

East Linton gala gets licence for drinks tent

Police have called for a fence to be erected so children cannot see adults drinking alcohol at a village gala after it was given the go ahead to sell booze.

East Linton gala, in East Lothian, applied for a licence for a drinks tent at this summer's event which will be based at the finishing line of an annual over-18s hill race which is linked to the traditional family day.

However Police Scotland asked for screening to be put in place to ensure children at the gala could not see the grown-ups drinking in an outside area on the day.

East Lothian Licensing Board instructed its Licensing Standards Officer to work with the gala organisers and police to come up with a screening solution for the event in June as it approved a licence to sell alcohol at the event.

Last year East Linton Gala was refused permission to serve alcohol after the board ruled it was a 'predominantly children's event' and should not be licensed.

However organisers, who had argued the event was for all ages, said the ban led to fewer adults attending and those who did bringing their own alcohol.

The village green, where the gala is held, is exempt from local bylaws barring drinking alcohol in public on gala day meaning people were able to drink without any designated area

provided.

At a meeting of the board members heard from the Licensing Standards Officer that after the licence was refused there was some promotion of a Bring Your Own Bottle approach to the event locally with claims there would be a 'Pimp your Prosecco' tent on the day.

Haydn Thomas, from the gala association, told the board no such tent had been at the gala on the day and that the decision by some attendees to bring their own alcohol had caused issues for organisers who were faced with a lack of control over where people drank and litter problems.

He said following last year's event, the association had looked at how to ensure the drinks tent could operate alongside the children's events with serving times restricted to after the main parade and linked to the annual hill race which was for over-18s.

The gala, which is in June is attended by around 400 local residents and described by organisers as the county's 'smallest' one held in the village's War Memorial Park.

The licence was granted with the decision over screening delegated to the board clerk to oversee.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter