

SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 - ACHALEVEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the Community Services Committee on the current situation of Achaleven Primary School, and invite Members to agree to the recommendations outlined.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

The report recommends that the Community Services Committee:

- a) Agree that Achaleven Primary School continues to be mothballed on a temporary basis and the School premises be retained on a care and maintenance basis.
- b) Agree that Officers should start the pre-consultation process and produce an Options Appraisal paper for the March 2023 Committee meeting for a decision in relation to the future of Achaleven Primary School.
- c) Note that there have been no requests to use the building since 2021, however if any do come forward they would be considered in the light of the current condition of the building, and any recommissioning works required.

SCHOOLS (CONSULTATION) (SCOTLAND) ACT 2010 - ACHALEVEN PRIMARY SCHOOL

3.0 INTRODUCTION

3.1 The Community Services Committee on 21 June 2021 agreed that Achaleven Primary School be mothballed on a temporary basis. There are no pupils attending Achaleven Primary School in August 2022. There are no children of pre-school age registered for Primary One at Achaleven School in session 2022-23. However, there is one deferred registration for a P1 pupil anticipating attendance session 2023/24.

4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Community Services Committee:

- a) Agree that Achaleven Primary School continues to be mothballed on a temporary basis and the School premises be retained on a care and maintenance basis.
- b) Agree that Officers should start the pre-consultation process and produce an Options Appraisal paper for the March 2023 Committee meeting for a decision in relation to the future of Achaleven Primary School.
- c) Note that there have been no requests to use the building since 2021, however if any do come forward they would be considered in the light of the current condition of the building, and any recommissioning works required.

5.0 DETAIL

5.1 It is proposed that Achaleven Primary School buildings be retained on a care and maintenance basis

5.2 As there are no registered pupils at the commencement of session 2022/23, it is proposed that a preliminary assessment of options regarding the future of the

school be undertaken by way of an Options Appraisal, in accordance with the preliminary requirements of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*. Should the school subsequently be considered for formal closure, a statutory consultation process in accordance with the 2010 Act will be necessary.

- 5.3 The school roll at Achaleven Primary School has been small over a number of years. In June 2021 a group of Primary 7 pupils moved to secondary school, and the remaining families chose to place their children in alternative schools. There are no Primary 1 pupils registered to attend Achaleven in session 2022 / 23. However, there is one deferred registration for a P1 pupil anticipating attendance session 2023/24.
- 5.4 At that time, all members of staff from Achaleven Primary School were redeployed in other posts within the Authority.
- 5.5 The mothballing of a school is a temporary closure. It does not require a statutory consultation to be carried out as it is an informal non-statutory measure. It is appropriate where the Authority considers that a school is not presently viable, but do not wish to close it immediately in order to assess the prospects of the number of pupils in the area increasing to the extent that the school should be re-opened in the future.
- 5.6 The Scottish Government's Statutory Guidance on the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*¹ stresses that this flexibility to close a school for a temporary period is not used to undermine the requirements of the 2010 Act to consult on all closure proposals. Mothballing is only appropriate for a temporary period, should be subject to at least an annual review and, in most cases, should last no more than three years in total.
- 5.7 As no pupils are in attendance at Achaleven Primary School in August 2022, it is recommended that the School is mothballed on a temporary basis until June 2023. In the intervening period, officers intend to monitor the situation and gather information in relation to the preliminary requirements with regard to rural school closures under the 2010 Act. In particular, this process will look to identify and assess the various options that are available regarding the future of Achaleven Primary School. The findings of these investigations will be presented to the Committee in the form of an Options Appraisal.
- 5.8 In the event of a sufficient number of school age pupils seeking to attend the School, the school may require to re-open at the next appropriate session. In this eventuality a further report would be brought before members.

6.0 CONCLUSION

¹ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/schools-consultation-scotland-act-2010-statutory-guidance/> (See Paragraphs 63-65.)

6.1 It is proposed that Members agree to the Education Service to begin gathering the necessary information, carry out the exercise of assessing the options for the future of Achaleven Primary School, in accordance with the preliminary requirements of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010*.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Policy – None

7.2 Financial – If the mothballing of the School is agreed, there will be costs associated with the upkeep and maintenance of the School premises.

7.3 Legal – The provisions of the *Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010* will subsequently apply if the Authority later decide to formulate a proposal under that Act in order to determine the future of Achaleven Primary School.

7.4 HR – None

7.5 Fairer Duty Scotland

7.5.1 Equalities – None at present

7.5.2 Socio-Economic Duty – None at present

7.5.3 Islands – None at present

7.6 Climate Change – None

7.7 Risk – None at present

7.8 Customer Service – None at present

Douglas Hendry - Executive Director with responsibility for Education

Councillor Yvonne McNeilly - Policy Lead for Education

For further information contact:

Wendy Brownlie, Head of Education: Learning and Teaching
Wendy.Brownlie@argyll-bute.gov.uk

Annette Trevelyan, Education Officer
Annette.Trevelyan2@argyll-bute.gov.uk