



Portobello Community Council

Gareth Barwell,
Waste and Fleet Services Manager
City of Edinburgh Council

To: gareth.barwell@edinburgh.gov.uk
CC: Councillor Lesley Hinds, Maureen Child, Mike Bridgman

28 August 2015

Dear Gareth,

I write on behalf of Portobello Community Council regarding the planned closure of the public toilets at 82 Joppa Road.

In the absence of any lease agreement with Lothian Buses to maintain public access to the toilets at Joppa, and since no local business to date appears interested in the council's Community Toilet Scheme, I am writing once again on behalf of the vast majority of local people who responded to our consultation to indicate their objection to the closure of this facility.

I am aware that the toilets are due to be closed from Monday 31 August and that this is therefore a matter of urgency.

With regard to the information we have about the closure, would you kindly acknowledge the following:

- The validity of the usage figures that informed this decision is questionable - the survey was undertaken off-season, when the beach and promenade would naturally be quieter.
- The condition reports that were taken into consideration have not been made public making it impossible to accurately compare the facilities. The Joppa building is relatively new and the solar panels were installed in 2003.
- The Joppa toilets were selected for closure on the basis of having received 196 responses in the council's consultation, third behind Hawes Pier (383) and Middle Meadow Walk (377). However, council officers did not include the 304 responses submitted by Portobello Community Council.
- The timescales the council have set are totally unrealistic - The closure decision was announced on July 8 with closure scheduled for 31 August. How could a community group realistically be expected to put in place the arrangements for alternative provision in that time?



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- The closure of the Joppa toilets will have a negative impact on visitors to Edinburgh's Seaside. The council needs to invest in Portobello Beach to help the community realise its enormous potential, building on the initiatives that are already happening, such as our successful rowing and sailing clubs.

Perhaps you would like to come along to the promenade tomorrow to see one of these events for yourself? The Big Beach Busk, now in its sixth year, attracts thousands of visitors and is just one of many events that take place throughout the year.

We want to build on our successes of recent years but we can't hope to attract more visitors to Portobello unless we are able to offer basic facilities.

Keep Scotland Beautiful, who administer the Seaside Award that we have proudly held for four successive years, make it clear that toilet provision is required to cater for the MAXIMUM number of visitors at any point and that this provision should be available all year round.

It is in everyone's interest that we should retain this award and indeed it would be a major embarrassment to the city if we were to lose it.

I therefore request that you reconsider the decision and, at the very least, postpone the closure of this facility to allow for proper consideration of alternative options.

Yours sincerely,
Geoff Lynn
Chair
Portobello Community Council