

The Highland Licensing Board

Meeting – 12 May 2026

Agenda Item	11.3
Report No	HLB/54/26

Hearing to consider Police Scotland report of conduct inconsistent with licensing objectives

Personal licence holder – Venkata Surendra Babu Gaddam (HC/INBS/9273)

Report by the Clerk to the Licensing Board

Summary

This report relates to a hearing under section 84A of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005. This is a mandatory hearing which the Board must hold following receipt from Police Scotland of a report advising that the Chief Constable considers that a personal licence holder has acted in a manner inconsistent with any of the licensing objectives.

1. Background

- 1.1 A personal licence is required to allow any individual to supervise or authorise the sale of alcohol.
- 1.2 Venkata Gaddam was granted a personal licence on 23 October 2024 and, subject to the terms of the Act, the licence will expire on 22 October 2034.
- 1.3 In terms of section 84A of the Act, Police Scotland have submitted to the Board a report dated 23 April 2026 that the Chief Constable considers that personal licence holder, Venkata Gaddam, has acted in a manner inconsistent with the following licensing objectives:
 - securing public safety; and
 - preventing crime and disorder.

A copy of this report detailing the conduct in question is attached (**Appendix 1**).

Section 84A(2) of the Act provides that where the Board receives from Police Scotland a report of this nature, the Board must hold a hearing.

- 1.4 The personal licence holder, Venkata Gaddam, and a representative from Police Scotland have been invited to attend the hearing. Both have been advised of the hearing procedure which will be followed at the meeting and which may also be viewed via the following link:

https://www.highland.gov.uk/hlb_hearings

2. Legal position

- 2.1 At the hearing, the Board may, after giving the licence holder, Police Scotland and such other persons as they consider appropriate an opportunity to be heard, make an order revoking, suspending or endorsing the licence if the Board is satisfied that it is necessary to do so for the purposes of any of the licensing objectives. The period of any suspension may not exceed 6 months. Alternatively, the Board may decide to take no action.
- 2.2 Separately, where, at the hearing, the Board are satisfied that, having regard to the licensing objectives, the licence holder is not a fit and proper person to be the holder of a personal licence, the Board must make an order revoking the licence.
- 2.3 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.

Recommendation

The Board is invited to hear from the representative of Police Scotland and from the personal licence holder and then to determine whether to make any order revoking, suspending or endorsing the personal licence.

Reference: HC/INBS/9273

Date: 24 April 2026

Author: Kata Somogyi

Appendices: Appendix 1 - Letter from Police Scotland dated 24 April 2026

23/04/2026

Your Ref: HC/INBS/9273

Our Ref: 232933

Highland Council
Licensing Office
Council Headquarters
Glenurquhart Road
Inverness
IV3 5NX



Divisional Co-ordination Unit
Highland and Islands Division
Police HQ
Old Perth Road
INVERNESS
IV2 3SY

Dear Madam,

LICENSING (SCOTLAND) ACT 2005 - SECTION 84A. REPORT OF CONDUCT INCONSISTENT WITH LICENSING OBJECTIVES. PERSONAL LICENCE HOLDER: VENKATA SURENDRA BABU GADDAM, [REDACTED]

The Chief Constable hereby reports to the Licensing Board in terms of Section 84A of the Licensing (Scotland) Act 2005 that Mr Gaddam has acted in a manner which is inconsistent with the licensing objectives articulated at Section 4(1) of Act, namely:

- Preventing Crime and Disorder
- Securing Public Safety

Mr Gaddam holds a Personal Licence with the Highland Licensing Board, being granted on the 22nd of October 2024 and expiring 22nd of October 2034.

Mr Gaddam is the Designated Premises Manager of Barneys, 35 Castle Street, Inverness, IV2 3DU since the 21st of January 2026. The Premises Licence Holder for this premises is V & C Retail Ltd for which Mr Gaddam is the sole director. Before this, Mr Gaddam was the Designated Premises Manager for Crown Stores, 13 Kingsmill Road, Inverness, IV2 3JT from the 27th of August 2025 to the 20th of January 2026.

The following information is provided for the Board's consideration.

Merkinch Stores has a Premises Licence with the holder being V & C Stores Limited with Mr Gaddam being the sole Director.

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On the 16th of April 2026, around 3pm, police officers attended Merkinch Stores, Lochalsh Road, Inverness in possession of a drugs search warrant.

Whilst searching cabinets within the shop, officers recovered green herbal material, pouches containing green herbal material, protein bars labelled "cannabis protein bars", hemp products (cones, wraps and briquettes) and blunt cones, all presumptively testing positive for cannabis. Also found were zip lock bags, odourises, glass one "hitters", bongos, nicotine pouches, tobacco products, cigarettes and vape products (some without the legally required health warning labels) and scales for sale.

The premises was not registered to sell tobacco and vape products.

Mr Gaddam has been charged with the following offences;

On 16/04/2026 at Merkinch Stores, Lochalsh Road, Inverness, Highland you VENKATA SURENDRA BABU GADDAM were concerned in the supplying of a controlled drug, namely a Class B drug (Cannabis) specified in Part of Schedule 2 to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 to another or others in contravention of Section 4(1) of the after mentioned Act; CONTRARY to the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971, Section 4(3)(b).

On 16/04/2026 at Merkinch Store, Lochalsh Road, Inverness, Highland you VENKATA SURENDRA BABU GADDAM did display or cause to be displayed, in the course of business, tobacco products or smoking related products by displaying bongos, pipes and filter papers in a place where tobacco products are offered for sale namely Merkinch Store, 1, Lochalsh Road, Inverness, Highland; CONTRARY to Section 1(1) of the Tobacco and Primary Medical Services (Scotland) Act 2010.

On 16/04/2026 at Merkinch Store, Lochalsh Road, Inverness, Highland you VENKATA SURENDRA BABU GADDAM did carry on a TOBACCO business whilst unregistered in terms of Section 10 of the after mentioned Act; CONTRARY to Section 20(1) of the Tobacco and Primary Medical Services (Scotland) Act 2010.

On 16/04/2026 at Merkinch Store, Lochalsh Road, Inverness, Highland you VENKATA SURENDRA BABU GADDAM, being a producer within the meaning of the after mentioned Regulations of room odourises and nicotine pouches, did place on the market a product which was not safe, namely not making visually impaired people aware of the risks in that you did not provide a tactile triangle CLP marking CONTRARY to The General Product Safety Regulations 2005, Regulations 5(1) and 20, and the European Communities Act 1972, Section 2(2).

On 16/04/2026 at Merkinch Store, Lochalsh Road, Inverness, Highland you VENKATA SURENDRA BABU GADDAM, a company incorporated under the Companies Acts, registration number SC794792, being required to comply with requirements under health and safety regulations, did contravene Reg 17 of the

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Biocidal Products and Chemicals (Appointment of Authorities and Enforcement) Regulations 2013 Regulations CONTRARY to the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, Section 33(1)(c).

There are no scheduled courts dates at this time.

The green herbal material, pouches containing green herbal material, protein bars labelled "cannabis protein bars", hemp products (cones, wraps and briquettes) and blunt cones are scheduled to be sent to a laboratory for official evidential testing of cannabis and a report produced for court purposes.

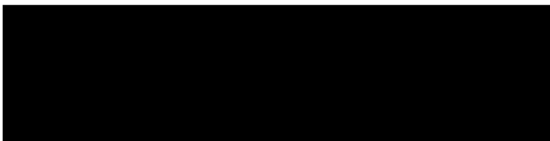
As the matter is sub-judice I am unable to furnish further details.

It is the Chief Constable's view is that the Board should consider all the options open to them under Section 84(7) or 84(7A) of the Act.

In signing this report, I confirm that this report is made under the authority of the Chief Constable of Police Service of Scotland:

Signed:

Yours faithfully

A large black rectangular redaction box covering the signature area.

Chief Superintendent David Ross
Divisional Commander