

Village shop bids to have alcohol licence renewed

A village shop which was barred from selling alcohol just before Christmas two years ago is bidding to have its licence reinstated.

The Premier store, in Gifford, was ordered to stop selling booze by East Lothian Licensing Board in December 2023 after it was claimed the premises manager was not a 'fit person' to operate it.

At the time the board's licensing standards officer raised concern about staff at the store, training and a lack of management oversight.

Next week the board will hear an application from a new premises manager Prasanth Baskaran to take over the shop and introduce alcohol sales again.

No objections have been lodged by Police Scotland however the licensing standards officer's report raised continued concern about the operations at the store.

In it she says the former manager remains landlord of the shop and during a visit to it last month staff appeared not to know who their new boss was.

She adds: "I asked the staff member if Mr Baskaran worked at the shop and was told no. He said he was one of three staff members who lived together at the rented property Gifford (at the address of applicant given).

“Currently I’m concerned about the applicant’s apparent lack of involvement in the premises.”

Despite concerns the officer adds the shop is the only convenience store in the village and the application is compliant with the Licensing Act.

By Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter