

Plans for late licence refused

A stately home's plans to host a European style wedding into the early hours of the morning have been cut short by licensing chiefs.

Gosford House, in East Lothian, had wanted to serve alcohol at the wedding in May from noon until 3am telling the licensing board it was a more traditional time for a European wedding.

However they have been ordered to call time on the bar at 1am after East Lothian's Licensing Board chairperson told them "this wedding is in Scotland".

The board was told that the couple who were holding the wedding were currently living in Spain and guests would be travelling to Scotland for the event.

Licensing policy in East Lothian restricts hours for selling alcohol until 1am at the latest and describes drinking time over 14 hours as 'unreasonable'.

Representatives of the estate said the couple would be flexible over the start time for serving alcohol which could be later in the day as the ceremony itself was unlikely to start before 3pm and would accept a 2am shut down time.

After adjourning to discuss the application in private, the board ruled that 1am was as late a licence as it could issue.

Chair Councillor Lachlan Bruce said: "We understand different cultures have different traditions but this wedding is in

Scotland and our policy is that 1am is the terminal hour. It is important we protect our policy.”

He was backed by fellow board member Councillor George McGuire who said: “It is great to see people coming to Scotland for a wedding but we have our policy for a reason and we have to uphold it.”

Gosford House is owned by the 13th Earl of Wemyss and March and sits in an estate of 5,000 acres of parkland and coast.

Questions were raised by the board over the application being made for an occasional licence for the wedding instead of a premises licence which carries more controls.

They were told the Wemyss family, who use the house as their Scottish home, did not want CCTV installed in it, which was a condition of a premises licence.

Councillor Bruce urged the venue to reconsider adding the outcome of the board’s decision may have been different if a premises licence was in place.

by Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter

