

Popular Edinburgh nightclub forced to close for a month

A popular Edinburgh nightclub is being forced to close for a month after a series of license violations, including a violent incident involving staff and admission of under-age patrons.

Councillors have suspended the licenses of Garibaldi's, a popular student spot located on 97 Hanover Street, for one month, meaning it cannot trade.

And, for four months after it reopens, it will be forced to shut at 1am, rather than its usual 3am. Further, its capacity will be permanently limited to 135, down from its current 180.

Police in attendance at a licensing board meeting on Monday, 24 March read out a series of incidents to assembled councillors, all having taken place this past winter.

In one incident, a patron was allegedly held up by one member of staff and struck repeatedly in the face by another, with the patron then falling to the ground and covering their face.

One of the two staff members was later arrested and charged in connection with the incident, with the matter being reported to the Procurator Fiscal.

And in several other incidents, it was described how numerous underage people had gained entry to the venue.

In one case, a 17 year old girl was found severely intoxicated by police around 3am outside the club, having been ejected by staff.

And in another, it was described how police found a 17 year old boy inside who attempted to pass off a friend's ID as his own, despite the fact the photo 'did not resemble him'.

After a search, his provisional license showing his real age was found, and he was removed from the premises.

Police also reported numerous incidents where Garibaldi's staff did not know the premises' safe occupancy limit, and where the number of patrons in the venue appeared to exceed this amount.

A legal representative for the club in attendance said that the door staff at the venue had entirely been replaced since the incidents took place.

And Sebastien Ossywa, one of the club's owners, told councillors over a video link that he was exploring the purchase of an ID scanning device to help catch fakes, as well as stronger policies on ID checks.

The lawyer for the venue had proposed a month suspension to officers during the meeting, saying that it would allow staff to be retrained, especially in the area of checking IDs.

Councillors agreed with this suggestion, and added the additional conditions of four months of limited trading hours and a reduced capacity.

The reduced occupancy limit of 135 is the one that was recommended by the council's building standards officers in 2008, when the property gained its current licence.

Garibaldi's did not respond to a request for comment.