

Abernyte Primary School
Community Drop-In Session
26 October 2017

**Overview of comments received at Community
drop-in session and Online Questionnaires**

Online Questionnaire Feedback

23 questionnaires submitted online – 20 were completed, 3 partially completed

- 26% (5) of responses from parents, 5% (1) were from the other family members, 26% (5) of responses were from neighbour, 32% (6) were from the wider community and 11% (2) responses were from other.
- 4 people gave no indication of their relationship to the school
- 6 questionnaires were submitted without any comments
- 6% (1) of responses preferred option 2, 18% (3) of responses preferred option 3 and 76% (13) preferred option 4
- 6 questionnaires submitted gave no indication to their preferred option
- Questionnaire closed on 10 November 2017

Online Questionnaire Feedback

Option 1 - Do nothing

Comments

- To do nothing is not an option, unsustainable and not stimulating.

Online Questionnaire Feedback

Option 2 – Consider mothballing the school – pupils moved to Inchtute Primary School

Comments

- The mothball option would be a possibility however a substantial cost would be required to maintain the mothballed school in the hope that more pupils moved to the village, which is a very remote chance.
- Social interaction with more children at a larger school. I see how behind my daughter is compared to children the same age.

Online Questionnaire Feedback

Option 3 – Consider closing the school – pupils moved to a neighbouring catchment school

Comments

- To invest the funds in a local sustainable, growing modern school, instead of falsely subsidising a school with such a small, and reducing headcount
- The school has become too small to attract further pupils. It has no nursery and no after school club, resulting in Parents having little choice but to request placing their children in other local schools which offer these facilities, or utilise private schooling. There is a distinct gender imbalance in the current school role. The immense cost to the public purse of continuing to operate the school is preventing investment of these funds into larger community schools, with better long term prospects. The modern approach to schooling is fewer "super" schools with adequate funding and modern facilities. This negates the other options.
- Lack of children wanting to attend the school. Looking at P1 pictures in the Courier I felt that with no P1 or P2 at the school, should the area be extended any children joining next year would be isolated from children their own age, as existing P3 would be in P4 and not a very good situation for younger children just starting school. It would be a pity to lose the school as it is used on occasions for adult social activities, but weighing up the costs and in my opinion lack of social interaction for the children, despite what appears to be an excellent level of education; I feel that the children's needs should be at the forefront.

Online Questionnaire Feedback

Option 4 – Catchment area is reviewed to determine whether this would increase the school roll sufficiently to ensure the future sustainability of the school

Comments

- Educational benefits of the current school arrangement at Abernyte PS are worth keeping, i.e., Curriculum for excellence is about children developing the skills they need for their learning, life and work. The Abernyte children are developing these skills in a rural setting where they live and in time may need to work continuing family work life styles. If the school closes it sends a message that rural life is unimportant, rather than showing the importance of diversity. The school provides a nurturing environment which takes full account of the context the children are living and learning in. The school is enabling the children to become confident and effective contributors as they are very successfully involved in leading their learning and in decisions about the school. It is very effective because of the small school numbers which does not always happen as well in other schools. The children live in a rural location and benefit from learning enabling them to be responsible for the environment they live and currently learn in. Their community is rural and a very different context from children living in towns. Learning experiences at Abernyte are building children's resilience which is a must to successfully live in such a rural setting and be prepared for future life and work. Learning experiences are relevant and purposeful suiting and fully taking account of the unique aspect of rural living as well as widening the children's horizons through a wide range of well-planned learning experiences with peers in other schools and from across the authority. This rural context for life and learning cannot be replicated or fully understood in a bigger school out with their rural community. The children will lose more than they gain if moved out of their community to a larger school nearby. Reviewing the catchment area could enable other children living in this rural setting to attend Abernyte to develop relevant skills for learning, life and work preparing them to take their place in society either in a rural or any other setting. If the catchment is reviewed and more children travel to Abernyte savings on transport could be possible.
- Both Errol and Inchtire schools have been extended to accommodate the pupils coming from new housing areas in the Carse. With more building planned I believe it would be cost effective to change some catchment areas (also Kinnaird, Rait, Kilspindie etc.) to Abernyte. My children went to Abernyte from Kinnaird and received an excellent, child centred education. The school also serves as a much –needed village hall for the local community.
- Because the school is the heart of the community and it would be a shame to lose it.
- I went to Abernyte Primary and it was a fantastic school and the heart of our little community. Inchtire primary is full and it is shameful that children from our community are allowed to go to Inchtire rather than support Abernyte. There are plenty local kids, extend the catchment area and save our school! Thanks.

- This is the only Community building in Abernyte and its loss will be keenly felt. This option retains the possibility of a viable school and community resource for the future. All the other options will ultimately result in the loss of this building to the community.
- Education of acceptable standard; Schools already overflowing. Maybe if you expanded the catchments earlier (while all the other schools were getting expanded/renewed) you wouldn't have had this problem.
- As an ex teacher at Abernyte, I believe in the value of a small school environment education, pupils from a school such as this leave with a huge sense of self-worth, reliance on their own abilities and confident, having had many opportunities to shine within a valued and supportive environment.
- We have to stop losing schools like AP to the failing institutions that are large schools. I am able to see first-hand what becoming a faceless, exam number does to a child and by closing this school you will be condemning these children to that fate. I am not able to offer this kind of education to my own child but I feel so happy that it's the life for some. Be different and do everything you can to keep this wonderful little school open.
- (1) It is efficient use of existing resources: the council should look at the mid-to-long term school capacity requirements for the entire Carse area and utilise Abernyte School to relieve the pressure on school places in the Inchtute/Errol areas. Abernyte School is a well maintained, high achieving school and is ideally placed to help manage the mid/long term capacity requirements of the growing Carse region. To further expand the Inchtute/Errol schools would require capex approval, which is in short supply. (2) It supports the Curriculum for Excellence: Abernyte is consistently rated highly by inspectors, offers an excellent standard of education, produces confident individuals, caring members of the community and is a shining example of how rural schooling should be delivered. Music, arts, caring for the environment, caring for the community, health & wellbeing, teamwork, charitable activities are all promoted as much as excellence in academic subjects. Individual pupil requirements are met to ensure all are successful learners. All pupils have the opportunity for personal achievement and independent thinking is encouraged. The ethos and life of the school is amazing and there are absolutely no educational ground on which to choose the other options (all of which effectively mean the school closes). A decision to expand the catchment area needs to be taken as soon as possible to safeguard the future of this brilliant rural school located in the expanding Carse district.
- All other options mean that the school closes, which is a massively short-sighted decision in an area of P&K where population is growing and Inchtute & Errol schools are going to struggle for capacity (if this isn't already the case in P1 classes). Concerned parents contacted the council 5years ago to ask for a catchment area review to keep the school at 2 classes. This request was ignored and we are now at a stage where action needs to be taken as soon as possible to attract and maintain the quality teaching staff that Abernyte is used to.
- A school is vital to the strong and vibrant community in Abernyte. This school creates more than well-educated and confident children, it also serves as a hub for many village events that bring a wide population of Perthshire together for family fun and charity raising purposes. This strong community is essential to delivering the curriculum for excellence goals of confident and responsible

contributors in years to come. Attending these events as families and having the community involved in the school sets this good example for the children. Expanding the catchment would bring the small rural communities together of Rait, Kinnaird, Knapp, Abernyte, Baledgarno, improving the future of these areas and maintaining the important age diversity in the rural areas. The well maintained school building could provide much needed spare capacity to remove pressure from Inchtute as this village continues to expand.

- The school is an integral part of the Abernyte community it would be so sad to lose it. We are in the catchment for Abernyte but chose to send our children to Kettins Primary simply because all of our wider family live that direction. If for any reason I needed them to collect them it would be much easier. It is a similar distance from our house to Kettins as Abernyte.
- Inchtute Primary School is overcrowded. Local children are not being sent to Abernyte Primary School because of the threat of closure. The school is at the heart of the community. It serves as the village hall as well as a school. Options 1, 2 & 3 would end in the same result; closure of the school.
- I assume that we would all like to live in a caring and socially responsible society. I am of the opinion that an education process beginning in a fully integral part of a community is a good way to achieving that. In the absence of any other community space within the village, the school provides an essential community resource. Removing children from their local environment, even if it is only to the next village, may have a short term financial cost saving benefit, but at what long term cost. To support my case I would offer a demonstration of such commitment to a local society. On the recent occasion of a non-teaching member of Abernyte School staff retiring, a leaving party was organised. What was unusual about this party was who organised it, and the large number of people who attended. It would be normal for it to be organised by the school staff, but in this case it was former pupils. These pupils, who had all attended the school in the past, progressed on through secondary and tertiary education, had all still maintained an association with the school. One pupil who could not attend emailed best wishes from as far away as Antarctica. In my judgment the case for enlarging the school catchment area is long overdue.

Online Questionnaire Feedback

Are there any other options that you would like to propose for the school?

Comments

- Arrangements such as a joint headship for Abernyte with another school, such as Inchtute PS or other local school would also achieve savings and could enable Abernyte PS to continue as a viable school for the community it serves.
- Impact on the children.
- None that I can see.
- It is possible that reviewing the catchment area, and making a large, significant investment in the school in order to provide the modern facilities required by the community (nursery / after school club) could attract more pupils, but at what cost to the other local schools, and should the council invest further public money in a school with such small current pupil numbers.
- What about an option of Inchtute and Abernyte being one school and based on two sites. My understanding is that Inchtute is very full. Maybe P1 and P2 could be based up at Abernyte?
- The school had been the heart of Abernyte for decades and is used by many other groups in the evenings etc. If we lost the school it would be a huge loss for many and annoyingly, I bet it would be converted to houses, increasing the need for a local school.
- No, just to ensure the building is kept for the community.
- Abernyte does not have a village hall; there would be a complete lack of services to this beautiful and historic village in the heart of Perthshire. This would also add resource pressure on Inchtute School where a number of further housing expansions are already planned.
- Please review the population of children in the local area in 12 months, there are currently many planning applications in place and many houses for sale that might improve the number of children wishing to attend in future years.
- Use Abernyte School as an annexe of Inchtute for specific activities such as exercise and other outdoor activities, music tuition, or special needs pupils.

Questionnaires were provided at the drop-in session, the feedback is as follows:

Option 1 - Do nothing

Comments

- It is the heart of the community.
- Do nothing is not viable with no likely increase in numbers of pupils from existing catchment.
- I believe that to do nothing will eventually result in closure. Many families surrounding the area chose to send their children elsewhere as the school is so small. This results in a 'catch 22' situation whereby – if everyone who felt this way sent their children to Abernyte – the school would be much bigger. I think the school/council/community needs to be more pro-active in attracting pupils and widening boundaries would help. Kinnaird is a really close neighbour and perhaps some children from Inchtute would enjoy a smaller school (for example). Closing the school and sending pupils elsewhere would remove the heart of the community and be detrimental to both the local children and the village as a whole.

Questionnaires were provided at the drop-in session, the feedback is as follows:

Option 2 – Consider mothballing the school – pupils moved to Inchtute Primary School

Comments

- Closing or mothballing the school would not help the community or pupil numbers but enlarging the catchment or attracting more pupils by providing additional facilities could save it. Parents may choose other schools because they have breakfast clubs & after school clubs.
- Mothballing by parents would be a preferred 2nd option.
- Mothballing would lead to slow decline in the vibrancy of local community.

Questionnaires were provided at the drop-in session, the feedback is as follows:

Option 3 – Consider closing the school – pupils moved to a neighbouring catchment school

Comments

- Closing the school would affect the village and children are better, happier in a local environment. It is also a waste of an excellent facility

Questionnaires were provided at the drop-in session, the feedback is as follows:

Option 4 – Catchment area is reviewed to determine whether this would increase the school roll sufficiently to ensure the future sustainability of the school

Comments

- Best chance to make a school a vibrant & busy place again.
- As long as (young) people can afford to live in Abernyte I feel there should be a local primary school they can walk to.
- Plan towards catchment change and then re build of school when this becomes necessary in some years to come.
- I feel that this option is the best and most direct way to help the school to grow and support other efforts.
- Widening the boundaries seems the best solution – but convincing families within the boundaries that it is a wonderful experience and privilege to come to a smaller school would help. The school needs to be proactive in talking to and recruiting children in Abernyte who are of pre-school age.
- Lack of pupils in present catchment area, keeping the community together.
- Abernyte School is central to our community, life in Abernyte PS keeps the village alive and the building provides the only meeting place for community events.
- Village community needs a school. Small school education is an excellent foundation.
- Abernyte School is the centre of the community also our daughter had an excellent education here therefore everything should be done to try and ensure the viability of the school.
- This is the only option that may provide evidence for increasing the school roll at Abernyte.
- I was a pupil at this school and I would like other children of the community and surrounding areas to benefit from the same education as I did. It was an incredible start in life and in addition to an excellent education – I feel a strong connection in this community through having been a part of it. It would be a real tragedy if the school was to close. I couldn't have asked for a better primary education.

Questionnaires were provided at the drop-in session, the feedback is as follows:

Are there any other options that you would like to propose for the school?

Comments

- Have a nursery. Have a shared headship.
- Have P1-P3 here at Abernyte. Once the children are 8 they would go to Inchtute PS & continue their education & good sports facilities etc.
- Possibly making the school more useful to the community by providing after school clubs and facilities for community use in the evenings and weekends for events or meetings or community get-togethers.
- Raising funds by using a part of the building as an art centre/café or even an old people home.
- Overall this feels a disappointing and limited range of options. Clever educationalists can, I am sure, come up with bigger ideas.
- Nursery class, after school club and breakfast club.
- Consider using school for “specialist” needs – speech therapy, behavioural, psychologist, resource centre.
- Think the school should take a greater role in the encouragement of people in the catchment area to attend the appropriate school.
- Supplementary resource centre for Carse schools to Balbeggie etc. Providing venue for the many services, educational experiences & problems that can be met in Abernyte and short term contact time. Teachers resource – advisory teachers.
- 1. Educational resource centre for teachers. 2. School for pupils with special needs. 3. Village hall for Abernyte & Kinnaird (because only rural halls are in Rait & Inchtute).

Community Drop-In Session

Drop-in session ran from 3:15pm – 7pm on 26 October 2017.

- 49 attendees at the session
- 39% (19) were from the wider community
- 27% (13) were parents & parents of past pupils
- 14% (7) were other family members
- 8% (4) were neighbours of the school
- 6% (3) were classed as 'other'
- 4% (2) were PKC Councillors
- 2% (1) from the local press

Comments received at the drop-in session

Option 1 - Do nothing

Comments

- Investment has been made in school over years, it is in good condition – to do nothing to keep it in use is a waste of this investment.
- Does not appear to be a viable solution.
- Will not help with predicted continued decline in pupil numbers.
- Does not seem to be an option – even if possible to continue with 5 kids – this is not a complete educational experience for them.
- The school will close if nothing is done.
- Do nothing is not a viable option. The role is not too low to be sustainable – not a good use of a facility, not cost effective, not stimulating.
- Doing nothing is not realistic given the resource situation.
- Doing nothing is in my opinion not an option. Even with another 5 children (ie doubling role) it would not efficiently stimulate the children ref social skills etc.
- I do not consider 'do nothing' as viable – it merely pushes the problem down the line a few years & resulting uncertainty will lead to a drift away from the school.
- Do nothing in my opinion is not an option as the school is a very important part of the community.
- Doing nothing would be a waste of a fantastic asset that could benefit other children and families.
- No-one has a crystal ball. Who knows if the school roll will fall even more? A lot could happen in 5 years.
- While this option may allow the school situation to improve naturally with time, I feel the school roll could be helped to become more viable.
- This is happening now and for the last years. Suggestions about catchments etc have never been supported by the P&K Council. There must be more positive actions.
- I can understand this would not be an option – unless linked with say a year of very creative village + meetings with outside input/consultation, to help broaden the role of the school – breakfast + after school, music lesson, art learning. Support for the area or other specialist activities that might not be available in other local (ish) schools.

Comments received at the drop-in session

Option 2 – Consider mothballing the school – pupils moved to Inchtute Primary School

Comments

- Mothballing – at least this would buy some time for a possible future solution
- If needs must mothballing for a couple of years COULD be an option.
- Seems like a cop out we should decide something. Demography of the area unlikely to change soon.
- This buys time when given the past success of the school – may help find a way forward to increase number of pupils.
- How long could Abernyte School be mothballed before it deteriorates or gets vandalised? An active school is a sign of a vibrant community. If pupils moved to Inchtute Primary School, why not conduct some Inchtute classes at Abernyte?
- If mothballing the building, which is a beautiful building would deteriorate and effectively be closed as a poor building.
- Not in favour of this option – will inevitably lead to closure & the loss of a valuable community resource. Likely to lead to inevitable building deterioration & unfortunate vandalism. Also leads to increased pupil transport costs.
- Inchtute School is at capacity.
- Very poor option that is effectively closing the school.
- Less family time due to doubling journey at both ends of day. Carbon footprint doubled. Days lost due to snow will increase. Too far especially for young pupils. Inchtute is full.
- This option seems to me to be merely a delay in closing the school, and will affect parent's thoughts on school placement.
- Transport to Inchtute = increased pollution.
- Mothballing does not really seem appropriate given that it would likely end in closure if we only have 3 years to 'boost' child numbers ☺ would be fab to keep the school open.
- Please do not or we will be so sad.
- Not an option which would be beneficial to children.
- Not supported by me as a president and parent. There has been a school in Abernyte for 200 years, over 100 in the building. Children from here are successful in their lives. Perthshire is growing. P&K should think bigger and more positively and build upon the success they already have.
- It's important for our Rural kids to keep a sense of community so to have both schools is an important focus for both community.
- Would not be a positive move. No benefit to the community.
- I am new to the community (June 17) and live at the back of the school. I am very aware of the vibrant atmosphere in and around the school – children and

adults and sport/natural learning environment is excellent. It is a real community school and highly valued as such. Mothballing would be on the way to closure. Multiple community use would work. This is a very creative village.

- Mothballing would be the worst option as it would mean the school was not available for either the children or the wider community.

Comments received at the drop-in session

Option 3 – Consider closing the school – pupils moved to a neighbouring catchment school

Comments

- I think that the children would benefit moving to a more vibrant school – social skills, friends etc. It would be a great pity to see the school removed from Abernyte but surely we should be thinking of the children.
- Financially attractive – improve efficiency to boost Inchtute Primary.
- Closing the school would have a very adverse impact on the wider community of Abernyte as it is the focal point of the community. The wider community are very supportive of the school and attend many school activities.
- Damaging to a vibrant community. History is also important; there has been a school here for a very long time.
- Loss of heart of community.
- Would be a huge loss to Abernyte as a community – no place to meet.
- The worst possible option for the community – loss of school & loss of a wider valuable community resource, especially given the building is in relatively good condition. This option should not be taken any further.
- This option for the school denies parents and children in this area choice in their education. I feel it would have a detrimental effect on the local community and may further reduce the viability of the village.
- Abernyte PS has always been a ‘community’ school, which has provided many poised young people who have benefited from the ‘small is beautiful’ ethos. Could Abernyte & Kinnaird children start their education here & only move to Inchtute PS for 2-3 years before they start secondary school?
- I should hate to see the school close. Better idea – children in current catchment attend Abernyte.
- Silly idea. Perthshire is growing. There is building in Abernyte. Neighbouring schools despite some investment are bursting at the seams and further building is expected.
- Not in favour because Abernyte School is a focus for the local community, but if the decision is taken to close this school. Alternative uses for the building should be sought (see other options).
- Consider merger with Collace to preserve ‘village’ school benefits. Village schools have certain unique attributes which schools be preserved across P&K.
- The school is not just a school but the hub of the whole community and therefore should not be closed. Moving children to neighbouring catchment area would be detrimental to their education and could over populate another school.

- The school is the hub of the village. My husband and I only met other residents through my granddaughter attending the school. The school is used for the whole of the village.
- If the school closed there would be nowhere for the members of the community to meet.
- Would like Collace to be considered.
- I don't drive ☹️ no bus service and have a little one.
- Would be very regrettable but if it came to that would there be any future for Abernyte School as an alternative educational premises – special needs or similar.
- Terrible idea! More time on bus for kids. Days lost to snow/weather due to longer journey. Less family time. Loss of community/centre of village.
- No more bike to school days.
- No more walk to school days.
- Increased pollution from transport.
- Closure – no. creative specialist usage – learning support, dyslexic work etc for the whole area preferred.
- This would be very unpopular with Abernyte. Surrounding schools are full or close to full and Abernyte might be considered as overspill for there. Closing Abernyte PS would lead to a loss of identity for children currently attending Abernyte.

Comments received at the drop-in session

Option 4 – Catchment area is reviewed to determine whether this would increase the school roll sufficiently to ensure the future sustainability of the school

Comments

- I believe the only fair action is to make the Inchtute/Longforgan/Abernyte catchment areas shared. This would be beneficial to the large & smaller school & provide more choice to the parents/children. The schools are vital parts of the community & must be protected to ensure life into rural communities.
- I feel that Abernyte Primary School has an important part to play in the life of their area. The numbers at the school would increase sustainably if the catchment area was enlarged and children living on this side of the dual carriageway came to Abernyte.
- I also feel that the children in this area are ‘country’ children and could thrive and be happy in this environment and subsequently achieve better
- The current catchment areas are a real puzzle and have definitely contributed towards low numbers at Abernyte PS. A change would take some years to implement but would be of great benefit to Abernyte.
- Widening the catchment area to include rural communities to the north of the A90 would make sense due to close ties between those communities and Abernyte.
- Slight increase may trigger children within the community elsewhere to consider coming to Abernyte.
- This has always felt obvious in previous conversations however the response has included ‘too difficult’, ‘we need new laws/agreement of Parliament’. Catchment should be reviewed and a long term view taken.
- Catchment area always was a view and could be bigger as one school is full and the other needs more but working together would help solve things.
- This is the best option and we have been lobbying for this for over 10 years. The current catchment is ridiculous. Unfortunately this is all too late!
- If the catchment area could be changed & parents in new area willing to use Abernyte School that would be a possible solution – what area would have to be included to make viable numbers?
- This must be considered along with dual catchment. Consultations should go ahead on this option.
- We love this! Please extend the catchment area! We moved to Abernyte just a year ago as we loved the small community, especially the school!!!! It is such a welcoming school, we have attended so many events here and the staff & pupils are wonderful!
- A great option to explore! Give folk a choice!

- Yes. I think this should be done – creatively.
- Increasing the catchment area would help keep the numbers up, include Kinnaird.
- This is my preferred option but I am unsure how quickly it could bring more pupils to Abernyte if pupils are already settled in other primary schools.
- Keep the school. Bus driver could take children to/from Abernyte – Inchtute for 8-9am slot and after school.
- My daughter has excelled since she has been at the school & I would like my son to go to Abernyte when he's old enough. If changing the catchment increases numbers that would be great.
- Catchment area reviewed. Abernyte & North of the Tay combined. Encourage the 'ten' pupils who go to Inchtute to come to Abernyte. Start a breakfast club & after school club (that's some peoples view).
- This is the best option. This school would provide an amazing education for a whole population of rural children & unite local communities into a tight knit village with a special quality.
- Add catchment area North of the A90 and make the 'added section' a dual catchment for 7 years before it becomes part of Abernyte permanently. This will allow a transition period where parents can choose to send to Abernyte in advance of a permanent change, while allowing those wishing to continue in Inchtute to do so.
- Review catchment. Also have a nursery class to enable good community bonds. Shared headship could bring savings. Living & schooling in rural community builds skills for working rurally later on in life.
- Needs to be a positive choice to come to Abernyte.
- With growth of Inchtute population, may be helpful to have an additional smaller unit – available to Abernyte and all the other catchment areas surrounding.
- Perthshire's population is growing. Schools close by are also full. A successful school and community should be a clear reason for encouraging the school to grow by a catchment change.
- Review catchment – the 'least bad' option & for definite consideration. Opens up several possibilities & would be done in conjunction with considering the school as a wider community resource which can be used for other activities.
- Keep in mind how the school can be used by the community – nursery, somewhere for teens to meet when reviewing catchment.
- Only reason community is behind 'dual' change is because we thought it would be easier for Inchtute parents, but our best option is full catchment changes.
- Perhaps a community enterprise set up to run breakfast/after school clubs for working parents. REVIEW CATCHMENT.
- Would like to see this option go forward. Abernyte needs the school and we should be doing everything to keep it.

- The option to review the catchment maybe a real positive to keeping the school and community alive.
- This would be my preferred option and as more people came and advertised that the school could give excellent one-on-one education.
- Why not include Collace too?
- Review catchment area. Community needs a school not just pupils. We have no village hall.
- Well worth reviewing. Evidence: not easy to gather, but must be possible to increase numbers significantly.
- 240 new houses at the airfield, more planned at Inchtute.
- Make use of everything invested in school so far.
- If you reviewed catchment what would happen to other schools eg. Catchment areas not the same for secondary schools, eg Perth High, Blairgowrie High and Perth Academy.
- Scottish Governments rural schooling!!

Comments received at the drop-in session

Are there any other options that you would like to propose for the school?

Comments

- Open a nursery. Shared head to save money (with another school). After school club to enable working parents to use this school.
- Is a new primary school (public/private partnership) completely out of the question? Again could provide a wider resources for the Carse of Gowrie and Braes of the Carse area.
- Pump in more money – after school club & nursery to avoid use of other schools – if not close school and re-invest funds to boost Inchtute.
- Utilise as a ‘special needs’ centre in some way to give a resource for wider needs in the Carse of Gowrie.
- Nursery. Use school for community events to raise money. Share school clubs in Inchtute. Affordable housing. Increase catchment.
- Better communications for catchment and after school club and a good head teacher driving force, and there is no community hall so we use the school.
- Catchment area as my daughters little girl lives in Ballindean and wouldn't get transport to this school.
- The building is used regularly for a range of community events and its closure would lead to the death of the village.
- Combining Inchtute & Abernyte Schools & have P1/2 at Abernyte or P6/7. Provide school transport for this.
- If possible an after-school club and/or breakfast club would help parents who work in Dundee.
- There should be a bigger bolder strategic long term plan. This feels last minute. That plan should include the importance of supporting successful communities. Primary education is not in isolation.
- Introduce pre-school nursery provision as there is space within the school to do that.
- Please review village population in 12 months – 3 houses currently for sale & 4 new builds planned.
- Dual catchment to use facilities for reducing class size & improving education. Additional support in nursery, after school club would all help viability for working parents.
- Additional needs support centre – access to outdoor areas quiet/safe environment for children with additional needs.
- Maybe to share the school with another catchment like Inchtute and eg. P7 would come to Abernyte and P1-P6 in Inchtute.
- Potentially use the school for other educational uses given its excellent rural location and outdoor space.

- Scottish Education has not improved in the last few years. This could be a great opportunity here, working with schools like Inchtute, Longforgan and Errol. Giving children the choice (parent can decide)/possibility to come to Abernyte and smaller classes. This would then also reduce their class sizes (Inchtute, Longforgan, Errol) and help improve learning (through smaller class sizes).
- Potential option could be 'partial' mothballing – only utilise part of building so that money could be saved?
- Resource for children with 'special needs' – ie, psychologist, speech therapist, behavioural problems etc. sessions for 'extra' educational activities when Abernyte teacher finds difficulty in coping with. Resource area & meeting place for advisory teachers. Utilisation of the wonderful rural environment.
- I am new to the village – June 17. This is a very creative, dynamic village, through the younger families are spread out. The school would and indeed is a central part of the modern community. Could we develop facilities that are not available in other local schools eg a learning support centre – dyslexia, general learning support with materials/resources and advice available from teachers have who could go out to support/advise teachers in the other schools who have children attending part time for the specialist work. Adult poetry, literacy and numeric evening classes/groups/ with an organising committee pulling in specialist as needed. This could lead to performance activities and involve children from all of the schools.
- School exchange scheme? Students currently at different schools get to experience what it's like to attend Abernyte Primary.
- I have made friends & now there family here & I have made hundreds of memories here.
- Promotion. Positive recruitment.
- Change the catchment area.
- A teacher at Morgan Academy – 1990's, early 2000. Said they always knew a pupil from Abernyte as they were confident + more mature than their peers from other schools.
- Maybe Perth council could consider other ways of saving money rather than closing schools. I'm sure small, rural communities are important to governments too – please extend the catchment area 😊
- One option I feel that could help the schools pupil numbers is the introduction of a nursery class. If children go to Inchtute for nursery they move very easily into infant classes.
- Smaller classes can be beneficial to education – promoting this
- Base for peripatetic staff and staff such as education psychology. Base for other PKC rural activities (it is a sound building with ample parking).
- Increase the catchment area pre and after school facilities. This school is the only public place to meet – no village hall.
- Adult education, centre for community rural education, rural resource centre.

- Special education unit where small classes essential. Community hub underwritten by PKC.
- Think of a better way to do this review. Even being on the list is negative for all the schools involved.
- I question number 44 as the no of pupil places there can be here, I suspect this needs reviewed and is in fact lower, as some point schools need a rebuild. The model of school beside/as part of sheltered housing has been successful in other countries.
- Start a nursery class to get children to come.
- Keep a community resource available – perhaps it can be used during the day for retired community members.
- It is essential for the community that the school building continues to be used. Ideas might include (if not a P.S) an educational resource centre, outdoors education centre, special needs hub. The school building is the only community building within the village.
- Consider options for children with special needs eg Asperger's where a small school would be beneficial

Comments received at the drop-in session

How would you describe the community and what are your thoughts on Abernyte Primary School as part of the community?

Comments

- The school is central to the community – friendships formed here have strong foundations and carry on into secondary school and later life.
- Our community is loving & kind. The school is fun & educational.
- The school is a vibrant and essential part of Abernyte. Its community centres around the children who are the future.
- All countries need robust communities. This suits here and should be nurtured by a Council. P&K cannot control Post Offices, shops, pubs, they can support schools.
- Children very much part of the community very caring towards elderly who are welcomed into school on special occasions.
- Lack of children – a. housing – too expensive. B. retired professionals move into area. C. many NHS workers who require after school clubs. D. extremely difficult to appoint staff who are prepared to incorporate all new teaching methods & materials. E. no boys – mean boys now go to Inchtute.
- The school is an important (the only) meeting place for other members of the community – AGMs & potluck suppers – Wine Club – Mary Young lectures – Garden club talks – Community Interest Company.
- Very strong and vibrant community. We all know each other. Many activities together at all levels. A sense of ‘pride’ exists in the area.
- Past pupils stay in the area and are successful. Even the ex-teachers stay in the area. The key annual events all happen at the school. It is the hub. Support to rural communities is an intermittent issue, definitely a Scottish issue. Keeping the school open and helping it to grow could demonstrate such a commitment.
- Many activities take place in the school bring all the parent, grandparents etc together. Strengthening the community.
- Great community to live in.
- Friendly community – school has declined in importance within the community – high input by Headteacher necessary to revive interest.
- Council houses: 3 social housing: 2 years ago 1 was vacant (3 bedroomed family house). Allotted to a couple & their 26 year old daughter – all in work – expensive cars!! No interest in the community. Definitely NOT homeless. Housing dept. very defensive.
- No village hall or other central meeting place. Inchtute village hall always booked. School bookings expensive.
- Very strong community and the school has always been at the heart of that community. The children who go through this school come out as confident,

able, motivated pupils when they move onto secondary school. They give back to the community. Families make the community what it is.

- I would consider Abernyte a viable, vibrant community, every community needs a central focus & loss of the school could have a significantly detrimental effect to the community in the long term.
- The children raised & educated in Abernyte always hold it dear. A fantastic personal education and a real community to instil values in our kids.
- The school helps hold the community together. It's where people meet.
- As an ex-pupil I will be forever grateful for my primary education here and would be desperately sad if the same experience were to be denied future children of the village.
- As a resident of the neighbouring village, Kinnaird, I have always been impressed by the dynamic & creative community that exists in Abernyte. For a small rural area, Abernyte supports a wide range of creative activities. I'm sure this starts with the school and its pupils. Over the years I have seen several of the children grow up to have outstanding educational achievements.
- Abernyte in the 40 years I have been part of it in my opinion always had the school at its heart.
- Abernyte is a small rural community. The school provides a centre and help children and adults have a sense of community. The children in the school are confident in a familiar environment.
- Abernyte School is the centre of a very rural area and is the equivalent of the village hall as well. In the 40 years we have been here it has been the focal point of many activities.
- Abernyte Primary is part of a very dynamic and creative village with many talented people. I am new to the village. I think this creative linkage could be developed massively to mutual advantage. It needs creative thinking and planning – and leading with expert council input, but the future to the whole area could be transformative, educationally, socially, culturally.
- Abernyte School is essential to this amazing community. The school & events held here are the heart of the village. The fantastic charity raising events that are put on often more than 200 people from around the area attend & support these events.
- The school is the only building in Abernyte open to the whole community. Without the school there would no community events as there would be no toilet facilities for events & the playing field. This would have an impact on the whole community and increase loneliness and social isolation.
- Lots of lovely people we would not now have at all without school.
- A. the school is let for approx. 12 bookings throughout the year – residents tend to go to Perth/Dundee for entertainment. B. tenants of farm cottages tend to work in Dundee – children go to 'Granny's' after school.

- The community revolves round the church and the school (the shop closed some years ago) we are a very active community and very supportive of the school – primarily for the children but also as a community building.
- Abernyte community is a rare thing in our modern world. We remain a tight knit & close community looking out for each other. Despite the population aging we remain active & vibrant. The school is a central part of the community & the children involved in almost every community activity/group.
- Although I have no children at the school, the school is central to our lives in Abernyte. We are welcomed to school events which are enormously imaginative and stimulating. The school is central to a very friendly community
- If the school goes slowly the community will die!
- Easy interaction between the age groups begins at school and continues in communities.
- Core of the community.

Comments received at the drop-in session

What do you think are the reasons the school roll is so low?

Comments

- That improved numbers would see more locals bring their kids back to the school.
- There is a lack of affordable housing for young people with families.
- There is no formal advertising or encouragement for people in the catchment area to come to Abernyte. New people moving into the area are not encouraged to bring their children here.
- No boys in the school. School has become too small, no nursery, no after school club for working parents.
- The boundaries are perhaps too small. Catch 22 – parents feel it's too small – if everyone sent their children here that felt this way it would be bigger. Not enough done by the school/community to attract pupils. Aging population, expensive area to live. No new builds. No nursery or after school care.
- Pre-school provision is currently at Inchtute Primary School, which means that children and parents (from outside catchment area) are less likely to consider a move to a different primary school.
- No after school provision could be an issue for working parents.
- No nursery. Catchment is terrible – hardly anyone lives in it! No boys at the moment. Affordable housing is non-existent. After school – kids could get existing bus to Inchtute.
- Very few new houses in area which mean not a lot of young families equals no children. Low school roll.
- Population of the village has aged & everybody moves here for life as it's a wonderful place to live. The young families left have now put children to other schools as the population is low – a change in the catchment area.
- Change in pupil balance eg, no boys.
- Parents think school too small and doesn't have facilities.
- For the past ten years there have been rumours of closure – so parents don't start their children here.
- Lack of affordable housing.
- No after school club.
- Roll is low due to size of catchment, lack of affordable housing, transport issues, lack of child care, after school activities, breakfast clubs etc.
- Lack of social housing. House prices too high for young people. Agricultural practises. Villages turning into dormitories not communities.
- Small catchment area with no other villages included in the Abernyte catchment area. Council houses not prioritized for families to help increase school roll & provide rural life for children.
- Could be a blip. Perthshire is growing.

- School roll is low due to an odd catchment area. Some of the natural catchments for Abernyte are directed instead towards Errol or Inchtute Primaries.
- By chance the population is a little older than new build areas. This will change again in the future. There are new houses going up in Abernyte.
- Too many people use private schools that live in the area. Lack of affordable housing. Incredible lack of forward planning by the council, despite constant reminders from community about what was happening.
- When the council house was vacated by a school using family, it was not repopulated with a family. NONSENSE!!!
- Lack of action/help from council. Parents & community members have been suggesting ideas & options for years & no help at all has been given. Rural communities need to be supported.
- Abernyte itself has changed in demography. If catchment is just immediate area not enough affordable housing for young families.
- Lack of breakfast club and after school activities.
- The main reason I feel that the school roll is low is the small catchment area.
- Private schools for after school clubs as most people ask so if an after school was an option and better communication so people that live around the area.
- There are several families with young children below pre-school age who may want to attend in the future. The catchment area is very small.
- Previously children from outside the catchment area (Baledgarno and Ballindean) travelled to attend the school. If the catchment area were extended it would support families travel to the school?
- No plans for development in the area.
- Mainly because the Council has not supported catchment change in the past
- I think we need new ideas to support schools in rural communities. Schools are important to forge relationships and make communities – not just a collection of people. 1. Look at ways to help families – access breakfast and after school clubs. 2. Interaction between schools and wider community – volunteers to help eg sport, gardening, nature studies. 3. Families moving to area – welcomed and encouraged to visit school. 4. Schools reaching out to community and community receiving it. 5. Groups accessing school outside hours – find it invaluable to have a meeting space in community. What happens if it goes??
- General population not having large families any more not just Abernyte, also farms and estates now are high tech and employ fewer labourers and therefore families. Many people especially mothers travel to work and I suspect perhaps choose a school more convenient to work at start and end of the day. Not certain how relevant this is. I am new here.

