

Haddington pub at centre of sectarian song complaints aims to be more family friendly

A pub which sparked police concern after installing a pool table has taken it away in a bid to be more family friendly.

The Railway Hotel, in Haddington, applied to East Lothian Licensing Board to be allowed to change its operating rules to allow children more access.

Restrictions to child access and supervision were introduced when the pub was granted permission to have the pool table downstairs last summer.

However the board today heard from a representative of the pub that new management had taken over and were trying to make it more of a community pub again.

They said: "The new team intends to make it more family friendly and the pool table has been removed.

"The Railway Hotel has a large function space, which is the only big function space in the town and it is in demand for events."

Last year the board heard concerns from Police Scotland about the pool table which they described as an 'added attraction'.

At the time police said there had been complaints about

sectarian singing and noise from the pub from local residents and they voiced additional concerns it had withdrawn from a local pub watch scheme.

Today the board heard the new management were keen to focus on functions and reintroduce a food menu in the pub.

They asked for children to be allowed in the pub until 10pm or the end of functions as well as being given 24-hour access if they are staying at the premises.

Councillor George McGuire, local ward member, who sits on the board said: "I'm a relative newcomer to Haddington, I've only been here ten years but everyone can tell you fond memories of The Railway in its past days.

"I've only really experienced it with new tenants there and it is great to see it being brought back to what people have described it as being before, as family friendly

"There is not an over abundance of function suites around Haddington and as it grows there will probably be more demand for function there so I would be very happy to grant this application."

The board unanimously approved the changes.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter