

**NORTHERN IRELAND ASSEMBLY
COMMITTEE FOR COMMUNITIES**

**CALL FOR EVIDENCE AND VIEWS ON THE LICENSING AND
REGISTRATION OF CLUBS (AMENDMENT) BILL**

Please indicate if you are providing a submission:

- as an individual

- on behalf of an organisation or business

SUBMISSION FROM: Run with Passion Ltd trading as Drumbo Park Stadium

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation or business, please tell us briefly how it relates to the subject matter of the Bill:

Drumbo Park holds a “Place of Public Entertainment” Licence under Article 5 (1)(h) of the 1996 Licensing Order and the proposed amendments to the Order contained in the Bill will adversely affect the future sustainability of our business (and the greyhound industry generally) if passed without some small but essential amendments.

1. The Policy Objectives of the Bill

The policy objectives of the Bill are *“to introduce a balanced package of measures to update the law in respect of the retail sale of alcoholic drinks and to make it more responsive to the current social and economic environment”*.

1. What are your views on the overall policy objectives? Do you think that the Bill will meet those objectives? If not, why not?

We are supportive of the overall thrust of the Bill to modernise Northern Ireland’s outdated licensing rules and give the hospitality industry a legislative framework that will allow it to flourish, help the growth of tourism and employ as many people (particularly young people) as possible.

2. Easter Opening Hours and Additional Permitted Opening Hours

What are your views on the provisions in the Bill on:

(2a) The removal of restrictions at Easter [Clauses 1 & 23]?

We support this modernisation measure.

(2b) Additional permitted hours for certain licensed premises [Clause 2]?

We support this modernisation measure as long as “Places of Public Entertainment” like Drumbo Park stadium are allowed to open until 1am on Fridays and Saturdays to allow us to compete fairly with bars and other venues providing entertainment that will be allowed to open to 2am

(2c) PSNI authorisation for additional permitted hours for smaller pubs [Clause 4]?

We support this modernisation measure subject to “Places of Public Entertainment” [5(1)(h)] & “Outdoor Stadiums” [5(1)(l)] being included in the category of premises can apply for additional hours to 1am and the maximum number of authorisations being 104 (not 85) per year to cover Friday and Saturday nights.

We believe this would be achieved with the following small amendments to the Bill:

4 (1) (a) after “5(1)(a)” add “5(1)(h) and 5(1)(l)” and omit “other than premises to which an order under Article 44 applies”

4 (3) (2A) amend “85” to “104”

3. “Drinking-up Time” and the Alignment of Alcohol and Entertainment Licences

The Bill contains provisions to extend the current “drinking up” time in licensed premises and private members’ clubs from 30 minutes to 1 hour [Clauses 5 & 24].

The Department for Communities states that the aim is to discourage customers from drinking too quickly and to allow a more gradual departure from premises at closing time, especially from large venues.

(3a) What are your views on the extension of “drinking-up” time?

We support this modernisation measure.

(3b) What impact do you think it would have on alcohol consumption towards closing time and during ‘drinking up’ time?

We believe it would discourage binge drinking.

(3c) What impact do you think it would have on issues such as anti-social behaviour and crowd dispersal?

We believe it would help public order and relieve pressure on the taxi industry at closing time.

(3d) Do you have any comments on the proposals to align closing time for liquor and entertainment licences [Clause 3]?

We believe that aligning liquor and entertainment licences makes sense. At present our liquor licence is to 11 pm but our Entertainment Licence from Lisburn & Castlereagh Council is to 1pm, which makes little sense. Allowing us to open to 1am would align the licences and allow us to compete fairly with bars and other venues providing entertainment that will be allowed to open until 2am.

4. Supporting Tourism, Special Events and Small Producers

(4a) Do you think that the provisions contained within the Bill will have a positive impact on hospitality and/or tourism and in Northern Ireland? If so, how?

Yes, Northern Ireland is competing for visitors with ROI, GB and the EU and the Bill will allow us to compete on a level footing.

(4b) What are your views on the proposals relating to permitted hours for special events [Clauses 6 & 25]?

Special events are an important draw for tourists so our licensing laws need to accommodate such events and allow visitors to have a better, not inferior, experience than when such events are held outside NI.

(4c) What are your views on the provisions of the Bill that are aimed at supporting small local producers of beer, cider and spirits [Clause 8]? What impact do you envisage this could have on tourism? Do you feel that the regulatory framework, as outlined in the Bill, is sufficiently robust?

We support this modernisation measure to help local producers. It is important that visitors to NI have a unique experience and local producers are an important

ingredient of providing such an experience. It will also encourage others to set-up production locally and create employment.

5. Children and Young People (under the age of 18)

The Bill contains a number of provisions directly relevant to children and young people. The Committee is keen to hear your views on the provisions of the Bill relating to children and young people and the proposed additional safeguarding measures, where relevant.

What are your views on:

(5a) The removal of the requirement of a licensed premises or registered club to hold a children's certificate [Clauses 10 & 26]?

We support this modernisation measure.

(5b) Permitting certain premises to hold underage functions; the conditions that must be met; the permitted opening hours; and, proposed enforcement action [Clauses 11 & 27]?

We support this modernisation measure – it could provide an additional income source for hospitality venues like ourselves.

(5c) Permitting the attendance of young people to remain on licensed premises to attend a private function (e.g. a wedding reception) and the proposed conditions that must be met [Clauses 12 & 28]?

We support this modernisation measure.

(5d) The strengthening of the current law around the delivery of alcohol [Clauses 9] and the delivery of alcohol to young people [Clause 13]?

We support this measure to discourage underage drinking.

(5e) The prohibition on self-service and sale of alcohol by vending machines [Clauses 15 & 30]?

We support this measure to discourage underage drinking.

(5f) Permitting children and young people to be present in a sporting club to 11:00pm during the summer months (1 June to 31 August) [Clause 29]?

We support this modernisation measure.

(5g) Permitting children and young people to attend an awards ceremony in a sporting club one night per calendar year (until 11pm) [Clause 29]?

We support this modernisation measure.

(5h) Overall, do you feel the measures are adequate to protect children and young people from alcohol related harm? If not, why not?

Yes.

6. Alcohol Consumption and Alcohol-Related Harm

The Bill proposes to address certain aspects of alcohol consumption and related harm, for example:

- Introducing a number of restrictions on off-sales drinks promotions in supermarkets [Clause 16];
- Regulating the delivery of alcoholic drinks to young people [Clause 13];
- Prohibiting the awarding or redemption of loyalty or bonus points for the purchase of alcohol in licensed premises [Clause 17]; and
- Prohibiting the sale of alcohol by way of self-service or vending machine (with certain exceptions) [Clauses 15 & 30].

(6a) What impact do you think these measures will have on reducing alcohol consumption and preventing alcohol-related harm?

They should help reduce underage drinking.

(6b) Do you have any other comments in relation to any other aspect of the Bill in relation to alcohol consumption and alcohol-related harm?

We believe that the measures contained in the Bill are fair and balanced.

7. Regulation, Enforcement, Offences and Penalties

(7a) The Bill proposes to allow statutory approval for voluntary industry-led codes of practice in relation to the sale and supply of alcohol in licensed premises and registered clubs [Clauses 19 & 32]. Do you feel these are an

effective means of helping to regulate the industry? If not, what alternatives would you suggest?

We believe that a voluntary industry-led code is a sensible way forward. The hospitality sector has shown itself during the current Covid pandemic to be a socially responsible industry with good leadership.

(7b) The Bill contains provisions to permit a court, when determining an application for an occasional licence, to impose terms and conditions on the licence with consequences for non-compliance [Clause 18]. What are your views on this?

We support this measure.

(7c) What are your views on the measures in the Bill that would require a body corporate (licensee) to notify the courts and police of any change of directorship (within 28 days) [Clause 20]?

We support this measure.

(7d) Throughout the Bill there are a number of new offences and/or penalties under The Licensing (NI) Order 1996, The Registration of Clubs (NI) Order 1996 and The Betting, Gaming, Lotteries and Amusements (NI) Order 1985. The Committee would welcome any comments you have in relation to these.

We support strong measures to deter and penalise breaches of liquor and betting licencing by rogue operators. Illegal bookmaking is a problem in some bars that requires strong enforcement.

8. Resource Implications for Certain Organisations/Bodies

8. What do you think the resource implications will be for:

(a) The PSNI:

The Bill should reduce the work pressure on the PSNI by reducing anti-social behaviour.

(b) Health and social services:

The Bill should reduce the work pressure on health and social services by reducing anti-social behaviour and under-age drinking.

(c) Other organisations (please specify):

A reduction in anti-social behaviour will also reduce pressure on the NHS, particularly at weekends.

9. Registered Clubs

9. Do you have any additional comments on the provisions in the Bill which specifically relate to registered clubs [Clauses 22 to 32]?

No

10. Additional Information

(10a) Are there any other measures *not included* in the Bill that you think should be included and why?

Please see our comments in Section 2 above.

(10b) Do you have any other comments you would like to make?

We very much hope the Committee will support our case for the small, but important, amendments to the Bill set-out in Section 2 above that will allow Drumbo Park to compete fairly and protect the large number of jobs that are reliant on the future commercial sustainability of the stadium.

Thank you

END

16 November 2020