

**Balhouses Primary School**

**Community Drop-In Session**

**7 September 2017**

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

## **Online Questionnaire Feedback**

- 22 Questionnaires submitted online – 17 completed, 5 partially completed
- 55% (11) of responses from parents, 20% (4) of responses from other family members, 10% (2) of responses from neighbours, 10% (2) of responses from 'other' and 5% (1) of responses from the wider community. 10% (2) had given no indication of the relationship to the school
- 6 questionnaires were submitted without any comments
- 53% (9) of responses preferred option 1 and 47% (8) preferred option 3. Responses from 5 questionnaires gave no indication of their preference.
- Questionnaire closed on 6 October 2017

## Online Questionnaire Feedback

### Option 1 - Both schools remain open – consider building a new school at North Muirton Primary School and improve the conditions and suitability at Balhousie School

#### Comments

- My son enjoys being part of Balhousie nursery class and as the numbers are not as much as the larger schools/ nurseries he is able to spend a lot more one to one time with the teachers than he would anywhere else. My opinion is that if the class numbers were any higher the teachers wouldn't be able to have the same bonds with the kids as it would in no doubt get lost. Many of the parents have chosen this school and/ or nursery because of the ability there is for the teachers to progress the kids more with the small numbers they have. My son has come on leaps and bounds since starting nursery and I'm in no doubt that he wouldn't have progressed as much if the numbers were larger because the teachers wouldn't have as some time to spend with each child. The kids love it as there is space for them to play rather than tripping over each other.
- Well established school with strong community links. Generations of families have attended. Historic building.
- My little boy attends nursery at Balhousie and has settled so well with his friends and surroundings. I travel every day from Stanley to bring him to Balhousie and he loves it.
- Children are settled at Balhousie and the travel for some parents they might find it difficult to get there on time depending where they are.
- Because the children are used to the school.
- It's a good long standing school and the children seem to love it.
- Why are you even considering looking to close this city school which is in the heart of an up and coming community again? Are you as a council looking at the smaller outlying schools? Such as Logiealmond, Kettins, Glendelvine. Just to name three, or is this just another exercise by PKC as you have already decided?
- Easy access and prefer my daughter to be at a smaller school as I feel she would be better supported than in a bigger school where she may get lost in the system.

## Online Questionnaire Feedback

### Option 2 - Consider closing Balhousie Primary School and moving pupils to a new build North Muirton Primary School

#### Comments

- Option two would make Muirton 'ghetto-like' in that all schools would be centred there. I do not think that would be good at all for that area or a healthy option for the community. There really should be an option for those pupils not living in Muirton, and so Balhousie is the ideal location.
- What the impact would be on the children and the upheaval and unsettledness it would cause.
- If families wanted their children attending North Muirton Primary School then they would have applied for a place at the start of the child's school journey.
- Do not close Balhousie.
- I definitely believe that closing down Balhousie Primary School would be detrimental to the local area with pupils from Muirton having to travel extra distance to school than currently. This may cause safety issues with children going to and from school. I also believe that children learn better in a smaller class size and smaller overall school size. I feel it is more friendly and personal that all the pupils and teachers know everyone's names.
- I'm completely against shutting Balhousie, I big school becomes impersonal and it's not the kid's opinions that are valued anymore because there is too many.
- None, just keep Balhousie open.
- Keep Balhousie open.

## Online Questionnaire Feedback

### **Option 3 - Balhousie Primary School remains open – expand the provision of other PKC services utilising space within the school for these services and improve condition and suitability. Consider building a new North Muirton Primary School**

#### **Comments**

- My second option would be 3 to utilise the space already in the school but still keep the school open.
- School have good location. It's not huge building like other so kids feels at school like home.
- As a neighbour and retired P&K teacher of a different Primary School, I am proud to see the turnaround in this school and it is obvious to see how hard the Head Teacher and his staff have worked to bring it to the point it is at today. Under no circumstances would I close a school community as good as this one. As there is spare capacity, it could be utilised with other services also under its roof. That makes its physical proximity easier to access, from this area and even the town, without going right into the heart of Muirton or further afield. There is also ample parking for other professionals etc to use.
- Think option 3 is ideal. Keep Balhousie open and utilise it for other services also. Maybe utilise it for older members of the community too somehow eg evening classes etc.
- Balhousie Primary School is a great asset to the community. It is a landmark building of historic importance which deserves to be preserved and sustained in a way that continues to serve the local area.
- My daughter has been at nursery since she was 2 and due to start school next year seen as she's had settling issues I want to keep her in the environment she knows and the staff too I think the school could be utilised more and offer more to local children.
- Balhousie is situated in a good place, North Muirton has a primary school already no point in building another one keep Balhousie open.
- I believe that Balhousie Primary School should remain open as there is definitely a need for 2 primary schools in this area as Muirton and North Muirton are large housing areas with Muirton soon to expand its housing in the next few months which will undoubtedly increase enrolment into Balhousie especially. If there are spare classrooms etc in Balhousie still then these can surely be utilised with other services to ensure full use of the school.
- With the building of new houses in Muirton I feel that putting all these new families plus Balhousie primary pupils and the current north Muirton pupils into one school will lose the personality and approachability that Balhousie currently has. Plus the distance fact has to be factored in. Currently we walk everyday but with north Muirton being further away it's likely that we would

have to drive every day, costing us more and impacting more on North Muirton traffic and parking. With the adding of extra PKC services may bring a fresh new outlook to the school.

- Why would you close a school with a small number of pupils, that has room for more, what happen when all the houses at Muirton are occupied? 200 houses possibility of on average say 100 children! Where do all these kids go to school? People check out schools prior to buying a house! If there is no school in the near vicinity which is easily accessible, which Balhousie is, they will chose to move elsewhere for good accessible schooling! A good school is so important to families! What is it they say school days are the best days of your life! Let's make them in a nice wee school that is accessible to all! Let's close the school prior to the houses being occupied, then when they are, the schools that are in the catchment area are full to bursting! Then let's pay to transport the kids to a school out of their catchment area that does have room! Predominantly most of the kids at Balhousie walk to school, put them to a school further away then you clog up the roads! Fumes, emissions polluting the atmosphere! Also a new school is not built overnight!

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

**Option 1 - Both schools remain open – consider building a new school at North Muirton Primary School and improve the conditions and suitability at Balhousie School**

**Comments**

- My preferred option is for the school to remain open because my son started his education here following our arrival from Poland and he feels safe here. He likes his school and he likes coming to school.
- Option 1 and 3 are very good for my daughter.
- Option 1 and 3 are safe for my child for whom this school is like a second home (a home away from home). A thought about change moves him to tears
- This option is the safest for me and for my children. We live nearby.
- I think it's the best option from the choice given. This is a small school where all children and teachers know each other – it means our children feel like at home. It's especially important for children of migrants, who once again would have to be uprooted and moved. School's closure would be very stressful to them. The children and parents love this school and people who teach here!!! My daughter is so concerned about her school's future!!
- Because three of my children attend this school from the beginning of their school education. They're very happy here and never had any problems; they make friendships here and love their teachers. The biggest asset of this school is the fact that it's so small allowing everyone getting to know each other. Everyone contributes to the unique, fantastic and friendly atmosphere. Also – children are really upset at the thought of closing this school.
- My daughter like this school, she knows this school, this school is not very far from us.
- Keeping Balhousie open is my main concern.

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

**Option 2 - Consider closing Balhousie Primary School and moving pupils to a new build North Muirton Primary School**

**Comments**

- Option 2 is not an option I would ever consider. I cannot imagine moving my son to another school. My son feels strong connection to the school, its teachers and other children. My son is quite distressed already at the thought of changing school.
- I really do not want the school to close. My son finished this school and my daughter has another 4 years to go. Both kids are very happy with the school and so am I.
- Option which I did not choose should not be considered 😊
- Do your renovations and other improvements to school but do not close.
- I cannot even begin to imagine the stress and distress of children who would have to be moved to another school.
- I can't bear the thought of closing this school. This would not be good for our children.

