

# Toilet Provision in Moray

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**moray**  
council

Good evening everyone, for those of you who I haven't met, my name is Colin Bell and I am the Environmental Protection Manager with Direct Services. Thanks for providing us with a slot in tonight's meeting. It is greatly appreciated.

So, myself, Jane and Dawn are here to give you an overview of the management of the public toilets in Moray. I will start the presentation by giving a bit of background on the toilet closures before handing over to Jane and Dawn who I understand will give a bit of history on toilets, take you on a whistle stop tour of toilets around the globe, and provide some innovative examples of non-traditional ways of managing toilets.

# Introduction

- Requirement for council to provide a balanced budget.
- Difficult and painful decisions therefore have to be made.
- Consultation “Bridging the Gap 2018” sought the communities views on decisions to be made



Every year the council has to set a balanced budget for the following year. Like most councils we are operating under severe constraints, the main ones being increasing demand for services, increased inflation, reduced funding, limited power to raise own revenue. Painful and extremely challenging decisions are therefore necessary.

- Proposals in the “Bridging the Gap” document reviewed – equality impact assessment.
- Proposal modified to one toilet to remain in each area
- Proposal to close further toilets subject to the introduction of CATS and other options to deliver the necessary financial savings.
- Delegated authority to grant licences for toilets that remain serviceable – community events but full cost recovery.

As part of the consideration of savings for 2018/19 the original proposal relating to public conveniences was reviewed to take account of the potential equality impact assessment and feedback received from the 2018 "Bridging the Gap" document. This prompted a change in the proposal at the time to close all public conveniences to one toilet in each area, resulting in the closure of 12 toilets.

List of toilets that are remaining open / closing.

Licenses for toilet facilities that remain serviceable, on terms which ensure full cost recovery have been granted for community events.

# Toilets Closed July 2018

Buckie - Strathlene Beach Car Park & Town House, Cluny Terrace

Craigellachie – Fiddich Park

Cullen – The Square, West Beach

Findhorn – Middle Block, the beach

Forres – The Leys

Hopeman – East Beach

Keith – Mid Street, Reidhaven Square, St Rufus Park

List of toilets that are remaining open / closing.

Licenses for toilet facilities that remain serviceable, on terms which ensure full cost recovery have been granted for community events.

The provision of toilets is not a statutory requirement; however it is recognised that public toilets are important for anyone who wants to access public spaces. They are especially important for older people, families (especially those with young children), those with disabilities, visitors and tourists.

Given the ongoing significant financial challenges facing the council, it is now necessary to give serious consideration to other options for managing the remaining toilets. The council will therefore continue to work with communities and businesses to consider appropriate alternative options for managing toilets.

Over to you guys....

# Toilets remaining open

Aberlour – Alice Littler Park (Operated by Community)	Fochabers – East Street
Buckie – Newlands Lane, Buckie Harbour	Forres – Grant Park
Burghead - Harbour	Garmouth – Playing Field
Craigellachie – A95	Hopeman – Harbour
Cullen - Harbour	Keith – Regent Square
Cummingston	Lossiemouth – Esplanade
Dufftown – Albert Place	Portnockie – Harbour
Elgin – Cooper Park	Rothies – Off New Street
Findochty – Edindoune Shore	Tomintoul – Back Lane
Findhorn – West Block, The Beach	

# **Toilet Provision in Moray**

Jane Martin & Dawn Brodie



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“to pee or not to pee”

# Background of Public Loos

- Monkey closets were the first public toilets and they were invented by George Jennings who installed them in the Retiring Rooms of The Crystal Palace for The Great Exhibition at Hyde Park in 1851.
- When the exhibition finished, the toilets were to be closed down. However, Jennings persuaded the organisers to keep them open, and the toilet went on to earn over £1,000 a year
- The Victorian era saw the rapid introduction of toilet facilities for public use in town centres, parks and other public areas.
- Public toilets have existed on UK High Streets for more than 150 years **but there is no legal requirement for local authorities to provide toilets.**

1. Jennings' public toilets caused great excitement as during the exhibition, 827,280 visitors paid one penny to use them; for the penny they got a clean seat, a towel, a comb and a shoeshine. "To spend a penny" became a euphemism for going to the toilet.

3. This was in an effort to alleviate appalling health problems associated with both open sewers and standards of public behaviour.

4. With public service budgets under pressure, the closure and rationalisation of public toilets is increasingly been seen across the UK. A BBC Freedom of Information request in 2016 found that nearly 2,000 facilities have closed in the last 10 years across the UK.

Daily News for Local Government across Scotland article on 8 August Stated that more than a third of public toilets have closed across the UK in the past 20 years

## **Fun Fact**

Why women often have to queue for the loo !

Only when women are provided with twice as many places to pee is equal provision approached assuming everyone takes the average time!

Have you ever wondered why it is that when you are at the cinema, theatre or large scale event women queueing for the loo is an accepted part of the experience,

well there are two contributing factors:

Men often have more facilities for urination than women – although toilets may have the same floor space women have cubicles and men urinals which take up less space so there are often more of them

It takes a woman longer to use the toilet than a man – around 90 seconds to use a cubicle and around 45 seconds for a man using a urinal

There are a variety of cultural and biological reasons why women take longer including anatomy, dress, menstruation, concern of infection, continence and overall mobility.



# Future of Public Loos

- Public toilets are still a big topic of debate because there seems to be a decline in public toilet provision – are they really disappearing or is the way public toilets are provided changing?
- Traditionally local authorities have provided public toilets, usually staffing them to ensure they are well maintained and safe - but this seems to be changing with different models of provision popping up including community toilets and comfort schemes run in partnership with businesses and other organisations.
- Now people are looking for different standards of toilet provision e.g. fully accessible toilets with baby changing facilities, more sophisticated hand washing and drying facilities.

Sadly we can't always provide this modern facilities in the current buildings although many communities have modernised public toilets and looked at alternative usage, which will include the public loo aspect.

# Public Toilets Around the World



The Cold Water Island Tourism Conference held on Arran last year heard a very innovative approach to the provision of toilets in rural areas of Norway.

It is all about place on the 18 National Tourist Routes through the Norwegian countryside where the experience has been enhanced by innovative architecture and thought provoking works of art designed at viewpoints and rest areas.

The facilities are becoming destinations in their own right.

# Unusual Toilets



The Sanisette is a self-cleaning public restroom, first pioneered in Paris. After a patron exits the restroom, "a wash cycle begins inside the toilet, and the toilet fixture itself is scrubbed and disinfected automatically." The washing process takes 60 seconds.

Kawakawa, New Zealand, Hundertwasser, Austrian-born New Zealand artist and architect who also worked in the field of environmental protection spent the last 25 years of his life in New Zealand, The only building he completed there was this public toilet

Apparently The most beautiful toilet in the world, also in New Zealand

# Toilet Pods



Toilets in the colours of France in Oslo

Urinal in Japan

Pop up Toilet London - The toilets, invented and sold by the Dutch company UriLift for around £45,000 a pop, are usually installed in areas full of pubs and bars: places which get lively on the weekend but don't have a particular need for public toilets the rest of the time.

Councils often invest after complaints of late-night public urination in an area: see [Guildford](#), for example, or [Westminster](#), where a local councillor said of the practice: "The pop-up loos are a further step in our campaign to tackle this menace and to provide people with an acceptable alternative".

# Less salubrious toilets



Bale of straw somewhere

New Deli India

# The Sexiest WC on Earth



Apparently the sexiest public loo on earth is in Lisbon!

Challenging the conventional notion of what a public restroom should be, The Sexiest WC on Earth is a new concept bathroom designed by Renova, located in Lisbon at Terreiro do Paço square.

