



'Door not closed' on lifting ban on alcohol at football games

Alistair Grant
Political Editor

The door is not closed on lifting the decades-long alcohol ban at football games, an internal Scottish Government document has said.

A briefing note written towards the end of last year said allowing alcohol in "a limited number of pilot projects would be the proposed course of action".

It added: "We understand from the SPFL [Scottish Professional Football League] that Police Scotland are open to discussions on this."

However, it also said there are "no plans at this time to remove the existing general restrictions".

The Criminal Justice (Scotland) Act 1980 has prohibited the sale of alcohol within football grounds for more than 40 years, although there is an exemption for corporate hospitality areas.

There have long been calls to relax the rules, with football bosses pointing to the fact alcohol can be sold at rugby matches and other sports.

Last year, Health Secretary Neil Gray said any proposal to allow alcohol to be sold in football stadiums would be given "serious consideration".

It came after SNP MSP George Adam called for the ban to be lifted, arguing football has "moved on" from the 1980s.

However, First Minister John Swinney later poured cold water on the idea, saying: "The Health Secretary was simply indicating that, as a government, we will receive representations, we'll obviously consider those points."

"We have no plan to go down such a route, because it's important that we take all necessary steps that we can to ensure we address the country's relation with alcohol, and we have a safe and supportive sporting environment for all."

A government briefing note written in November, released through Freedom of Information laws, discussed the issue of "alcohol in football stadia".

It said Maree Todd, the SNP minister for sport, "has had discussions with the SPFL on the introduction of alcohol at football over the last couple of years and expressed the clear view that, while the door is not closed on the issue, any proposals coming forward would need to recognise the significant impact of alcohol on public health in Scotland".

"Extending this to concourses in a limited number of pilot

There is an exemption for alcohol within corporate hospitality areas in football grounds

projects would be the proposed course of action, with evidence gathered to understand the results and impacts."

Minutes show Calum Beattie, the chief operating officer at the SPFL, told a roundtable event in December that "alcohol is already widely available at football grounds in hospitality areas and many fans come straight to the ground from nearby pubs and bars".

He said Police Scotland currently categorise lower risk games, and this mechanism "could potentially be used to enable alcohol to be sold in the ground".

A Scottish Government spokesman said: "We have no plans to change the ban on alcohol sales at Scottish football grounds."

"We regularly meet the Scottish Professional Football League to discuss a wide range of issues, including the sale and consumption of alcohol at football matches. We will continue to engage with the football authorities, supporters' groups and clubs on ways to enhance the fan experience."

40
years of Scottish football's alcohol ban

Sperm whale tangled in ropes dies

Amy Watson

A sperm whale has died after becoming tangled in ropes and stranding on a Scottish island.

The 15m (49ft) long whale was first spotted off the coast of Skye on Thursday.

A team from the British Divers Marine Life Rescue (BDMLR) used drones and boats to examine the whale and found it was wrapped in fishing lines and trailing up to 20m (66ft) of rope. The team managed to free the animal from much of the rope on Saturday, but some remained when it swam away.

On Monday, BDMLR was called a report of a sperm whale grounded near the shore of nearby Raasay. Some ropes were wrapped around the animal and the team believe it is the same animal



The whale became entangled in a rope off the Isle of Skye

they helped last week. BDMLR said in a statement: "We received footage showing the whale grounded in the shallows, still breathing, but stationary. As the tide receded, the whale was pushed onto its side and was almost completely stranded at low tide."

"This revealed the extent of the rest of the entanglement, which wrapped around the whale's lower jaw and again around its head," BDMLR said marine mammal medics were

sent to the island and a member of the public cut away the ropes from the whale, which was then still breathing.

"The organisation warned against any untrained people attempting to disentangle ropes from a whale due to the risks posed."

They said: "It was hoped the whale would refloat itself as the tide rushed back in around it, but sadly after being disentangled it only took one more noticeable breath."

Cambushinnie Haul Road

Beauy-Denny 400kV Upgrade Project

Feedback Event

We are pleased to be holding a second public event on our proposals for the access road to the new Cambushinnie 400kV substation, following our pre-application consultation in November 2024 and feedback period which closed on 8 January 2025.

We are holding this event to present updates to our proposals, following feedback received from the last event and ongoing design developments.

During our face-to-face drop-in event you will be able to view our project proposals, ask questions to the project team and share further comments. Further details will be made available on the project website.

The event will be held on:

Monday 17 March, 3–7pm
Braco Village Hall,
Feddal Road, Braco, FK15 9QD

We encourage all members of the local community and all interested parties to attend the event.

 Scottish & Southern
Electricity Networks
TRANSMISSION



If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact our Community Liaison Manager:

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Find out more and register for project updates, visit the project website by scanning the QR code, or use the following URL:
www.ssen-transmission.co.uk/cambushinnie