

Scottish licensing - an issue to be resolved

On the 4th of November 2006 a meeting/open forum was held in Edinburgh to discuss the way forward for the licensing of the Scottish window cleaning industry.

The FWC was represented by Tam Moffat and myself, seven members of the Scottish Licensed Window Cleaners Network were there and they were accompanied by another three window cleaners. As you can tell from the list below, these guys - and the areas they came from - covered a fair proportion of Scotland.

As is the norm these days most folk are content to sit back and let others do the hard work, so I suppose that ten interested men for an inaugural meeting isn't too bad considering the distances most of them had travelled to get there. They assured me that quality, not quantity, was quite an important attribute to have, but next time a meeting is arranged to discuss I hope you might give it some more thought and make an effort to attend for after all its your future as professional window cleansers that is under discussion. Harsh words may be but you all have a chance and a choice to improve your industry..... don't sit on your ass and moan about the costs of these licences, do something about it..... attend the meetings of which there will be plenty more I can assure you of that and if you had attended you would have seen from the passionate people who did attend the meeting; very good valuable points were raised and discussed, resolutions drawn up and the formation of a plan to address the licensing issue in Scotland agreed.

Why I hear you asked would an English man be interested in giving up a weekend to attend the meeting?... It's quite simple, I believe that a licensing system should be introduced in England, oh I can hear the sharp intakes of breath and the tut tut's why do we need to be licensed in England?... Well I believe its about being professional and I also feel this is another strong sales tool we can have in our sales arsenal. Perhaps more directed at the domestic market than say the retail/business side to our industry but never the less it will in my opinion benefit us all and set our self a side from the cowboy image which this industry unfortunately still has. By bringing in a National licence and it needs to be a National licence - those of us who care about our industry will have no problem in joining such a scheme..... and this will be reflected in our annual earnings. How-come... you may ask well you have a choice just as the customer has a choice. Do I adopt a more professional attitude to my work. i.e. showing the customer that I am:

- A. Trade registered
- B. Have formal training
- C. AND THAT YOU ARE LICENSED TO CARRY OUT WINDOW CLEANING.

By doing this you give the customer the choice of employing a professional or a cowboy. You may think I'm not a cowboy and I do a good job ...why do I need all this. Well we all need it to promote our industry as a profession and not just a means to earn some money. As I say to new window cleaners that I meet in my town and surrounding area, any one can make money from window cleaning, but not every one can make a living.... and the reason for this is a lack of belief in ourselves as window cleaners, if we all took advantage of the many different types of training that are know available to us. We would all benefit financially because it goes back to choice..... your choice to provide the customer with a professional service and the price that goes with it, or choose to carry on with the cowboy image and the cowboy price for the job.

So its all about educating the public to accept a better service and standard of workmanship from our industry and in return from us, a collective industry benefiting from a higher return for our efforts.. That's why I personally feel that a licence here in England will help promote a better image to the general public and give them peace of mind when choosing who to employ.

Remember the key word "choice" you will hear me use this world a lot when I'm given the opportunity to talk about the industry I love. It's your choice to disagree with me as it's your choice to join a trade body or, to use a water fed pole system over ladders and it is your choice; despite what you hear from certain camps. to use ladders.. Choice is all about living in a free country.... but when you are told you can't do this and you must do this (and I'm not talking about the laws of the land, I'm talking about working practice) you step out side the bounds of common sense....and choice, and you are forced into the world of - the empire builders and this is not good for our industry as a whole.

So our fellow professionals in Scotland have a choice they can sit on their ass and do nothing or, they can get involved in getting a better deal for themselves.

With regards to the meeting, as I mentioned earlier a number of proposals have been put forward that Tam Kay is going to pull together and present them in a form which is acceptable to every one. These points will then be presented to the individual Scottish MP's for consultation.

In addition, there are a few more avenues that are being looked at, one of which is gathering information on how each Scottish region polices the licence. so things are on the move if anyone would like more information on the Scottish licence issue it can be found at www.slwcn.org (Scottish licensing window cleaners network.)

Also for our Scottish members if you happen to know any of the people listed below you can talk to them you might not even know how passionate they are about this issue as they where all at the meeting I attended.

Tam Kay	-	Dumfries & Galloway	Stuart Cormie	-	Angus
Tom Moffat	-	Fife	Doug Atkinson	-	Stirlingshire
Ewan Chrystal	-	Argyll & Bute	David Dunnell	-	Fife
David Park	-	Edinburgh, City Of	James Cairns	-	Erskine
Graham Murray	-	North Lanarkshire	Matthew Speirs	-	West Lothian
Stuart Hamilton	-	North Ayrshire			

I would encourage you to make your feelings known to me via the federation.

IAN DOUGLAS F.W.C EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEMBER. - Grateful thanks to Tam Kay & Davie Park for their assistance