Email received:

Hi,

I intend to be there on the 4th if I am able, however if not then I feel I should put my views to you.

We live near to the Village of Abernyte and have 2 sons and

We had hoped to send our children to Abernyte primary, however when we visited the school prior to our year old enrolling, and discovered that even at that stage there were only 8 in the school and they were all girls we felt we could not. He would have been the only new start that year in a junior class of 4 girls. He had been to nursery at Inchtute, and made many friends, and whilst we were more than prepared to take him away from his friends we could only do this if there was a potential to make new friends of both sexes and of his age. This was clearly not going to be possible at Abernyte. We therefore took the decision to place him at Inchtute. This resulted in preventing my wife being able to return to work in order that we could drive him to school and pick him up each day (not to mention the cost of doing so). Since then Abernyte primary has dropped to a single class of 5 girls.

I know that the education is very good at Abernyte; however the cost per student must be astronomical.

As far as I can see there are more staff than pupils, whilst Inchtute has struggled to afford reading books for kids.

This is an emotive subject I am sure, but surely it is time to close or mothball the School, and divert the funds to a successful modern school with great 'new' facilities.

The catchment area of this school was vastly reduced some years ago by the council and that is what triggered the demise in the school role.

There are MORE kids in the catchment area attending Dundee High (primary) due to the fact that their parents work in Dundee and the High School, unlike Abernyte provide an after school club.

With no nursery class and no after school class Abernyte Primary has become the typical Dinosaur.

Email received:

I was not able to make the Community liaison meeting last Thursday at Abernyte School, but understand that I can put forward my views to you direct. I am the Aunt to a P.... pupil at Abernyte. In addition my family will be moving to Abernyte in the next few months with our ..yr old, .. yr old & .. yr old children.

I fully support the option to review the catchment area with a view to expanding it and increasing the roll at the school.

Why chose the catchment area option?

(1) It is efficient use of existing resources: looking at the mid-to-long term school capacity requirements for the entire Carse area, it makes sense to utilise Abernyte School to relieve the pressure on school places in the Inchtute/Errol areas. Abernyte School is a well maintained, high achieving school and is ideally placed to help manage the mid/long term capacity requirements of the growing Carse region. To further expand again the Inchtute/Errol school buildings would require capex approval, which is in short supply. Improving the Abernyte catchment area to include rural villages that currently go to Inchtute or Errol would make efficient use of existing resources.

(2) It supports the Curriculum For Excellence: Abernyte is consistently highly rated, offers an excellent standard of education, produces confident individuals, caring members of the community and is a shining example of how rural schooling should be delivered. Music, arts, safeguarding the environment, caring for the community, health & wellbeing, teamwork and charitable activities are all promoted as much as excellence in traditional academic subjects. Individual pupil requirements are met to ensure all are successful learners. All pupils have the opportunity for personal achievement and independent thinking is encouraged. The ethos and life of the school is amazing and there are absolutely no educational grounds on which to choose the other options (all of which effectively mean the school closes).

A decision to expand the catchment area needs to be taken as soon as possible to safeguard the future of this brilliant rural school located in the expanding Carse district.

Any comments on other options:

All other options mean that the school closes, which is a massively short-sighted decision in an area of P&K where population is growing and Inchtute & Errol schools are going to struggle for capacity (if this isn't already the case in P1 classes). Concerned parents contacted the council 5 years ago to ask for a catchment area review to keep the school at 2 classes. This request was ignored and we are now at a stage where action needs to be taken as soon as possible to attract and maintain the quality teaching staff that Abernyte is used to.

Email Received:

I much enjoyed meeting you this evening and can I congratulate you and your colleagues for the way in which you are approaching your difficult task. Your materials were also very clear and helpful.

I am writing as an Abernyte resident but also as a member of the House of Lords Social Mobility Select Committee until April last year. The Select Committee was naturally immersed in the very issues on which you are advising the Perth & Kinross elected members.

What was clear to us was that action that results in improving life chances begins very early educationally and that the schooling environment in earlier years had a direct and verifiable impact on outcomes. Two aspects of that environment were the built environment of the school and the length of the journey to get to it. In terms of journey time we took very stark evidence that where journey times were longer the reduction in engagement led to poorer outcomes especially among the lower achievers of a cohort. Long journeys to school have a detrimental effect on life chances.

The school in Abernyte is a wonderful example of a built environment of great merit. The pupils in its current catchment area travel very short distances. These are the very ingredients that would promote life chances and good outcomes for pupils.

Accordingly it does seem to me that closing the school and asking the pupils to move elsewhere might have a positive economic result for the Scottish Government/PKC but that could come at a personal cost to those pupils concerned. Only the most hard hearted would not want to explore every avenue to prevent that and indeed take a reasonable alternative path.

The suggestion that the catchment area for Abernyte School is enlarged would seem to me to be that reasonable alternative path. Indeed local geography suggests to me that it is wholly likely that new pupils involved would have a shorter journey and would be able to benefit from the fine built environment of the school.

But the thrust of what I am saying is that the Social Mobility aspects of not only Abernyte School but the whole series of difficult decisions (and what a long list of schools that was) are very much ones that Elected Members should consider alongside the economic ones.

In closing I realise that one of the main reasons that I have taken the time to write is the vibrant spirit and happy tone of the School.