

Drinks tent given the go ahead at Aberlady Gala

A village gala has been given the go ahead to include a drinks tent despite a decision to bar a neighbouring gala from serving alcohol because it was deemed a "children's event".

Aberlady Gala organisers insisted their annual summer gathering was a community-wide event for people of all ages.

And they told East Lothian Licensing Board they did not plan to start serving alcohol at the gala until after the main parade and floats had taken place to ensure it did not clash with the main children's events.

Last month the licensing board refused a drinks licence for the county's smallest gala in East Linton.

At the time organisers pointed out that local by laws allowed people to bring their own booze to the event and drink it on the grounds during the day.

They also argued the event was for the whole community and not just children but their argument was dismissed by councillors.

Today's board meeting was reminded by its licensing standards officers that part of its policy stated that events which were predominantly aimed at children had to give a compelling reason to be allowed to sell alcohol.

She also told the board that after granting Aberlady gala a drinks tent licence for last summer's event she visited and saw people drinking outwith the approved tent area, adding: "I saw six people leaving the grounds with drinks bought from the tent and moving into the streets."

Councillor Neil Gilbert said he could not support the granting of a licence for the event, adding: "It is a gala day with events organised for children throughout the day, and they will be in attendance all day. In line with the board's policy I cannot support this."

Councillor John McMillan, acting chair of the board, proposed the licence was approved for Aberlady with a later opening time for the drinks tent of 2.30pm to ensure it did not clash with children's events.

The board approved the licence with the later starting time by three votes to two with Councillor McMillan, Councillor Fiona Dugdale and Councillor George McEwan supporting it and Councillor Gilbert and Councillor Cher Cassini against.

by Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter

