

Our Ref: NALF/1/2015 FT

Shona Robison MSP
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Dear Ms Robison,

MEMBERSHIP OF PUB WATCH

I am writing to you as Convener of the North Aberdeenshire Licensing Forum. As you are aware, local Licensing Forums were set up to keep the operation of the Licensing Act under review and to make recommendations to the Board in relation to matters as the Forum sees fit.

The Forum is the community's voice on liquor licensing issues and as such, we feel that we should bring membership of the Pub Watch scheme to your attention. As you know, Forum membership is drawn from across the population of Aberdeenshire and this includes representation from the licensed trade. Licensees on the Forum have expressed concern that membership of Pub Watch is declining and in some areas, has folded altogether. Pub Watch was set up with the aim of providing a safe, secure and responsibly led social drinking environment in licensed premises. Members of Pub Watch aim to reduce the opportunities for individuals to cause damage to premises and threaten violence to customers, mainly by refusing to serve those individuals or refusing admittance to the premises. This can also apply to those known to use or deal drugs in pubs and clubs. Members of Pub Watch can make others in the scheme aware of those individuals who should be closely monitored in their behaviour by sharing information and in this way, can tackle the problem of (dodgy characters / undesirable clientele / unruly elements?) merely taking their unacceptable behaviour to other premises in the area.

The scheme requires close co-operation with Licensing Standards Officers, Police Scotland and Licensing Boards and as such, builds strong working relationships with the various agencies tasked with working together to create a non-threatening environment for people to enjoy a sociable drink. This, in turn, is also a good model for young people to experience, to realise that behaviour should not escalate to the point of being drunk and disorderly in order to have a good time. Pub Watch shares best practice with members, as well as information on those individuals who may be set to cause trouble. Pub Watch is a scheme which takes

community safety seriously and there are real concerns that the demise of the scheme in certain areas will have a detrimental effect on public order around licensed premises.

To this end, members of North Aberdeenshire Licensing Forum wish to recommend to you that membership of Pub Watch should be made a mandatory requirement for managing licensed premises and we would appreciate your full support on this matter.

Yours sincerely

Norma Thomson
Convener, North Aberdeenshire Licensing Forum