

IN THE MATTER

of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act
2012 (the Act)

AND

IN THE MATTER

of an application by **BLAIKEN LIMITED**
pursuant to s.99 of the Act for a new
on-licence and a new off-licence in
respect of premises situated at 5726
Masterton Castlepoint Road, Masterton
known as "Castlepoint Hotel"

DECISION OF THE MASTERTON DISTRICT LICENSING COMMITTEE

Chair: Robyn Cherry-Campbell
Members: Campbell Gillam
Brian Deller

HEARING at MASTERTON on 4th August 2026

APPEARANCES

For Applicant

Celeste Blakesley – Applicant (Director and Shareholder)
Amanda Aitken – Applicant (Director and Shareholder)
Chris Hince – Alcohol Licensing Qualification and Training Consultant (in support of
applicant)

Reporting Agencies

Bronwyn Johnson – Chief Alcohol Licensing Inspector
Anoop Gopalakrishnan - on behalf of Medical Officer of Health
Sergeant Manu Leuluai – New Zealand Police

INTRODUCTION

1. Blaiken Limited applied for a new on and off licence pursuant to s99 of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 in respect of premises situated at 5726 Masterton Castlepoint Road, Masterton. Both applications were lodged on 14 April 2026.
2. The applicant, Blaiken Limited, is a registered company, which can hold a licence under s28(1) of the Act. Blaiken Limited was incorporated on 23 February 2026, with two directors listed as Amanda Catherine Aitken and Celeste Alice Blakesley, who own 50 shares each (100 total shares).
3. The premises has been operated as a tavern with on and off-licences by various operators for a number of years. Currently the premises has no alcohol licence in force.

4. NZ Police reported on the applications on 6 May 2026, and whilst they did not oppose the applications they noted in their report *"Of note: For the licensing inspector, a detailed staff training manual to be provided by the applicant would be beneficial for assessing this application. This will clarify and give reassurance on what information is being covered in detail."*
5. The Medical Officer of Health reported on the applications on 7 May 2026 and initially opposed the applications due to insufficient information to make full assessment of the legal requirements under s105(1)(a) The object and purpose of the Act, s105(1)(b) Suitability of the applicant and s131(1)(c) Other matters of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012.
6. The opposition on behalf of the Medical Officer of Health was withdrawn on 3 June 2026 after further information was supplied by the applicant.
7. Fire and Emergency New Zealand initially objected to the applications, however this was withdrawn when trial evacuations were completed.
8. The Licensing Inspector did not oppose the applications, although noted at point 25 of their report *"The Committee should apply a heightened standard in assessing the applicant's suitability."*
9. The applications were set down for a formal hearing on 4 August 2026, for the Masterton District Licensing Committee (Committee) to discuss further with the applicant the following matters:
 - i. How the Alcohol Safety Plan will be implemented in practice, given the applicant's limited experience in managing and operating a licensed venue;
 - ii. What does the applicant mean by being "actively involved in the running of the pub". What does that entail? How does the applicant see that working?
 - iii. General and Duty Manager experience given the unique challenges of running a licensed venue in a rural location, whilst noting the two Directors have not previously held a Manager's Certificate.
 - iv. An amendment to the hours that the applicant proposes to sell or supply alcohol under the licences.

APPLICANT'S EVIDENCE

10. Ms Amanda Aitken and Ms Celeste Blakesley, and their witness Mr Chris Hince of HINCE Hospitality Limited, attended the hearing, spoke to the applications and answered questions from the Committee.
11. The applicant acknowledged their lack of experience in operating and managing a rural licensed premises and spoke to their combined lived experience in dealing with members of the public and staff, in potentially challenging circumstances, within the health sector and as a school principal. They have reached out and spoken with other rural licensed operators around business operations.

12. Ms Blakesley confirmed she lives on site and her role will be that of a full-time General Manager, to support the Duty Manager and oversee day-to-day operations of the business.
13. The applicant has appointed two Duty Managers, both of whom have experience over several years at the premises. Ms Aitken's application for a Manager's Certificate is pending a decision, and Ms Blakesley will be applying for hers, if the outcome of the hearing is favourable.
14. Speaking to the submitted Alcohol Safety Plan, the applicant advised they have a 'zero tolerance policy' to breaches of the Plan, and all decisions made by the Duty Manager are final. The expectation is that staff and employers will adhere to the Duty Manager's decisions.
15. The Duty Manager's role will include actively moving about the premises during service and not be 'stuck behind the bar', to ensure early detection of any potential risks and enable timely intervention.
16. For busy periods, and as required, a contracted security person has been appointed.
17. Confirmation was given of CCTV coverage for areas not visible from the point of sale, including the Fenced Garden Bar. This can be monitored on a tablet by the Duty Manager and also the applicant's phones.
18. Mr Chris Hince of HINCE Hospitality will provide comprehensive staff training for all staff on an annual/bi-annual basis at the premises.
19. New staff will be given in-house training by the applicant and the Duty Manager, with the expectation for bar staff to complete a Licence Controller Qualification (LCQ) as soon as practicable. The applicant commented it is their intention not to employ staff under the age of 25 years.
20. The applicant provided the Committee with a nine-page document "Job Overview & Description" which highlighted Staff Training Policies and Schedules (Exhibit A). Of particular interest to the Committee was the Onboarding Training (to be completed prior to first shift) and Recurring Training detailing the applicant's intention to 'always support our staff and their decisions around the Sale and Supply of Alcohol'. The document was also circulated to the reporting agencies.
21. The applicant advised they intend to operate reduced trading days and hours during winter, and in the busier summer months trade as per their applications.
22. Ms Aitken confirmed clear controls around the sale and supply of alcohol with the off-licence, e.g. no supply for catering events, limit to one bottle of spirits.
23. The applicant is aware and understands that if the licences are granted, a high level of compliance scrutiny can be expected.

LICENSING INSPECTOR

24. The Committee noted the Inspector's report for the on and off-licences, which was taken as read. The Licensing Inspector did not oppose the applications.
25. In response to the Committee's request to better understand why the statement at point 25 of her report was included, Ms Johnson stated it was in relation to the applicant's lack of experience in operating this type of premises, and Ms Blakesley's family connection to a director of both Fireballs Imports Limited (previous licence holder) and Holding My Dingdong Limited (building owner).
26. Ms Johnson requested, if the applications were to be approved, that the Committee consider two discretionary conditions:
 1. Patrons must not be allowed to become intoxicated, and no alcohol is to be sold or supplied to an intoxicated patron. Any intoxicated patron must be safely removed from the premises or taken to a place of safety on the premises.
 2. A properly appointed certificated or Acting or Temporary Manager must be on duty at all times when the premises are open for the sale and supply of alcohol, and their full name must be on a sign prominently displayed in the premises.

MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

27. The Committee noted the Medical Officer of Health's report for the on and off-licences, which was taken as read. The Committee noted the Medical Officer of Health is not opposing the applications and had withdrawn its initial opposition.

POLICE

28. The Committee noted NZ Police's report for the on and off-licences, which was taken as read. NZ Police do not oppose the applications.
29. Clarification was sought by the Committee on the note to the Licensing Inspector on the Police report.
30. Sergeant Leuluai spoke on the benefits of having a more robust stand-alone training manual for staff to access for reference if the need arose during a shift, and a good starting point was in the additional information provided by the applicant on pages 136 and 137 of the hearing agenda.
31. Sergeant Leuluai also suggested the Committee consider the two discretionary conditions proposed by Ms Johnson, if the applications were to be approved, in line with Hutt Valley and Wellington City Council District Licensing Committees.

COMMITTEE'S ASSESSMENT

32. In determining these applications, the Committee has had regard to the criteria in section 105 of the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012, including the Purpose and Object of the Act in sections 3 and 4. No single criterion is determinative; the Committee has undertaken an overall evaluative assessment.

33. The Committee was satisfied that the applications and supporting documentation met the requirements set out in s100 of the Act.
34. Section 105(1)(b) states the applicant must be a suitable entity to hold a licence. In this regard, the suitability of the applicant was not challenged by any of the reporting agencies, and the Committee consider the applicant suitable to hold a licence.
35. Section 105(1)(c) the proposed days and hours are consistent with the Wairarapa Local Alcohol Policy – Te Kaupapa Here Waipiro ā-rohe o Wairarapa.
36. Section 105(1)(d) the Committee was satisfied the applications for the days and hours of sale meet the criteria as set out in s105(1)(d) and noted comments made by the applicant in the hearing that the premises would operate reduced days and hours in the winter months.
37. Section 105(1)(e) the Committee was satisfied the design and layout of the premises meet the criteria and noted the applicant's confirmation that CCTV coverage extends to the outside Fenced Garden Bar area.
38. Section 105(1)(f) and (g) the applicant advised no sale of other goods, and that the accommodation provided is managed separately from bar operations, with clear controls to ensure guest safety and compliance.
39. Section 105(1)(h) and (i) in the opinion of the Committee there is no reason to believe that the amenity and good order of the locality would be likely to be reduced, to more than a minor extent, by the effects of the issue of the licence.
40. Section 105(1)(j) the applicant and their witness Mr Chris Hince spoke at length to the systems, staff, and training they will have in place to comply with the law if the applications are successful.
41. Section 105(1)(k) any matters dealt with in any report from the Police, an inspector or a Medical Officer of Health under section 103 of the Act:
 - i. The Police have not opposed the applications, however the Committee strongly recommends the applicant takes the advice of Sergeant Leuluai and has a robust stand-alone training manual, easily accessible on-site, for staff to refer to as required.
 - ii. The Medical Officer of Health has not raised matters in opposition.
 - iii. The Inspector does not oppose the applications.
42. Section 105(1)(a) requires the licensing committee to have regard to the object of the Act and in particular that the sale, supply and consumption of alcohol should be undertaken safely and responsibly. On the whole of the evidence and submissions, the Committee is satisfied that the application is consistent with the object of the Act.

DECISION

43. The Masterton District Licensing Committee is satisfied as to the matters to which we must have regard as set out in s105 of the Act.
44. The Committee, in accordance with the Sale and Supply of Alcohol Act 2012 grants both an On and Off Licence to Blaiken Limited for a period of one year pursuant to s122(1)(b).

CONDITIONS

45. In addition to the suggested conditions listed by the Inspector in their report dated 3 June 2026, the applicant must also comply with the following discretionary conditions, pursuant to s117 of the Act:
- i. Patrons must not be allowed to become intoxicated, and no alcohol is to be sold or supplied to an intoxicated patron. Any intoxicated patron must be safely removed from the premises or taken to a place of safety on the premises.
 - ii. A properly appointed certificated or Acting or Temporary Manager must be on duty at all times when the premises are open for the sale and supply of alcohol, and their full name must be on a sign prominently displayed in the premises.

DATED at Masterton this 7th day of August 2026



Robyn Cherry-Campbell
Chair

Masterton District Licensing Committee

