

Collieston Against Council Cuts (CACC)

In April Aberdeenshire Council announced their intention to close the public toilets in Collieston at the end of summer – unless an alternative could be found.

We think the decision was wrong, lacked knowledge of Collieston, its importance to the wider Aberdeenshire community – and that it should be reversed.

The Council say that they are faced with a need to reduce costs and the decision is based on the poor condition and low usage of some toilets. They also say that having public toilets is not a statutory obligation but a discretionary one. However, not all toilets across Aberdeenshire are to close, and in fact some are to be significantly improved. Some toilets NOT earmarked for closure have already had complete refurbishment – despite being in close proximity to potentially available alternative toilets. **Collieston has NO other publicly available toilets - the decision making process was extremely flawed.**

Aberdeenshire Council has outlined a number of priorities which conflict with the intention to close toilets. Aspirations to improve and enhance opportunities for mental and physical health and wellbeing, social inclusion, as well as improving tourism opportunities would all be severely affected. Closing the toilets would also result in the loss of Collieston's blue flag status, and also penalise some of the most vulnerable members of the community.

The Community Council wrote to all the Formartine Councillors stating a number of reasons why the decision was a wrong one and to ask for it to be overturned. The Community Council agree that the building is in need of improvement, but that is due to a lack of investment and neglect by the local authority over many years. Collieston is an extremely popular visitor destination year round and we refute the Council's claim of low numbers. A meeting with Council officials and the Community Council looked at alternative ways of continuing the service. To date the Council have suggested –

1. A community run facility. Volunteers would clean the toilets and the Community Council provide cleaning materials and consumables. The Community Council would require appropriate insurance cover for volunteers. Aberdeenshire Council would pay £1200 per annum and also pay for utility bills and maintenance. They would also make regular checks to ensure the toilet was cleaned to a satisfactory standard.
2. A comfort partnership. This is an agreement made with a local business who agree to provide toilet facilities to the public with no obligation to purchase. The Comfort Partnership grant is up to £2000 per annum or pro rata. The business owner would be responsible for the building, fixtures and fittings.

The Community Council have made Aberdeenshire council aware of the many volunteer commitments, and have rejected both proposals. If you agree that the Council need to think again, you can write to your local Councillor or to Alan Whyte Head of Property and Facilities Management (contact details overleaf). The draft template can also be used if preferred but please include your own address/contact details or it will not be considered.

Allan Whyte
Head of Property & Facilities Management
Woodhill House
Westburn Rd
Aberdeen
AB16 5GB

alan.whyte@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Councillor Rob Merson
40 St Mary's Drive
Ellon
AB41 9LW

cllr.r.merson@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Councillor Isobel Davidson
Chapel Howe
Ardlethen
Ellon
AB41 8PF

cllr.i.davidson@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Councillor Richard Thomson
2 Overhill cottages
Blairythan Terrace
Foveran
AB41 6AX

cllr.r.thomson@aberdeenshire.gov.uk

Councillor Gillian Owen
Feu Cottage
23 Schoolhill Road
Ellon
AB41 9AH

cllr.g.owen@aberdeenshire.gov.uk