

East Lothian distillery gets green light for yoga and ceilidhs

An East Lothian distillery faced the ‘vexing’ question of whether yoga is a sport as it faced demand for classes at its visitors centre.

Glenkinchie Distillery wanted to introduce the activity at the centre and outdoors but after discussions with East Lothian’s licensing officers could not decide if it was a sporting or spiritual activity and in the end applied for a change to their licence to allow it.

And a meeting of East Lothian Licensing Board this week heard that after deciding to change its licence it looked at other events it could hold submitting a wide range of future activities from Pilates to ceilidhs and events offering refreshment stops to bigger cycling and running events.

The board heard the change in events planned for the visitors centre which has operated at the distillery for nearly 20 years were all inspired by the plan to start a yoga class.

A spokesman for the distillery said: “The catalyst for this was quite simply yoga. The centre said there was a demand for indoor classes and outdoors weather permitting and the landscaped gardens are a great venue for that.

“This got us thinking about what other changes we could bring in and I had a conversation with licensing officers around whether yoga was a sport, which is a permitted event, and this

got us into a very vexed question about if it was a sport or a spiritual activity or both.

“Where we got to was that it was better to come to the board and include it as a specific activity rather than sport and that is what got us started on a variation application.”

A report to the board from its licensing standards officer said the new licence would include allowing dancing facilities and charity events, talks, lectures and demonstrations along with ‘holistic wellbeing activities including yoga and Pilates’ as well as ceilidhs and being either start, finish or stopping points for races.

A single objection was lodged over the changes from a local resident who said: “I take particular exception to the proposal to become involved with cycling and running events as not only will they have large numbers of people and vehicles on site but these will also cause congestion and dangerous driving conditions in the surrounding areas.”

The board’s licensing standards officer said she had not received any complaints about the premises which was well run.

Board convenor Lachlan Bruce said: “I am happy with this application. In terms of whether yoga is a sport I will leave that to others.”

The board approved the variations to the licence unanimously.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter