

The Highland Licensing Board

Meeting – 16 September 2025

Agenda Item	9.4
Report No	HLB/74/25

Application for a major variation of premises licence under the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005

Nevis Centre, An Aird, Fort William, PH33 6AN

Report by the Clerk to the Licensing Board

Summary

This report relates to an application for a major variation of premises licence from Linnhe Leisure Limited, An Aird, Fort William, PH33 6AN.

1.0 Description of premises

1.1 The Nevis Centre is a large leisure and conference complex serving both the local community and visiting tourists. It is conveniently located near Fort William town centre and close to the University of the Highlands and Islands and Morrisons Supermarket. It also offers easy access for both pedestrians and vehicles.

2.0 Summary of variation application

2.1 Variation sought

The applicant seeks to vary the premises licence as follows:-

1. Sale of alcohol:

Add consumption of alcohol off the premises (off-sales)

2. Operating Hours:

Add: Off-sale hours : Monday to Sunday 1000 hrs to 2200 hrs

Increase: On-sales hours to Monday to Sunday 1100 hrs to 0100 hrs
(currently Mon to Wed: 1100 to 0000 hrs; Thurs to Sat: 1100 to 0100 hrs
Sunday: 1230 to 2345

3. Operating Plan Activities:

- Add the following activities to take place both 'within' and 'outwith' licensed hours: outdoor drinking facilities

Reason: to allow for the consumption of non-alcoholic beverages prior to core opening hours.

- Update **any other activities** as follows:

Remove reference to current activities and update as follows:

- Both internal and external areas may be used for market purposes, including Christmas markets and local craft and food producers markets where third parties may exhibit and sell food, drink and other products. (*The premises currently holds Market Operator's Licence under the Civic Government (Scotland) Act 1982*);
- The premises may offer nursery provision;
- The premises caters for and hosts public and other local events; including Community Meetings, Scottish Six Day Trials, Mountain Bike Events, Mountain and Film Festival, Ben Nevis Race Registration/Celebrations; Royal National Mod; Local and Traditional Music Festivals;
- Local Sports Clubs and Community Groups use the premises;
- The external areas of the premises may also be used infrequently for festivals/live performances and events with external food and drink facilities during which pop up bars and temporary structures may be utilised;
- A soft play area operates within the premises and no alcohol is permitted in this area, marked as "Hi Jinks soft play area" on the layout plan;
- The premises offers an indoor sports which include a 10 pin bowling alley, pool tables, table tennis and other amusements.
- The premises offers an outdoor sports area including tennis and basketball courts
- Café facilities which offer hot and cold snacks.

4. Layout Plan:

- Extend the licensed footprint of the premises to include external areas including Basketball and Tennis Court and Car Park
- Include "fusion youth room" within licensed footprint.

5. Description of premises:

Update description of premises to reflect above proposed modifications to premises licence.

"The Nevis Centre is a large leisure and conference complex serving both the local community and visiting tourists. Conveniently located near Fort William town centre and close to the University of the Highlands and Islands and Morrisons Supermarket. It offers easy access for both pedestrians and vehicles.

The indoor licensed premises includes: a 10-pin bowling alley, large multi-purpose hall with a stage, studio, meeting/conference room, Nevis Café, foyer area, bar/lounge and reception area located off the foyer, toilet facilities.

For large-scale events, temporary bar facilities may be set up within the multi-purpose hall.

The external licensed areas comprise: basketball and tennis courts, the car park area. These external areas may be used occasionally for events.

The Hi-Jinks Soft Play area and first-floor accommodation are not included within the footprint of the licensed premises.

The venue caters to all age groups, offering a wide range of activities including recorded and live performances, Christmas and birthday parties, markets, and similar events. Indoor and outdoor sports such as 10-pin bowling, tennis, pool and table tennis are also available.

The Nevis Centre is popular with local clubs and classes and is frequently used by businesses for meetings and conferences.”

3.0 Background

- 3.1 On 1 August 2025 the Licensing Board received an application for a major variation of a premises licence from Linnhe Leisure Limited, The Nevis Centre, An Aird, Fort William, PH33 6AN.
- 3.2 The application was publicised during the period 13 August 2025 until 3 September 2025 and confirmation that the site notice has been received.
- 3.3 In accordance with standard procedure, Police Scotland, the Scottish Fire & Rescue Service and the Council’s Community Services (Environmental Health) and Planning and Building Standards were consulted on the application.
- 3.4 Notification of the application was also sent to NHS Highland and the local Community Council.
- 3.5 Further to this publication and consultation process, no timeous objections or representations have been received, however, Building Standards have requested that their Service be consulted on prior to the erection of any temporary structures in the external area. This matter has been addressed by the Licensing Standards Officer.
- 3.6 The applicant must nevertheless be given the opportunity to be heard before the Board determines the application and has accordingly been invited to the meeting. The applicant has been advised of the hearings procedure which may also be viewed via the following link: www.highland.gov.uk/hlb_hearings

4.0 Legislation

4.1 The Licensing Board must in considering and determining the application, consider whether any grounds of refusal apply and if none of them applies, the Board must grant the application.

Relevant grounds of refusal may be: -

1. the grant of the application will be inconsistent with one or more of the licensing objectives;
2. having regard to (i) the nature of the activities carried on or proposed to be carried on in the subject premises, (ii) the location, character and condition of the premises, and (iii) the persons likely to frequent the premises, the Board considers the premises are unsuitable for use for the sale of alcohol in accordance with the proposed variation;
3. that the Board considers that, if the application were to be granted, there would, as a result, be overprovision of licensed premises, or licensed premises of the same or similar description as the subject premises, in the locality.

4.2 For the purposes of the Act, the licensing objectives are-

- (a) preventing crime and disorder,
- (b) securing public safety,
- (c) preventing public nuisance,
- (d) protecting and improving public health, and
- (e) protecting children and young persons from harm.

4.3 The Board only has power either to grant the application and make a variation of the conditions to which the licence is subject or to refuse the application.

4.4 If the Board refuses the application, the Board must specify the ground for refusal and if the ground for refusal relates to a licensing objective, the Board must specify the objective in question.

5.0 Licensing Standards Officer

5.1 The LSO has provided the following comments:-

- (i) The application is within Highland Licensing Board policy;
- (ii) The application is consistent with the licensing objectives;
- (iii) The proposed variation seeks to update the operating and layout plans to better reflect the potential the Premises has to offer;
- (iv) During the consultation process, the Building Standards Authority commented on the use of temporary structures as part of the premises licence and requested to be consulted in relation to the erection of any temporary structures. This information has been passed to the applicant as an informative and the Board are requested to note as such.
- (v) Given the location of the premises and the nature of potential external events, the proposed local condition suggested at paragraph 7.2 below is

- considered to be appropriate to support the licensing objectives while still maintaining a substantial degree of flexibility for the applicant.
- (vi) Other than the comments received from the Building Standards Authority, no objections or representations have been received in respect of this application;
 - (vii) I have no objections to this application.

6.0 HLB local policies

6.1 The following policies are relevant to the application:-

- (1) Highland Licensing Board Policy Statement 2023-28
- (2) Highland Licensing Board Equality Strategy

7.0 Conditions

7.1 Mandatory conditions

If the application is approved the mandatory conditions set out in Schedule 3 of the Act will apply.

7.2 Local conditions

Existing local conditions will continue to apply and it is recommended that the following additional local condition be attached:

- **External licensed areas**

Any event taking place after 2100 hrs on any day in the external licensed area requires a section 68 - Extended Hours application and each application will be considered on its own merits.

Recommendation

The Board is invited to determine the above application and if minded to grant the application, to agree the proposed local conditions detailed at para.7.2 above.

If the Board is minded to refuse the application, the Board must specify the ground for refusal and if the ground for refusal is in relation to a licensing objective, the Board must specify the objective in question.

Reference: HC/RSL/463
Date: 4 September 2025
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