



COLINTRAIVE AND GLENDARUEL DEVELOPMENT TRUST

Cleland Sneddon, Executive Director
Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Argyll PA31 8RT

cc. Donald Walker, Kilmodan School Parent Council,
Michael Kaufmann, Colintraive and Glendaruel Community Council
Councillors Alex MacNaughton, Bruce Marshall, Ron Simon
Jim Mather, MSP, Alan Reid MP,

1st November 2010

Dear Sir,
Proposal to close Kilmodan Primary School

The Colintraive and Glendaruel Development Trust wishes to register its opposition to Argyll and Bute Council's proposals to close Kilmodan School in the Clachan of Glendaruel for the following reasons:

- The proposals do not improve the educational standards for the pupils of the school in any way.
- The proposals commit the children to a school journey of over 45 minutes: which by the council's own standards is unacceptable.
- The proposals critically undermine the economic, social and cultural viability of the Clachan of Glendaruel and therefore the community.
- The proposals create a division in our community, and do so without regard for the electoral and physical boundaries between Colintraive and Glendaruel.
- The proposals have not been made in consultation with the statutory community bodies.
- The proposals were not preceded with any attempt to engage with the community on alternative arrangements to closure as the act and guidance indicate.
- The proposals, which have been put forward for discussion on 2nd November by the council, state in point 8.1 the note that the council decided to go ahead with the consultation process on the 2nd November. This contradicts statements made in letters to parents to all three schools. In our view this undermines the credibility of the whole consultation process.

Our specific points with regard to the proposals are as follows:

- The school roll, which has always fluctuated over time, will see a significant increase over the next ten years as work by the development trust creates employment, affordable

housing and social cohesion in Colintrave and Glendaruel Development Trust. We are also unconvinced with regard to the statistical analysis that the council uses in its proposals with regard to falling numbers of pupils at the school. According to our reading of the Scottish Government reports we believe the falls in school roll are significantly overstated by a factor of 10.

- The school building is fit-for-purpose, and will most certainly be utilised by our organisation over time as a venue for interactions with young people in our community.
- While we see the present facilities for physical recreation as being perfectly adequate for the health and well-being of pupils of the school, we are committed to improving these. As recently as August 2010 a working group was established to look at creating a building for the community on the sports field.
- In our view the young people at Kilmodan do not suffer from a lack of peer interaction. This is not only because the school make great efforts towards cooperation with other schools and involvement in Cowal-wide initiatives, but because the community has also made provision for ongoing and valuable opportunities in this area.
- The size of the school is no barrier to delivery of the Curriculum for Excellence, indeed HMIE has praised small schools all over Scotland for their approach to this. Kilmodan is no exception.
- The school provides an extraordinary breadth of experience and skills in the learning professionals and specialists they employ. In our experience, Kilmodan School has seen a marked diversification of teaching experiences for the children, and we have encouraged this, not only with plans for establishing a forest school, but in projects which will engage the school's pupils still further with their environment and community.
- The community use of the school building has been hampered in recent times, not only by the renovation works carried out by the council but the desire by community organisations, including ourselves, to ensure that the changes being effected by the head teacher are not disrupted by additional demands on the building and her time. During the last year there have been several community uses which may not have been recorded, from the sale of market garden produce to members of the community to the creation of a School Café as part of the Curriculum for Excellence – in both cases raising money for charity. We anticipate that during 2011 the building will increase further community use.
- We note the tables on the financial impacts of this proposal, and should the consultation on this proposal go ahead, we will be asking for a much more detailed breakdown of the financial background of this element.
- With regard to the value of the property at Kilmodan for other uses, we have noted the presence of protected species in the fabric of the building and question whether the building would be useable in any form other than as a school given the disruption change of use would occasion. We fear that if the school closes this building would quickly become derelict and have a further deleterious impact on the Clachan.

- With regard to the statements in 5.4 and 5.5 we would point out the following:
 - The Development Trust has over the last two years formulated a strategy which will provide for increased housing, increased employment and increased social sustainability in the long term. This strategy depends upon the presence of a school in the clachan as a locus for young people, and to provide an incentive for working families to move here. Had the council properly considered all alternatives to school closure they would have found in the Development Trust a ready partner for devising innovative and sustainable ways of maintaining the school, its function, the facilities it offers and its potential use by the community.
 - We do not consider the argument that previous development has not increased the school roll as pertinent given that these previous building completions will have been for retirement or for accommodation.

It is our opinion that these proposals are untenable and will not deliver improved educational facilities and opportunities for the children of our community. We therefore adjure the council to discard these proposals, and we invite representatives of the education department to our community to discuss the alternatives to closure that we are convinced will sustain Kilmodan School and its neighbours in the years and decades to come. The Development Trust would be delighted to facilitate such an initiative.

Yours sincerely,

Charles Dixon-Spain, Chair
on behalf of the Colintraive and Glendaruel Development Trust

Please reply to: Dunans Castle, Glendaruel, Colintraive, Argyll PA22 3AD

Please note: Michael Russell was not party to any discussion of this issue by the board of the Development Trust and takes and supports no view on it.

The Colintraive and Glendaruel Development Trust is supported by:



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