

Beach snack van wins over the doubters

A snack van given a one year licence to operate at an East Lothian beach has been told it can stay for three more years after operating without any incidents.

Markos Akgum applied for the temporary extension to his planning permission to operate the van at Shore Road car park, on the John Muir Way at Belhaven, Dunbar.

The original one year permission was granted in December 2021 but the van itself did not begin operating until August last year.

Initially it drew 17 protests from local residents who raised concerns about litter, road safety and one councillor at the time describing placing it on the John Muir Way as "sacrilege".

However planning convenor Cllr Norman Hampshire, local ward councillor, said at the time the snack van, which is powered by batteries rather than a generator and uses compostable cutlery, would be a welcome addition for people who visit the beach and walk the John Muir Way.

He told protesters: "A lot of people are not fortunate to be able to buy a house close to the beach and they would enjoy the opportunity to walk down there and enjoy a cup of coffee."

The application to extend the temporary planning permission for the snack van for another three years received no objections from either Dunbar or West Barns Community Councils although concerns were raised the van had not been operating during the peak summer season.

Mr Akgum told planners problems with suppliers had caused a delay in the launch of the van at the car park.

West Barns Community Council noted the van was 'well managed' and earlier concerns about litter were no longer an issue as they supported the extension.

Dunbar Community Council also supported an extension but asked that it be reduced to just one year for further monitoring pointing to its delayed opening.

Granting the extension for the full three years, planning officers said: "Whilst the snack van has not operated for a full one year, it had operated for a sufficient period of time to allow its impact to be assessed.

"As no concerns have been raised there are no sound planning reasons why planning permission should not be granted for the siting of the snack van for a further three years."

by Marie Sharp Local Democracy Reporter

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Snack van at Shore Road car park, Belhaven