

Eas Mor Ecology, Kildonan, Isle of Arran.



Statement to accompany application for planning consent for accommodation for staff working at the existing café.

Background:

The applicant has been working for many years now to make the 40 acre Auchenhew glen at Eas Mor accessible to people with limited ability who would otherwise never be able to appreciate the therapeutic benefits of being out in a relatively wild forest. The centrepiece at Eas Mor is the spectacular waterfall dropping down into a ravine. Over the years, a basic log cabin with a turf roof was built, using windblown timber from the 1998 storms and this has now become a library and small interpretation centre with an ecological theme (consent ref 01/00785/PP). The project is a perfect example of recycling, with nothing being removed from the site and everything re-used for construction.

Eas Mor Ecology Limited, was set up to manage the affairs of the estate and was granted charitable status on the 7th September 2004 (Scottish Charity number SCO35805).

Paths have been built on which it is planned that battery-powered scooters will be used, powered by the Eas-mor hydroelectric power generating system (consent 05/00110/PP). There are also plans, under the same consent, to construct an Ecology Centre (The Eas Mor Hub), which will give the site accommodation and facilities for a number of disabled guests. Further shelters and a café were granted consent (17/01027/PP and 23/00682/PP) and the café began operation in 2023.

Eas Mor already receives in excess of 30,000 visitors a year.

The Proposals

Since the café began operation earlier last year, it has been difficult to attract and retain staff, given the relatively remote location, restricted public transport and limited amount of accommodation available locally. As mentioned above, when constructed, the 'Eas Mor Hub' will provide accommodation for staff, but the construction of this facility is still some time in the future. To address the problem in the meantime, two static caravans have been located in the field in which the 'hub' will eventually be located. These are to the south-eastern edge, immediately behind the hedge which divides the field from the existing café area. This application is to secure permission for the temporary location of these caravans for a period of five years to allow time for the work on the hub to commence.

The provision of temporary accommodation was discussed at a pre-application meeting with Mr N McAteer on 24th July 2023 who advised that as everything was ancillary to the established business, they should accord with the provisions of the adopted LDP and therefore be acceptable.