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

**Option 3 - Balhousie Primary School remains open – expand the provision of other PKC services utilising space within the school for these services and improve condition and suitability. Consider building a new North Muirton Primary School**

### **Comments**

- Incorporate St Ninian's into Balhousie and use St Ninian's as a nurture base/youth club.
- New methods – trial as a pilot site
- North Muirton – how old?
- Why: financial gain/Flats/Sewers
- Education and Children's Plan
- Expand on activities as BPS, focus on fitness, art, language, music etc.
- I am resident at Grove Care Home. Would miss coming to this school to visit pupils and vice-versa.
- Don't want to lose community link with school.
- Local community school which could thrive if given the right conditions. Empower Headteacher and resource appropriately.
- Option 1 and 3 are very good for my daughter.
- Option 1 and 3 are safe for my child for whom this school is like a second home (a home away from home). A thought about change moves him to tears.

## **Feedback from questionnaires completed at the drop-in session**

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

#### **Comments**

- (From North Muirton) New build for Balhousie.
- If you were to move other services here – perhaps music or sport activities.
- If you were to move music or art services here, I would be using it – even at a fee. Option 3 would be good for me then.
- More sport and entertainment for children.
- My daughter, through tears, asked if we have any money that we could donate to the school to keep it open. If necessary we can start fundraising and help with schools renovations and other jobs around school. Any improvements however should be done during school holidays.
- Perhaps, to improve school's finances you may wish to consider making improvements and renting space out to other educational meetings or trainings.
- Join the school together.
- Is the school funding not better spent within the classrooms rather than a new building.
- 1 open adult learning centre in the school to encourage parents to develop literacy/numeracy skills. Possibly as an ESL centre. 2 early intervention to 'close the gap' in attainment. Parenting classes/social work/health professionals base.

## **Community Drop-In Session**

Drop-in session ran from 3pm – 7pm on 7 September 2017

- 69 attendees at the session
- 57% (39) of attendees were parents
- 4% (3) were press
- 7% (5) were North Inch House representatives
- 7% (5) were “other family members”
- 19% (13) were neighbours/residents
- 5% (3) were pupils
- 1% (1) a teacher

## Comments received at the drop-in session

### Option 1 - Both schools remain open – consider building a new school at North Muirton Primary School and improve the conditions and suitability at Balhousie School

#### Comments

- Save our school!!
- + A young vibrant parent council who are committed to the school.
- Option 1 – “improve the condition” of Balhousie Primary. Excellent school – should remain open.
- With house building in Muirton there is a good chance that the school population will increase.
- Investing in improving the conditions and also the provision to support learning and learners would make the school more attractive to parents who currently choose other schools.
- I prefer to keep Balhousie School open because: is small and my child feels safe and happy here. Has good scores in education. Nice teachers and staff works in Balhousie.
- History of school – multi generational family history as well as school history.
- Option 1 – Keep both schools and spend some money on necessary things rather than (art!!)!!!
- Option 1 – my son attends this school and my daughter spent all her primary years here. It’s a fantastic school, it definitely needs upgrading – classrooms etc. Great community school!! Multi-cultural.
- I think Balhousie Primary should stay open because it’s a great school and its part of the community.
- New houses are being built in this area, so school pupil roll will increase. Keep Balhousie School open.
- A very high quality of teaching staff.
- The liaison work between P6/P7 and the care homes is so beneficial to both.
- It’s a no brainer. The school must stay open.
- Improve the facilities. Make the playground a vibrant, safe and attractive place to be – sports ground etc. To encourage more pupils to enrol. Yes to Option 1.
- I prefer to keep this school because it is good situated and has history and good climate. My child love learning in this school. Option 1.
- Option 1. Save Balhousie Primary School it’s a beautiful old building. Why spend money on new school when we could restore this school.
- I prefer this option. Balhousie Primary is a gorgeous school full of welcoming staff and pupils.
- Love this school.

- Option 1 a possibility or Option 3. It's a big school and would accommodate more services to make it more a community school.
- I prefer this option. Balhousie Primary School is an old school but with traditions. My daughter loves this school.
- Needs a lot of input and money spent on the school. Please save Balhousie.
- If upgraded – then give 3 or 4 years to see the effect on the school roll. If no change then option 3. Give school a chance to increase roll.
- Save Balhousie because it is a great school.
- 30% of parents are from Polish/Bulgarian backgrounds. No family.
- School roll has gone up (without upgrading) so if upgraded – more pupils.
- Better publicity about how good Balhousie Primary is. How much it has improved over the past few years. A lot of people probably don't know.
- Building is lovely.
- The school is centre of this neighbourhood and has a friendly environment.
- Save the school!!!
- I want the school to keep open!!
- Children (and parents) not treated or considered as “foreigners”.
- Please keep our school as the teachers are nice.
- Don't want new North Muirton as too far to go.

## Comments received at the drop-in session

### Option 2 - Consider closing Balhousie Primary School and moving pupils to a new build North Muirton Primary School

#### Comments

- Option 2 – is this to raise money on back of City of Culture failure bid? Too much money wasted already by P&KC.
- Option 2 – No repeat of Caledonian Road needed.
- Option 2 – Why? Financial gain. Non sensical. No mention of St Johns.
- Option 2 should not be an option. 1. A waste of money. 2. Balhousie would be left for 8 years empty until some idiot decides what to do.....build flats should not be an option. KEEP OUR school.
- 1. Part of the community. 2. Great learning opportunity with small class sizes. Option 2 not an option.
- Option 2. What proportion of parents would have access to their own transport to take their children to and from North Muirton? There is a main road which has a fairly high pollution level if parents were taking this route from most of Dunkeld Road. This could be detrimental to their health and wellbeing.
- Moving kids into a larger building would affect kids hugely as they know all teachers and pupils inside out within the school they attend at the moment. Local kids in the surrounding area have enjoyed the pleasure of Balhousie Primary School for a lot of years and hopefully in the upcoming years.
- Not an option for me. It would be left empty for years and left to rot.
- Don't destroy the heart of the community.
- Option 2 – the school building at Balhousie Primary has extensive playground area and indoor space that could be developed into a community hub. There are very few community spaces in the locale.
- As a local resident it would be helpful to know how P&K Council would develop the site. Would it be sold for housing – a fairly unimaginative but profitable solution but not enhancing the potential for community?
- Save Balhousie School. Perth needs this architecture and history.
- No thanks.
- Do not close such a good school. It is exemplary.
- Don't close.
- All my family for generations have attended this school and I feel very strongly about this. Common sense must prevail. Don't close Balhousie!
- Friends/community would be lost – all going to different schools.
- Wouldn't want the school to close. My daughter came here and she loved it.
- Save the school!!!
- Better playground. Trim trail.

- Larger new build would possibly be an improvement but too costly to run perhaps. I like facilities for nursery attached to a primary school. Grassed area as in days of old recommended.
- Historic building been standing over 100 years -v- a new build school with a 30 year lifespan?

## Comments received at the drop-in session

### **Option 3 - Balhousie Primary School remains open – expand the provision of other PKC services utilising space within the school for these services and improve condition and suitability. Consider building a new North Muirton Primary School**

#### **Comments**

- Upgrading the school would upgrade the class sizes!!
- Don't shut the school!!
- This option for sure. Please give Balhousie another chance to grow.
- Fine school with impressive programme, including music and drama. One idea (expensive) is to refurbish the building to accommodate an Art School/Music School with outside areas for tennis. Athletics, swimming/squash. Dormitory accommodation (where necessary) could be established. Summer school lets established for income.
- Balhousie Primary is a family school and is simply fantastic. It must be saved!! No other option is feasible.
- To keep the school forever.
- Don't close school!!!!
- Option 3 is a good one IF it prevents the closure.
- Option 1 or 3.
- Option 3. It is also a good idea. Improve condition please!
- Option 3. The children also benefit from links with the local community. They sing for residents at Balhousie care home, which teaches the children much, but also helps the residents of the home enjoy life. They have many more links with the community – one of which is carol singing at Asda around Christmas which the staff and customers alike always comment how lovely it is. The proximity of Balhousie to these is invaluable – children can shop at Asda for snacks (nursery, French afternoons etc.) which are a valuable life skill. They are also within walking distance of the museum, concert hall and many more facilities including Bells and the North Inch. Also many of the pupils here walk to school which for many would be impossible if the school were to close and amalgamate with North Muirton. Parents here feel comfortable sending their children to school on foot.
- The spare capacity at Balhousie PS could be used to develop life-long learning and adult literacy, particularly given the number of English as a second language parents.
- Having been at a larger primary school, the differences between that and a small one like BPS are obvious. The teachers have more time with the pupils here and as such it shows in their enthusiasm at school. I know the numbers will increase with the new buildings close by but hopefully the split will be

between here, North Muirton and St Johns. Improving the services at the school would help the pupils and the area.

