

Argyll and Bute Council
Comhairle Earra Ghàidheal agus Bhòid

Executive Director: Douglas Hendry

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Achaleven Primary School

Dear Consultee,

Review of Education Provision Notice and Summary of Proposal for closing Achaleven Primary School Schools Consultation (Scotland) Act 2010

Background

Argyll and Bute Council, through its Education Service, aims to realise ambition, excellence and equity for all.

The Council is consulting on a proposal to close Achaleven Primary School. This notice provides a summary of a proposal that you may have an interest in or are required to be notified of, giving you key information about the proposal.

The Council is conducting a public consultation process. This will commence on 31st August 2023 and will conclude on 27th October 2023. This is the period within which you will be able to make written representations to the Council in respect of the proposal. If you wish your view to be taken account of in the consultation exercise you must submit your written representation within this period. This notice and summary provides further information on where a full copy of the proposal may be obtained or referenced and also advises on how you can make written representations to the Council.

The Council will hold a meeting where officers will be able to provide information on the proposal. The details of the public meeting are contained in this notice and summary.

It is important that everyone we are consulting tells us what they think of the proposal. Please read this notice and summary and then consider the contents of the proposal document. You can then tell us what you think of the proposal by making written representation and/or by attending the public meeting. This notice and summary tell you how to do that.

The Proposal

It is proposed that education provision at Achaleven Primary School be discontinued with effect from 31st May 2024. The catchment area of Lochnell Primary School shall be extended to include the current catchment area of Achaleven Primary School.

Reasons for this proposal

This is considered to be the best option to address the reasons for the proposals which are;

- Achaleven Primary School has been mothballed for two years. The school roll is currently zero, and is not predicted to rise significantly in the near future.
- Along with several other rural Councils, Argyll and Bute is facing increasing challenges in recruiting staff. At the time of writing there are 16.29 fte teacher and head teacher vacancies in Argyll and Bute.
- Whilst the school is mothballed, the building is deteriorating with limited budgets for maintenance.

The Council's education strategy - Our Children Their Future

Together we will realise ambition, excellence and equality for all.

- Raise educational attainment and achievement for all,
- Use performance information to secure improvement for children and young people,
- Ensure children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed,
- Equip young people to secure and sustain positive destinations and achieve success in life,
- Ensure high quality partnership working and community engagement,
- Strengthen leadership at all levels.

Alternatives to the Proposal

The following alternatives to the proposal were considered at the preliminary pre-consultation stage of this process;

- a) Re-open Achaleven Primary School,
- b) Continued Mothballing of Achaleven Primary with the pupils zoned to either Lochnell or Dunbeg Primary Schools,
- c) Close Achaleven Primary School and realign its catchment area to Dunbeg Primary School,
- d) Close Achaleven Primary School and realign its catchment area to Lochnell Primary School, (the Proposal).

Written representations may be made on those alternatives as well as on the proposal.

Written representations on the proposal may suggest other alternatives to the proposal.

What will we do?

We will consult with people by:

- Providing a notice of the consultation and a summary of the proposal to the relevant consultees **this is that notice and summary**
- Placing an advert in the local press
- Putting information on our website <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/school-consultations-and-proposals>
- Holding a public meeting to explain the proposal
- Ask parents, carers, children, young people, teachers, support staff and others to tell us what they think of the proposals.

What to do now?

- Please read the full proposal document
- Please attend the Public Meeting which will be held on Wednesday 4th October 2023 at 6.00pm in Achaleven Primary School.
- Let us know what you think by:

Letter to: Education Services
School Consultations
Argyll & Bute Council
Argyll House
Alexandra Parade
Dunoon
PA23 8AJ

Returning the attached response sheet by post or by;

Email to: argyllhousereception@argyll-bute.gov.uk

What next?

Whilst the Council is engaging in a consultation process in relation to this proposal that does not mean that the proposal will go ahead. It does mean that the Council is engaging in a consultation process to seek your views on the proposal.

All the points raised during the consultation will be carefully considered and Elected Members will then decide if the plan should go ahead.

If the suggestion goes ahead, any children from Achaleven Primary School catchment area would be educated at Lochnell Primary School. Children already attending Dunbeg Primary School would be able to continue at this school.

Please note that this summary document is for convenience only. Full details of the consultation can be obtained from:

- Council Headquarters, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll, PA31 8RT
- Education Offices, Argyll House, Dunoon, Argyll, PA23 8AJ
- Lochnell Primary School, Benderloch, Oban, Argyll, PA37 1QS
- Dunbeg Primary School, Dunbeg, Argyll, PA37 1QF
- Connel Village Hall, Lora Rd, Connel, Argyll PA37 1PA
- Oban Library, 77 Albany Street, Oban PA34 5AL

It is also available electronically via our website:

- <https://www.argyll-bute.gov.uk/school-consultations-and-proposals>

Yours faithfully,

Douglas Hendry
Executive Director with responsibility for Education