter under discussion, or adjourning the meeting for a period of time specified by the Convener.

F Reporting Arrangements

1. A Council Officer (or Officers) shall act as committee clerk to the Forum and shall be responsible for taking minutes of the meetings of the Forum.
2. Minutes shall be presented to the next meeting of the Forum for approval.

G Working Groups

1. The Forum will create Working Groups from within its own membership, as and when required, to support the work of the Forum and the licensed trade, and to initiate community consultations and respond to statutory consultations. There are no minimum or maximum numbers for a Working Group to be created or to be able to make decisions on behalf of the Forum. All members are expected to participate in Working Groups.

H Miscellaneous

1. The Council is legally obliged to provide the Forum with such staff, property and services as the Council considers are required for the Forum's purposes.
2. Alterations and updates to this Scheme of Administration are the responsibility of the Forum and can only be approved where at least two-thirds of the members present and entitled to vote agree to do so. The Scheme of Administration should be reviewed at least every two years. A copy of any updates to the Scheme of Administration is to be submitted by the Forum to East Lothian Council at meetings@eastlothian.gov.uk

Contact Details

- Democratic and Licensing, East Lothian Council, John Muir House Haddington, EH41 3HA
- Telephone: 01620 827225
- Email meetings@eastlothian.gov.uk

East Lothian Licensing Report 2024-2025



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**POLICE
SCOTLAND**
Keeping people safe

Foreword

It gives me great pleasure to provide the Annual Licensing Report for 2024/25, in accordance with Section 12(A) of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005.

Throughout the last year I have been committed to improving confidence amongst our communities by working in partnership with a focus on prevention, early intervention and proactivity. This supports our broader 2030 vision of safer communities, less crime, supported victims and a thriving work force.

In respect of Licensing, I recognise that success can only be achieved in collaboration with the 32 local authorities across Scotland. Along with contribution from many other associated national and local partners, this collaborative working ensures support for the licensed trade while also preventing alcohol fuelled violence, disorder and anti-social behaviour. Our joint campaigns which aim to protect children and young persons from harm will continue.

In the year ahead, our approach will remain focused on prevention and collaboration to ensure high standards of service delivery. I will continue to encourage officers and staff to engage with licensed premises and take relevant and proportionate action where appropriate to ensure licensing standards are maintained in the interest of the safety of the people of Scotland.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank our local partnerships for their contribution to maintaining high standards and driving improvement where necessary within the Licensed Trade for the benefit of the communities we all serve.



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Police Scotland Licensing Overview –

The Violence Prevention and Licensing Co-ordination Unit (VPLCU) sits within the National Policing Together Division and have staff based across the force. The department has overall responsibility for determining and delivering national licensing strategy and policy, providing advice, guidance and support to divisional licensing teams and undertaking other specialist functions.

The VPLCU is a specialist department which consists of a small team of officers. The officers within the unit work with divisional licensing teams and partner agencies to help shape policy and strategy around the police licensing function. They provide advice to police licensing practitioners, operational officers, supervisors and policing commanders.

The VPLCU seek to ensure that legislation governing the sale and supply of alcohol is applied consistently across the country and all opportunities are taken to stop the illegal or irresponsible sale, supply or consumption of alcohol with the intention of preventing and reducing crime and disorder.

During 2024/2025, from a licensing perspective, our particular focus was on the following.

- Scrutiny of the serious incidents of violence, disorder and antisocial behaviour linked to licensed premises.
- Delivering and promoting campaigns which seek to address issues arising from the consumption of alcohol, particularly in relation to young persons and in the context of the night-time economy.
- Governance and ongoing development of the National ICT Licensing System, known as “Inn Keeper”, to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of liquor and civic licensing administration and management. Police Scotland continue to work on upgrading the National ICT system to ensure compliance with GDPR legislation.

Each of the 13 Local Policing Divisions have a licensing team responsible for the day-to-day management of licensing administration, complying with statutory requirements as well as addressing any issues that may arise within licensed premises in their local area.

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LICENSING BOARD AREA

The Licensing Board area is policed by Lothian & Scottish Borders Division (J).

Chief Superintendent Gregg Banks is the Divisional Police Commander who has the responsibility for all day-to-day policing functions.

The Local Area Commander Chief Inspector Ben Leathes is based at Musselburgh Police Station. He is responsible for performance management, community engagement, partnership working and the daily management of local personnel.

Chief Inspector Ben Leathes is supported by Inspector Alan King who is also based at Haddington. The East Lothian Licensing Boards are predominantly attended by PC Stephen Gibson.

Inspector Laura Stevenson is the Head of the Licensing Department, and she is responsible for the overall supervision of the department.

Sergeant Stuart Miller is the Licensing Sergeant, and he is responsible for the day-to-day management of the department and staff.

Local Policing Priorities

Following our public consultation process, the policing priorities for J Division, as set out in our Local Policing Plan as follows.

- Protecting the most Vulnerable People
- Reducing Violence & Antisocial Behavior
- Reducing Acquisitive Crime
- Improving Road Safety
- Tackling Serious and Organised Crime

In response to the local policing priorities, J Division will continue to work in partnership with partner agencies to reduce alcohol related criminality and continue to develop nighttime economy plans. It is recognised that education, prevention, partnership working and robust policing are all key factors in reducing crime and disorder in this area.

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Description of Board Area

East Lothian is council area is located in the South East of Scotland, bordering Edinburgh, Midlothian and the Scottish Borders. With a population of approx. 110 000, East Lothian combines rural landscapes, long stretches of coastline and historic towns making it a popular location to live and work.

East Lothian has experienced significant population growth and development over recent years, with that growth projected to continue in the coming years.

Licensing plays a critical role in promoting safety, preventing crime and disorder, protecting children and vulnerable persons and ensures the fair operation of licensed premises.

As of March 2025, there are currently:

- 51 'on sales' only premises,
- 87 'off sales' only premises
- 145 combined on/off sales premises

giving a total of 283 premises in East Lothian licensed to sell alcohol, which is the same as last years reporting period.

OPERATION OF THE LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2005

Introduction-

The East Lothian Licensing Team is based at Dalkeith Police Station. This consists of one police officer, PC Stephen Gibson, supported by administration staff Natasha Gregory and Craig Beveridge based at Dalkeith Police Station and West Lothian Livingston Civic Centre.

The team works standard Monday to Friday however are flexible and often carry out variations to this working late shifts or at weekends to support Divisional demands.

The team are responsible for processing all correspondence and applications received from East Lothian Licensing Board. The officer reviews applications on behalf of the Chief Constable as part of the consultation process in conjunction with the Local Area Commander. This consultation process forms part of the Police support of the Licensing Objectives.

On Friday and Saturday evenings, police officers are deployed on foot where other incidents permit, to aid with dispersal of licensed premises and reduce antisocial behaviour and violence related incidents between the hours of 2200-0300.

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The proactive use of exclusion orders and antisocial behaviour legislation continues to contribute to reducing repeat offending in licensed premises.

The misuse of alcohol is regularly cited as a contributory factor in relation to crimes of violence, domestic abuse, disorder and antisocial behaviour occurring on our street and within our homes. In addition, alcohol is also known to lower inhibitions which can have the impact on people's lives, both resulting in them becoming victims of crime, as well as the perpetrator, which can have serious consequences for individuals and their families.

We continue to ensure there is a concerted focus on the issues surrounding the sale and supply of alcohol within our communities and work together in partnership with licensed premises and other agencies to promote responsible trading practices, ultimately keeping people safe. Our focus is to "Keep People Safe" and we seek to reduce the negative impact alcohol has on our communities. This is achieved through encouraging the responsible sale and supply of alcohol in well run licensed premises, taking positive action to stop irresponsible supply of alcohol to children and young persons and preventing the over supply to individuals already intoxicated in licensed premises.

In the reporting period 2024/2025 the following incidents within licensed premises were recorded.

Premises Type	2023/2024	2024/2025
Public Houses	69	58
Off Sales	187	120
Restaurants	11	9
Hotels	4	5
Total (including misc.)	303	226

Police Scotland carried out 136 recorded inspections of licensed premises in East Lothian during the reporting period.

The Intervention Process

Issues in licensed premises are assessed using a well-established intervention process. Incidents connected to premises are identified by licensing officers who evaluate the Licensing Objectives to determine if any have been compromised.

Police intervention usually results in a meeting with the appropriate representatives of the premises concerned e.g. premises licence holder, designated premises manager and if appropriate, any stewarding company to discuss concerns and agree a way forward to resolve these.

Premises being monitored by way of the above system are subject to regular visits by either local officer's or licensing officers to monitor progress, measure improvement and ensure that agreed remedial measures are implemented.

The intervention system is ultimately designed to support the licence holder before any premises review is sought, although a serious or significant incident may obviously merit an immediate review application. Depending on the severity of the incident and history of the premises, officers will categorise the premises/incident as below: -

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Intervention Process – Stages	Description of Process	Number this reporting year
Green – Monitored	The premises have come to note for a minor issue and require to be monitored. This may result in an informal intervention providing advice/support to the premises along with Police visits.	0
Amber – Intervention	Issues have arisen and an intervention action plan/agreement is drawn up by the Police and implemented by the licence holder to resolve them. This action may be taken with more serious or repeat issues.	0
Red - Problematic	Premises are operating in a manner inconsistent with the licensing objectives or outwith the terms of their licence. Where local Police intervention and support has failed or is unlikely to succeed in resolving the issues. A premises review request to the Licensing Board is considered the most appropriate way to address the issue	1

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Summary of Applications/Offences

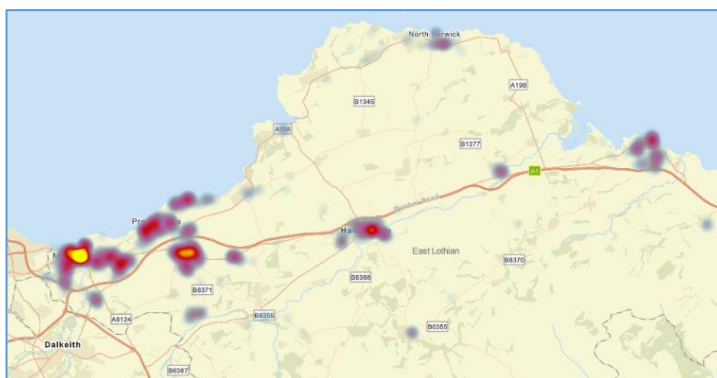
During the year 2024/2025 the following applications were received and processed by the Police Licensing Team.

Application Type	2023/2024	2024/2025
Personal License	222	156
New Premises License	15	18
Variation	86	107
Occasional	852	885
Total	1175	1166

Violence and Anti-Social Behaviour

A total of 898 crimes of violence were recorded within the East Lothian area for the period from 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025. This represents a decrease of 141 crimes (-13.6%) from the 2023-24 levels of violence. The violence recorded in 2024-25 included five attempted murders, 35 serious assaults, 13 robberies and 771 common assaults, with a further 74 assaults on emergency workers. It should also be noted that there was one crime of drugging recorded in East Lothian during 2024-25, however was not within a licensed premise.

Map 1: East Lothian Heatmap for Violence and Anti-Social Behaviour



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A total of 34 crimes of violence were recorded for licensed premises within East Lothian during 2024-25 compared to 19 reports in 2023-24. It was also noted that 21 crimes were committed within supermarkets licensed to sell alcohol.

