

Submission to :

Scottish Borders Licensing Board - Meeting at 10am on 16 June 2017

Your Honours,

I address you today in support of the **Extended Hours Applications for the County Inn Peebles on 24th June, 1st July & 8th July 2017.**

As you will know the County is situated in Peebles town centre, and therefore is ideal for servicing supporters interested in the British & Irish Lions rugby games.

Let me introduce myself – Peter Orr, I am the General Manager of the County and have been in situ at the premises for over a year, being nominated as Designated Premises Manager in May 2016. In the period of time I have been established as DPM the County, I believe, has proved to be a well run and respectable food led licensed premises – food alone makes up a substantial 50 % of our weekly revenue, so the associated food and liquor take would be the majority of our weekly takings.

We would like the opportunity to sell alcohol at the premises at this earlier hour, an additional 3 hours, as we believe there will be a genuine interest by Rugby fans for the British & Irish Lions tour of New Zealand, and especially the Test Games. Note there are a number of games on the tour, but we are only applying for the main Test games vs the All Blacks. We intend to open at 8am and we propose to screen the live Sky TV televised broadcast, as the games kick off at 8.35am in New Zealand. We have no doubt the County will have a busy three days when the Test games are broadcast, and this will be of benefit to our business, but also offering a service to our customers.

For your peace of mind we will carry out a risk assessment to consider what we need to do on the day to meet all our Licensing Objectives – as we do for every day of trading, and specifically on major sport days. The County actively encourages a good natured atmosphere but we will have our Personal Licence holders on duty for the specific days to ensure the patrons allowed entry are suitably behaved, which tends to be the norm for rugby supporters.

As per the application, breakfast will be available to order and alcohol will be ancillary to purchasing breakfast. A full range of non-alcoholic drinks including hot drinks will also be available.

Referring now to the Licensing Standards Officer letter objecting to the applications. It is correct the premises will operate more than the 14 hours recommended in your policy. However, your policy also allows applicants to make extended hours applications for one off events. We uphold that the British & Irish Lions vs New Zealand All Blacks rugby Tests are indeed “**a special event of local or national significance**”, which is referred to at Section 68 of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005. It is an international sporting event established in 1888 and held every 4 years, with Lions players being selected from the Home nations: England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland – the majority of whom have represented their country at international level.

As intimated earlier breakfast will be available to order and alcohol will be ancillary to purchasing breakfast. Some of our customers will want to watch the game without consuming alcohol, but those who wish to consume alcohol will need to purchase a breakfast. This is normal for premises throughout Scotland who operate with a breakfast licence. We do not want to restrict access, as we want to encourage everyone to watch the games. We will be trading like we do normally, with an open door policy and allowing the customers a choice on what they wish to purchase, whether that be alcohol, non-alcoholic products, food or a combination of all of these.

Referring now to the Police letter objecting to the application. It is correct the premises will operate more than the 14 hours recommended in your policy. However, as intimated earlier your policy also allows applicants to make extended hours applications for one off events, which we believe this is. The Police make reference to no significant entertainment being offered – we will be showing the live Sky TV broadcast of the British & Irish Lions vs New Zealand All Blacks rugby Tests on all of our 10 TVs – that is the purpose for customers to attend.

The Police suggest a precedent may be set. This is for Extended Hours for a one-off event – and the Act does call for each application to be considered on its own merit.

I note Police Scotland has not specifically said the County give them cause for concern and we have not made demands on them in terms of policing or resources.

I am pleased to hear this, and this should be taken into account when you are considering this application. The County and Belhaven Pubs very much support Police Scotland in their work.

Furthermore, in response to the reference of preventing crime and disorder and protecting and improving public health, I would point out we are making this application for a one-off event over three consecutive Saturdays, and have proved from previous International Sport days we are very capable of running a licensed premises without any alcohol fuelled anti-social behaviour and disorder. Rugby fans in the majority tend to be well behaved!

We are offering a secure, safe, controlled and well managed environment.

We would also like to suggest when the game is over the fans will more than likely head off to carry on their normal Saturday routine. We would not envisage the Lions supporters drinking til 1am on Sunday morning – in fact we would not allow it, as our staff are trained to refuse service when they feel the customer should not be drinking more alcohol. And this is internally logged on our till system.

Finally, we note Police Scotland also object on the preventing public nuisance objective and securing public safety. Neither public nuisance nor public safety has been an issue at previous international games, and we cannot be held accountable for something that has not yet happened, or likely to happen.

Our future applications, should this one be successful, will be judged on previous experience, as this one should be.

We hope you will view this application on its own merit, and we move you to grant this application as applied for. I would be happy to answer any of your questions.