

Alcohol licence granted despite fears of outsiders visiting East Lothian village

A village café has been given the go ahead to serve alcohol despite concerns from locals that it would ruin the community's 'dark sky' reputation and encourage 'outsiders' to visit.

In total 17 objections to Tynninghame Country Store, in East Lothian, being given a licence to serve alcohol until 10pm at night, were lodged with the Licensing Board.

Among concerns raised were the impact on the village's 'dark sky' which sees no street lights or light pollution, fears local residents would move away, and concerns it would encourage a new clientele to the small village.

Objectors argued that the traditional lack of street lighting in the village would make it a target for criminals.

They said: "A licensed premises with alcohol stored is a very attractive target for the unscrupulous. I would be concerned that as we are a dark village criminals might see it as an easy target."

Another added: "Tynninghame is a low or non-crime area. This is because there is no reason for non-residents to come to the village after 4pm unless visiting friends, family or attending an event at the village hall.

“The extension of house the café has applied for would encourage outsiders to be and stay around the village longer, potentially drinking, and could result in crime and disorder.”

The licensing board was asked to approve an alcohol licence for the café which would allow it to serve drink until 10pm, however boss of the premises David Wakefield told the board he had ‘no intention’ of operating beyond the café’s current closing time of 5pm.

He said the full licence had been applied for to allow for any occasional event but no events were planned and offered to have a reduced hours licence imposed.

Dunpender Community Council, who cover the village, also asked for the licensing hours to be restricted to 5pm.

However board members granted the full licence to allow alcohol to be served until 10pm saying they trusted Mr Wakefield’s reassurances that it would not be needed.

Board convenor Councillor Lachlan Bruce said: “I note from Mr Wakefield that he does not intend to operate beyond the café closing time of 5pm and that is what the board expects to happen. We have no reason to suspect it won’t, we fully trust Mr Wakefield and won’t restrict the licence hours.”

by Marie Sharp, Local Democracy Reporter.

