

# **Haddington licence breach shop gets five weeks to turn it around**

**A newsagent's shop caught selling double the amount of allowed booze during Euros 2024 has been given a five weeks reprieve after being called before the licensing board.**

The Shopsmart store, on Haddington High Street, now operating as a Premier Store, applied to East Lothian licensing board for approval to extend its alcohol sales space after it was caught selling too much drink.

A report from the board's licensing standards officer said a visit to the shop in June found double the shelf space allowed given over to alcohol and, she said, when asked about it she was told it was to 'cash in' on the Euros.

The officer also reported staff in the store giving false names on two occasions during checks as well as having to step in and stop alcohol being sold to customers who she feared could be buying it for underage drinkers.

She also said staff were unable to produce paperwork proving they held a licence to sell alcohol or had been through required training.

At a meeting of the board today Alastair MacDonald, representing the shop, asked for a five week continuation of a decision over the application to allow him a chance to train

staff at the store himself and ensure they were compliant with licensing rules and understood them.

Board convenor Lachlan Bruce raised concerns that the shop had only held its alcohol licence for a matter of months when it was caught breaking the rules in June.

Local councillor George McGuire also voiced concern telling the board "That corner of the High Street has become a magnet for young people hanging around."

However the board agreed to allow a five week continuation to give Mr MacDonald an opportunity to train staff with the licensing standards officer saying they would carry out additional visits to the shop during the period and report back.

Speaking about the sale stopped during a visit, the officer said in her report to the board: "I asked why he (the staff member) was about to put the sale through without asking for ID, at which point one of the young men immediately left the shop and the other became aggressive saying he had ID.

"He then left after being advised there were other ongoing issues. In my opinion it was clear that this was potentially a proxy sale and challenge 25 should have been conducted for both customers."

The case will be brought back to the next board meeting at the end of November.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter