

# **Bookshop café avoids closure after councillors grant appeal**

**An Edinburgh bookshop café has avoided being shut down by the council amid a planning row after councillors agreed it is “supported by the community”.**

Krem Karamel was threatened with closure after operating without the correct planning permission in place for the past year.

After converting the premises on the corner of Inverleith Row and Elidon Street from a sports shop to a café, the new owner failed to submit an application for change of use.

Permission was sought retrospectively but refused by council planners who raised concerns about ‘cooking odours’ from the hob and oven disturbing residents.

However, an appeal – which included nearly 100 letters of support from locals – has proved successful, with the decision overturned this week by councillors who found there have been “no complaints whatsoever” about smells.

The Inverleith coffee shop’s owner Didem Aysem Dogru said in a letter to the council that the business was a “start-up with relatively little resources” and he had a “lack of understanding of local planning regulations”.

He added: “As direct and objective evidence of the benefits

that our café brings to local amenity, we have received 62 letters of support signed by neighbours and local residents in support of our café.”

Mr Dogru urged councillors on the planning appeals committee to remember they had the “livelihood, and indeed passion, of a sole trader” in their hands.

He said since arriving from Turkey several years ago he had “invested time, commitment and of course a good deal of money into making this a successful and worthwhile enterprise”.

As the appeal went before the committee on Wednesday Cllr Hal Osler said planning was a “blunt tool” and that members had the option to “support a venture that is working, that hasn’t had any issues so far and is actually supported by the community”.

Planning officer Ken Tippen noted the council had received a further 37 letters of support from local residents and customers in advance of the appeal meeting.

Cllr Jo Mowat said: Mowat: “It’s a question of how the equipment in there is being used. At the moment we have a situation where whilst the concern is about a potential impact on amenity, there is a positive impact on amenity as testified by 62 letters . That’s the evidence we have in front of us.”

The committee agreed to grant planning permission for a restricted class 3 use, which will allow the café to use a toaster, panini machine, soup tureen and a microwave. Councillors said the owner would need to write to the planning department to obtain permission to use any other kitchen appliances.

*by Donald Turvill, Local Democracy Reporter.*

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