

Ashfield School

From: Alisa Raeburn  
Sent: 02 September 2019 09:52  
To: Tyre, Susan  
Cc: Hendry, Douglas; Sneddon, Cleland; Philand, Dougie; Russell MW (Michael), MSP; O'HARA, Brendan; Taylor, Sandy; Graham Walker; Kate; AlkaFoster; David and Louise Logue; Bernie and Liz Swan; Tim & Margaret Lister; Kerrie Grant; Andy Grant; Terry Wright; Colette Benham; Steve Benham; Mcneilly, Yvonne; John Jackson; Tanya Jackson  
Subject: Ashfield School

Dear Ms Tyre

Thank you for sending through the Consultation Report on Ashfield PS. I am writing on behalf of the Achnamara Village Hall Committee.

It is very disappointing that yet again, the Council have ignored the community's request in relation to the school building. We have asked that the school be mothballed for a further period to allow us time to develop our plans to help our community grow and thrive. You cannot fail to be unaware of all of the following work and activity by our community:

1. Securing a SLF grant to undertake a feasibility study into acquisition of forestry land to develop housing, a community hydro and new marine facilities.
  2. Securing a CARES grant to explore a community hydro scheme
  3. Ongoing discussions with Forest Land Scotland re acquiring an area of c100Ha of forest to support our aspirations
  4. 2 community surveys identifying plans and aspirations for development
  5. Support from our Councillors, MP and MSP for our plans
- This is all a huge amount of voluntary time and effort invested in our community by its members. Your proposal to close the school without giving the community due time to explore options is unjust and unnecessary and will significantly impede our plans.

As we have said previously we accept that in the short term, children should be educated at Tayvallich School or Lochgilphead School. Should we be successful in achieving what both the Council and the Government declare to be their stated objectives of growing rural populations, especially of young families, we would like the option of considering re opening the school in the future. This is NOT an unreasonable request.

If the grounds for closure are based purely on financial grounds, then the community could look to lease the school from you during the period of mothballing with a view to it providing office space for a Development Officer. This would remove all financial burden from the Council.

If at the end of the period of mothballing, there is no demand for a school then this matter could be considered again by the Council.

I can confirm on behalf of the community, as evidenced by the 2 surveys we have undertaken, that the community DO NOT WISH to take over ownership of the school building in the long term as it will not provide the facilities we require in the location we require. It will not be a community hub. Please remove all references to this in the report

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that is going to Councillors and Education Scotland as it is misleading and false. We do have ambitious plans for our community but they do not involve the school building for anything other than a school.

Please ensure that this email on behalf of our community is put in front of all Councillors attending the meeting this week to discuss this.

Thank you

Alisa Raeburn  
Chair - Achnamara Village Hall Committee