

All correspondence to be addressed to the Clerk

Inverclyde Licensing Board

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Date: 11 September 2020

Dear Licensee

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2005

On behalf of Inverclyde Licensing Board, I'm pleased to see so many of our licensed premises welcoming customers once again following an extremely difficult few months caused by the coronavirus pandemic. The hospitality sector is important for jobs, the economy and leisure – but we all have a duty to follow the health and safety rules to help suppress the spread of this deadly virus.

We must face the **FACTS** in order to do this and to ensure pubs, bars, restaurants, cafes and other establishments remain open and continue to recover after such a challenging period. The **FACTS** are: **F**ace coverings; **A**void crowded places; **C**lean your hands regularly; **T**wo-metre distance; **S**elf-isolate and book a test if you have symptoms. Following these five rules is crucial in the fight against coronavirus. This applies to staff and customers. Clearly licensed premises are unique in that some of these cannot be followed easily. Face coverings whilst eating a meal, for example, are not required. Where two metres isn't possible, a physical distance of at least one metre from people in different households is allowed.

Several new health and safety measures have also been introduced recently, which you should be aware of. Gathering customer contact details for the government's test and protect system is now a legal requirement. In order to avoid singing or shouting, which can spread Covid-19, previously-permitted low level music or background noise is no longer allowed and any loud behaviour should be challenged. Televisions should be muted and subtitles switched on instead. Keeping noise to a minimum also avoids people getting too close to each other and therefore restricting transmission of the virus. It remains that customers should pre-book tables in advance where possible; no more than three households should meet in venues at one time and up to a maximum of eight people; and premises should be operating table service only – no standing, queuing or dancing is allowed.

The vast majority of Inverclyde licensed premises have implemented robust safety measures and are adhering to the rules, which are designed to keep us all safe. There is also a responsibility on the part of customers to do their bit and follow the rules and pay attention to guidance from staff. With that in mind and to make you, your staff and customers aware of the latest health and safety advice, enclosed are posters which can be displayed in your premises. Posters are also available to download and print off from www.gov.scot/coronavirus, where you will find a wealth of additional information and resources to support you and your business during these unprecedented times.

Officers from Inverclyde Council's public protection team, including licensing standards and environmental health, along with police, have been visiting local licensed premises and they will continue to carry out visits to support the trade and ensure the rules are being observed. Following the first minister's statement on Thursday 20 August, local authorities are being given additional powers to take appropriate action against any premises found flouting the rules. Police Scotland will also have the power to break up and disperse large indoor gatherings. We want to help local businesses recover but we have a responsibility to protect public health. Make no mistake about it, swift action will be taken where rules are not being followed.

Now is not the time to let our guard down. We must stay vigilant because this dangerous and deadly virus is still among us. If we all fulfil our duties as responsible citizens by following the rules, we can continue to enjoy the things we've missed so much during lockdown and help get the local economy back on its feet.

Yours faithfully

Councillor Ronnie Ahlfeld
Chair to Inverclyde Licensing Board