

# Comhairle Uladh

## Ulster Council G.A.A.



12<sup>th</sup> January 2016

The Committee for Social Development  
Room 430  
Parliament Buildings  
BELFAST  
BT4 3XX  
Your Ref: CSD/008/2015/SK

**Re: Response to the Licensing Bill**

Dear Sir/Madam,

Please find enclosed the Ulster GAA's response the committee on the above legislation. We look forward to discussing these matters with you.

Yours Sincerely

*Danny Murphy*  
Danny Murphy  
Provincial Secretary

**Dónall Ó Murchú** Rúnaí, Comhairle Uladh



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Response to the Committee for Social Development on the Licensing Bill

## **Introduction**

Ulster GAA is the Provincial Council and governing body for the GAA in Ulster. The GAA is the world's largest amateur sporting, cultural and community organisation. Ulster GAA oversees the work of nine County Committees and almost 600 GAA Clubs as well as GAA activity in over 1,500 schools and Colleges. Some 250,000 volunteer members are actively involved in the GAA in Ulster.

Ulster GAA is very aware of how it has to do its work within the frameworks set by others. That reality is made very clear in our new strategic plan. The Council also holds firmly that it has a role in inputting to and influencing those frameworks in which the GAA operate. The Association is above all else a community-based one. Therefore what happens in or is planned for those communities is of pivotal concerns to us.

Volunteering is a vital in every aspect of all the activities undertaken by Ulster GAA. In 2005 the Economic and Social Research Institute of Ireland report titled "Social and Economic Value of Sport in Ireland" highlighted that the GAA accounts for over 40% of all volunteer activity in Ireland.

Ulster GAA welcomes the opportunity to respond to the Social Development Committee Licencing Bill.

As part of the GAA, Comhairle Uladh is unequivocally value-driven. The values which guide its plans and its day-to-day work are:

- Community
- Volunteerism
- Identity
- Inclusion
- Excellence

## **Consultation Response**

On examination the licencing for the sale of Alcohol as covered under three specific headings, namely the Hotels and Restaurants, Licenced Bars and Social Clubs. Clearly none of these cover the situation that arises at the construction of the three new strategic stadia. The only basis will be a licence extension which requires continuing applications to court. Clearly from all aspects it is appropriate that a licence awarded to each one of the three stadia is preferable and will guarantee a better and more controlled environment on the sale of alcohol at the sports stadium. After these three stadia are licenced, the Registration of Clubs Order covers the operational use of licenced premises at club and county grounds.

The licencing laws have already been amended to provide for the SSE Arena and the Waterfront Hall, to have the sale of alcohol on the premises. This Bill would bring the three main strategic stadia into line with the indoor stadia.

Under the Justice Bill 2010, provision was made for the control of consumption of alcohol while travelling to and from games, and this will simply mean that the licencing of these stadia will ensure the stadia management are responsible for the control of the sale of alcohol within the defined areas.

The Safety of Sports Grounds Legislation requires that once a licence is awarded then the responsibility for its delivery rests with the ground management board or committee. With regard to ensuring the compliance with the legal requirements of the various controlling bodies, it is envisaged that the family nature of our Stadia are recognised and supported.

With regard to enforcement of this proposed legislation, it is important that the PSNI have an overarching role, but in line with the Justice Act the responsibility rests with ground management to ensure compliance with the stated terms of the licence as it is so awarded.

With regard to the matter of Licenced Hours then this will be primarily established by the courts and any amendments to the Designated Hours will be a requirement for the ground management to apply for any adjustments or amendments or extensions.

It has been clearly demonstrated within the Registration of Clubs Order that proper management of access to Alcohol and proper and responsible controls being established then anti-social behaviour is seriously diminished, and it would be our belief that this legislation would have a similar impact on the running of major events at the strategic stadium.

We fully support the proposed legislation and complement all those involved in its drafting and taking forward to the current stage. We believe that this is a timely and appropriate amendment to the Licencing of the sale of alcohol and has substantial mechanisms to ensure that its implementation will be for the overall good of society as a whole.