Simultaneously a design and gift shop, a place with creative music ambiance, design and art combines to offer a unique ambient of comfort, joy and wellbeing.

The Sexiest WC on Earth offers the perfect balance between the private and common areas. Literally, the common area is a transparent territory with an exclusive community washbasin.

Guests are invited to select the colour of their own toilet roll from the wall display at access corridor and insulated individual cabinets, seamlessly cleaned, work as a shell or cocoon, with walls covered by 1000's of pieces of wood.

How social can a public restroom be? You will have your own answer

# Examples of toilet provision Scotland



Starting with some examples over the border in Aberdeenshire

New Deer and Methlick – Council pays for some of the costs - £100 a month

Community Pays for insurance and is responsible for opening and closing and keeping them clean – Council can inspect standard of cleaning. Council – repairs and maintenance ...

Volunteers and paid staff...



# Thinking out of the closet – Comfort schemes



Comfort schemes – usually an agreement with a local business where they agree to the use of facilities during opening hours with no obligation of a purchase. Owner responsible for upkeep and cleanliness. Aberdeenshire currently offer - £2k per year. Moray not offering money ...

Suitable for large numbers? Workmen? Long term this is dependent on business staying open!

# Community Run Toilets Scotland



**Portpatrick Harbour Community Benefit Society**

In 2016, the community in Portpatrick (Dumfries and Galloway) launched a community share offer to raise funds to support their bid to buy the local harbour and breathe new life into it.

Portpatrick's public toilets became an unstaffed facility in the summer of 2016 with the loss of three local jobs and reduced opening hours when the local authority (Dumfries and Galloway Council) withdrew their support.

Portpatrick Harbour Community Benefit Society (CBS) has agreed to take on the toilets from the Council and adapt the building to provide much needed harbour facilities including toilets and showers.

They have secured an initial fee of £25K from the Council to take them on and are working with their local Third Sector Interface to identify sources of funding which will help them to realise this next phase of development.

CBS said “Purchasing the harbour, for the benefit of the community, has enabled us to go on and provide a wider range of services as part of the redevelopment. The know how has enabled us to turn an uncertain situation, the future of the public toilets, into a win for everyone, the community, visitors and the local authority.”

Portpartick website - <http://www.portpatrickharbour.org/>

Contact: – [info@portpatrickharbour.org](mailto:info@portpatrickharbour.org)



## Biggar Community Toilets

South Lanarkshire Council (SLC) decided to close all its public toilets in 2015 and indicated that it may be interested in proposals which would enable any premises to remain open.

Community Groups in Biggar came together to form a Working Group (WG) to see what could be done.

The group recognised early on that linking their plans to a charity could be beneficial so they agreed with the Trustees of Biggar Theatre Workshop (BTW) that they would operate as a sub-committee. The WG approached the LA which agreed in August 2015 that the group would operate the toilets for one year on a nominal lease of £1.

The WG carried out an options appraisal and prepared a plan for how the toilets would operate on a viable basis as a social enterprise. They use automated door locking which is adjustable so opening and closing times can be varied and cleaning is carried out twice daily on a contractual basis. Capital costs of £15,000 were envisaged at the outset with annual running costs estimated at £15,000 making a budget for

year 1 £30,000.

Donations were invited and grant applications made to the Biggar Common Good Fund and Clyde Wind Farm raising £18,400. The toilets re-opened in May 2016.

Two locally based cleaning firms share the daily cleaning duties. Volunteers manage the accounting, empty the slot machine which collects 40p for each visit; make daily checks and provide flowers/plants inside and outside the toilets.

The WG arrangement was reviewed after the first year and as things had gone well it was agreed to continue with the arrangement. The income from the slot machine door contributes to the running costs, businesses and individuals continue to make regular donations by standing order, there are collection boxes around the town and the entry charge has recently been increased from 20p to 40p.

Volunteers make regular checks on consumables, tidiness and security and circulate regular updates to supporters, through social media and email. CCTV has been installed in the entrance way to enhance security.

The Working Group advises other groups to go ahead and “Do it too”, adding “you need a small group who will actually deliver to make it happen and keeping the community involved ensures their support.”

Biggar Community Toilet /Contact: [info@biggarcornexchange.org.uk](mailto:info@biggarcornexchange.org.uk) 01899 221555



**Arisaig Public Toilets**

Local outrage at The Highland Council's decision to close the toilets in Arisaig village at the height of the 2011 summer season resulted in Arisaig Community Trust (ACT) taking on the responsibility from July 1st 2011 for keeping them open.

Negotiations with The Highland Council took almost two years, with Arisaig Community Trust finally taking legal ownership of the public toilets on 28 May 2013.

The running costs were approximately £6,000 a year, they put together a funding package to maintain and, hopefully, upgrade them - local

Fundraising was organised

They also installed wall-fitted donation boxes in the toilet vestibules, together with a 'story' of the community road to ownership. This was important to both raise awareness of the fact that Arisaig public toilets are community-run NOT council-run, and raise some funds towards refurbishment.

An eco-refurbishment of the whole toilet block was agreed. Plans included installing a

solar-powered hot water supply, water-efficient cisterns, high quality energy efficient lighting and hand driers, and easily cleaned wall and floor coverings. An upgrade of the accessible (disabled) facility has been carried out

At the outset, the Trust received offers of support from the business community, including the provision of new dispensers, an ongoing supply of paper consumables, a free deep clean of the premises, and the supply of renovation materials – some at cost, and some donated.

The toilets are cleaned 364 days a year and a salary above the living wage is paid.

Currently someone unlocks every night and opens again in the morning, but electronic opening is being considered.

Arisaig's advice to other groups is absolutely yes, you should go ahead and take on toilets but speak to the local authority first about their Comfort Scheme as they may be able to support you, also, if you can, find a friendly local lawyer to do your conveyancing and finally see what other support can be gleaned from other businesses, both locally and further afield Arisaig Community Trust website [www.arisaigcommunitytrust.org.uk](http://www.arisaigcommunitytrust.org.uk)

## **When is a toilet not a toilet !**



## **Luckenbooth Coldingham**

The genesis of the project was the threatened loss of the village Post Office late in 2009.

This precipitated a proactive community effort to retain the Post Office – a vital part of the village infrastructure.

As is always necessary where fragile rural infrastructure is concerned, the community effort involved a number of partners, including the Community Council.

The idea of using the present toilet building for the Post Office, together with a group of other village functions was formed.

Coldingham Sands Community Company was set up, the aim of the project is not only to secure a future for the Post Office, but in recognition of the importance to the village of tourism, by taking advantage of the on site presence of the Post Mistress, to include a range of functions including interpretation, visitor information, retail, a coffee shop and updated public toilets which will provide a focus for visitors and villagers alike.



## **You're in Al's**



## **Pino's Peeeeza Elgin**



You're in Al's – Public toilet converted into a taxi office and Barbers Shop in Ellon

Pino's Pizza converted to Pizza parlour

Community Storage (Christmas Lights)

# Next Steps

## How can Community Councils help?

**DTAS**

<http://www.dtascommunityownership.org.uk/sites/default/files/Public%20Toilet%20Publication%20Final.pdf>

**British Toilet Association**

[http://www.btaloos.co.uk/?page\\_id=728](http://www.btaloos.co.uk/?page_id=728)

We have had a light hearted presentation around the use of public toilets, but we understand that this is a serious issue for communities in Moray and for individuals with medical conditions, not forgetting the tourist and visitors that flock to see our beautiful area

Community Councils can support groups or volunteers in their communities to look at alternative community run facilities.

Community Councils can also take on the lease and organize volunteers, a simple change to the constitution and review of your existing insurance will allow you to do this.

We are all here to help if you are interested and would like further advice or assistance Dawn, Colin and I are happy to help