- Option 3 is also one I would favour. Balhousie Primary School may be old but it is a gorgeous building full of wonderful staff and pupils.
- Option 3 – Balhousie could be the compromise for use if you're determined to build a new school at North Muirton.
- Balhousie remains open, combine St Ninian's and Balhousie. Change catchment area to a larger scale.
- Option 3 – Incorporate St Ninian's into BPS and use St Ninian's as nurture nest. Expand activities at BPS e.g. sports, art, fitness, language, music etc.
- Option 3- Pilot new systems at BPS re: education processes.
- With the building of 209 new houses in Muirton I would rather improve the suitability and put extra services in than close the school as then the new school at NM numbers will be greatly increased, which would impact travel, parking etc.
- From northern district days to Balhousie the school is steeped in hundreds of people's lives and part of the community. Tapping into the community and giving them a place to come. This area doesn't have a community centre.
- The school would be better used for other services whilst all pupils enjoying the school remaining open to enjoy the stability they have with Balhousie teachers and best friends.
- Stick to school – not other services.

## Comments received at the drop-in session

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

#### Comments

- Bring it into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.
- Modernise it and make it part of the community. Make nursery bigger.
- The building could be improved to meet the safety standards which would cost less than building a new school.
- Playground improvements.
- Playground improvements.
- A better playground.
- Outside sporting facilities for kids – especially football.
- Containers from Sports Development.
- Do the repairs. Cheaper than a new build.
- Move pupils from St Ninian's to Balhousie and close St Ninian's. Also do Balhousie up.
- Why not join St Ninian's and Balhousie together and do the repairs. Not everyone can do large schools.
- Combine St Ninian's with Balhousie Primary.
- Fix up Balhousie School and bring St Ninian's here as it's bigger.
- Join St Ninian's with Balhousie Primary in Balhousie Primary.
- Combine St Ninian's and Balhousie. Update interior within remit (listed building). Have a specialist team for disabilities. This will stamp out discrimination.
- Literacy centre. Library – kids (open 3pm – 5/6pm). Extra needs unit. Sensory/nurture room.
- Community is important – keep our school.
- Taking more interest and more improvements (upgrading) of the school rather than spending more money on a new building therefore removing the funds that would be more beneficial in the classroom.
- A dedicated zone for 2 year olds as nursery isn't big enough to accommodate at the moment.
- Not enough people realise just how good this school is – hence it is not at full capacity.
- Keep the school open! Old building with history.
- Excellent facilities for our children. Great library. Great IT room. Big playground.
- Excellent communication between staff and parents. Great old building with very big history.
- Great teachers. Very good location. Give for our children better future.

- Don't want to impact on the "survival" of any other school in the programme.
- Closing Balhousie is a ridiculous idea given the amount of new family housing being built. If the children all end up at North Muirton it will make it a "ghetto" of schools in that area.

## Comments received at the drop-in session

**A large number of catchment pupils attend other schools. What do you think are the reasons for this?**

### Comments

- Lost children to the new St Johns School. But not everyone can do big schools.
- If the school was upgraded I think more people would send their children to their catchment.
- School facilities need to be modernised.
- Poor reputation in the neighbourhood. Resident Muirton Place. Issues: Behaviour, resources, concrete play area. PKC needs to support school more.
- History of BPS over past years no longer applicable eg. Rough school.
- Require better learning support resources.
- People do not realise how good this school is.
- Balhousie remain home. There are new houses getting built means more children. Balhousie is a fantastic large building - so much potential.
- A lot of children do not come here as they want St Johns due to religion.
- