

Musselburgh husband and wife issued written warnings

A husband and wife restaurant team have been issued with written warnings after repeatedly failing to pay licence fees on time for more than a decade.

Idris Khan, who owns the Shish Mahal in Musselburgh, missed the annual deadline for paying 12 years in a row.

His wife Rakhsana, who is the owner and licence holder for nearby The Stand, has also paid its fees late since taking it over in 2014.

A meeting of East Lothian Licensing Board heard from the couple's agent Alistair McDonald that there was no excuse for the late payments as he apologised to the board.

Mr McDonald said he himself had put this year's deadline in his own diary to ensure he reminds the couple to make the payment on time.

The board heard payments had been made for the Shish Mahal licence after deadline every year since 2012, despite reminders being sent out with delays of between two days to 41 days before payment was made.

Its licensing standards officer pointed out every delay created additional work for the board's licensing team who have to chase up missed payments.

And she said every year when the deadline was missed the

restaurant would be selling alcohol without a licence until the payment was made, adding to the breach of its conditions.

The board was also told that The Stand, which has lain disused since it was taken over by Mrs Khan has retained its licence but also made payments late every year.

The board agreed to issue written warnings to the couple over both premises warning failure to pay in time this year would lead to more severe action.

Councillor Lachlan Bruce, chairperson, said: "I do not think (paying the licence fee on time) is a difficult ask and it is the law.

"People make mistakes but to continue missing the deadline suggests a disregard for the licensing regime."

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter