

Concerns over licence for self check in hotel and restaurant premises

A self check-in hotel and Italian restaurant could be barred from selling alcohol after failing to pay their licensing fees in time.

The Folly Hotel, North Berwick and Tranent's Giancarlos are among licence holders who have been ordered to appear before East Lothian Licensing Board after missing the deadline for the annual payments.

Concerns were raised about The Folly Hotel by the board's licensing standards officer after it was revealed it has introduced lock boxes so guests can let themselves in.

A report due to go before next week's board meeting said the officer hand delivered a reminder letter to the hotel after it failed to make its annual payments.

A statement in the report said: "The premises were closed and the letter was posted through the door. There was a notice on the door. The sign detailed that the hotel was using a self check in due to a staff shortage.

"It directs guests to a side door with six lock boxes. It appears that the hotel is unmanned and guests reside there without staff. This is concerning in relation to all the licensing objectives and the control the licence holder has over the operations and behaviour at a licensed premises."

Booking.com describes The Folly Hotel as a “self check-in room only property”.

The board will also hear that Giancarlo’s Italian restaurant in Tranent, which has also failed to pay its licence fees in time, has been closed since May this year.

Also facing action for not paying their fees ahead before the 1 October 2023 deadline are Dragons Way, Prestonpans and Stodola on Musselburgh High Street.

The licensing standards officer notes in reports that Stodola appears to have been stripped of equipment and closed while Dragons Way is operating a takeaway without alcohol sales.

Failure to keep up the annual fees could see the board issue warnings or revoke alcohol licences.

By Marie Sharp, Local Democracy Reporter

