

ABERDEEN LOCAL LICENSING FORUM

25 February 2010

Grampian Police Visit

A number of members of the Forum expressed an interest in going out with Grampian Police patrols at the weekend to see for themselves the issues Police have to deal with as a result of excessive consumption of alcohol by some patrons of licensed establishments. Ken Eddie took part in a visit at the end of November, 2009 and he has submitted his comments for the information of the Forum. He spent five hours with the police from 10.00pm on a Saturday night until 3.00am learning about the command structure within Lodge Walk. Procedures were explained including fingerprinting and if required drug related procedures. Ken attended the Shift Change meeting where the latest information and worksheets were discussed. A visit to the Call Centre was undertaken where calls are prioritised. An interview with the officer in command of the deployment of resources was arranged and he explained the problems which can arise if all 80 police cells in the city are full and this then involves transporting people to Bucksburn, Stonehaven, Inverurie or Ellon. This arrangement can be time consuming and leads to the further commitment of scarce staff resources.

Ken visited a club to see the approach to operating the premises and maintaining control, he walked Union Street with plain clothed police officers and spent time in the fast response van dealing with problems communicated to the van by telephone/radio contact from door stewards. He observed that the Street Marshalls at taxi ranks and bus stops were working well and generally customers from public houses had left the city centre before customers from clubs came out looking for transport.

The curfew has added to the police workload and impacted adversely on the police budget. The 2.00am door queues can become rowdy. Confusion can be caused by smokers using the same doorway as customers waiting to gain entry. It would help reduce tension if there was a method of communicating to people in the queue that a club is full to encourage them to try to move to another club.

The fact that catering premises are open until 4.00am creates further problems for the police and earlier closing would perhaps be of assistance. The efforts of Street Pastors, emergency services and environmental/street cleaning should not be overlooked. Street cleaning staff only have a limited time to clear litter and other debris in time to have the city centre looking reasonable for when the public start arriving for work and retail related activities the next day.