The 34 crimes of violence recorded for licensed premises were in the following areas:

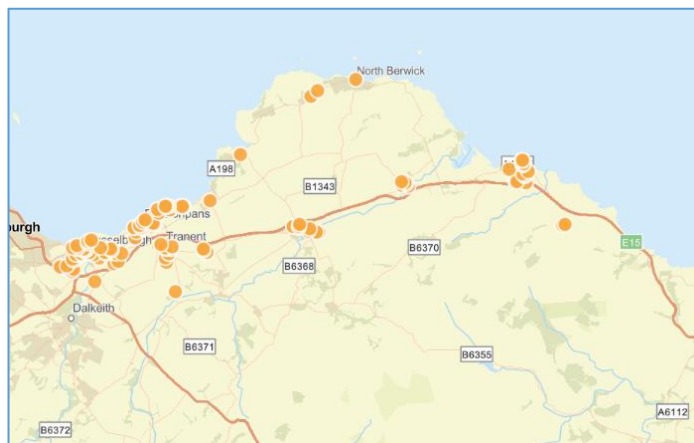
Area	# of Crimes
Musselburgh	12
Haddington	8
Tranent	5
Wallyford	3
Port Seton	2
Prestonpans	1
Longniddry	1
East Linton	1
North Berwick	1

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Violence data where Alcohol is a factor

Crimes with an “alcohol” tag applied can give an indication of offences where alcohol is a factor. It should be noted however that it is not compulsory to add tags to crime reports and therefore the statistics provided here in relation to alcohol related violence provide an indication only, and do not specify the nature of the link to alcohol. Of the 898 recorded crimes of violence for the 2024-25 period, a total of 149 (16.6%) had the alcohol marker attached to the crime report, which is a reduction of 28 from the previous year. Common assaults continue to account for the main volume of alcohol-related violence (76.5%), an increase of five percentage points from the previous year (71%). The number of serious assaults (13) where alcohol is a factor has reduced from 18 in the previous year. Of note, the number of alcohol-related assaults on emergency workers (16) increased by 167% from 2023/24. There were also four alcohol-related assaults on retail workers, a reduction from six when compared with last year’s level.

Map 2: East Lothian Locations for Violence where Alcohol is a Factor

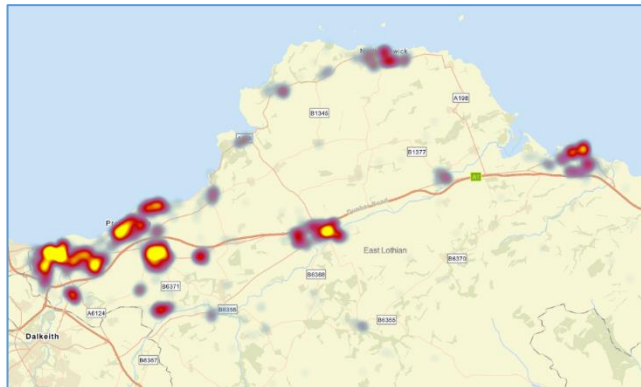


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Anti-Social Behaviour

A total of 4998 incidents relating to ASB have been recorded during 2024-25 within the East Lothian area. This represents an increase of three incidents (0.1%) from 2023-24, and an increase of 186 incidents (3.9%) from 2022-23.

Map 3: East Lothian Heatmap for Anti-Social Behaviour



RECORDED LICENSING OFFENCE CRIMES

Offence	2023/2024	2024/2025
Section 1 – Unlicensed sale of alcohol	0	1
Section 63 – Sale or supply out with licensed hours	0	0
Section 102 – Sale of alcohol to a child	0	0
Section 103 – Allowing sale to child or young person	0	0
Section 105 – Purchase of alcohol for a child or young	0	1
Section 111 – Drunk persons within licensed premises	0	0
Section 113 – Sale of alcohol to a drunk person	0	0
Section 114 – Premises manager, staff not to be drunk	0	0
Section 115 – Drunk/disorderly conduct on premises	0	0
Section 116 – Refusal to leave licensed premises	7	2

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PREVENTING THE SALE OR SUPPLY OF ALCOHOL TO CHILDREN OR YOUNG PEOPLE

Police Scotland can make a positive impact on the future outcomes for children and families, by addressing the sale and supply of alcohol to young persons and working with our partners, taking the appropriate action to address both the potential and actual misuse of alcohol within the early years.

From April until August, Community Policing Teams in conjunction Police Scotland Youth Volunteers continued to support the 'It'll Cost You' Proxy Purchase Campaign, this involved further distribution campaign materials, engaging with licensed premises staff to provide appropriate guidance and some social media activity to raise awareness across East Lothian.

There are dedicated School Link Officers based across schools in East Lothian and they are seen as one of the main links between police and children and young persons in the area. The local Licensing officer continues to work alongside these officers to provide education and support to students around the dangers of alcohol not only to their own health but also the impact on the community.

Youth Engagement: actively engage with youths and foster a positive image of the police and their local communities. Act as primary first responders to youth calls, disrupt antisocial behaviour and enforce appropriate legislation firmly but fairly. Maximise alcohol seizures. Engage with partners and Community Policing Teams to identify appropriate support and diversionary activities.

Licensed Premises: monitor licensed premises activity and act as first responders to antisocial behaviour related incidents whenever possible.

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TACKLING SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME

Serious and organised crime has far-reaching consequences that affect a large proportion of society and the economy. Those involved have spread their activity into an increased variety of criminal enterprises including illegal drugs, money laundering, fraud, human trafficking, fake goods and the licensed trade.

The Serious Organised Crime Task Force was set up by the Scottish Government to provide direction and co-ordination for all organisations involved in tackling Serious Organised Crime in Scotland.

The task force has a remit to disrupt, dismantle and pursue Serious Organised Crime Groups (SOCGs). Key partners include Police Scotland, NCA, HMRC, COPFS, SOLACE and the Scottish business Resilience Centre, amongst others.

If SOCGs gain a foothold in licensed premises then this would afford the criminal group a seemingly legitimate income stream, which could be no more than a veneer for other criminal activities.

SOCG's pose a serious threat to communities, individuals and businesses. We use intelligence and enforcement to break the cycle of crime and reduce opportunities for criminals to profit from illegal activity.

All opportunity is taken to disrupt the running of these licensed premises with the assistance of the National Intervention Unit. Multi-Agency Proactive visits are conducted with key partners in an effort to put the pressure on these operators, in an effort to disrupt their activity and cease from trading.

PROPOSED ACTIVITY FOR THE YEAR AHEAD

- The Licensing Officer will continue to work in conjunction with partner agencies and LSOs to provide guidance and support to all parties, ensuring license holders and licensed premises staff have a better understanding of their responsibilities/obligations. This collaborative approach should seek to further develop partnerships as well as fulfil licensing objectives
- The Dedicated Night Time Economy Policing Plan will continue and will be led by Local Community Police Officers, with assistance from Response Officers (subject to incident demand). This co-ordinated plan will be devised with the Licensing Officer and will include licenced premises inspections to ensure compliance with licensing obligations and to detect and deter any alcohol-fuelled criminality. All incident related visits will continue to be recorded for any required further action from the Licensing Officer.

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- Continue with the “It’ll Cost You” Proxy Purchase Campaign. This will encompass further distribution of campaign materials, engaging with licensed premises staff to provide appropriate guidance and some social media activity to increase awareness across East Lothian.
- Provide student safety inputs at Queen Margaret University.
- The Licensing Officer will continue to review any relevant intelligence and liaise with colleagues or other intelligence sources (where permitted) to facilitate a satisfactory resolution.
- Work in conjunction with event organisers, events planning colleagues and partner agencies to agree conditions for events, offer advice and support in order to achieve a safe and crime free environment for such events.
- Funding by East Lothian Council for the policing Community Action Team has ceased for the 2025/26 period, which will impact the capability of local policing.

CONCLUSION

Police Scotland would like to thank East Lothian Licensing Board, The Licensing Standards Officer, and the wider council colleagues for their continued support, collaboration.

We look forward to a safe and healthy 2025/2026.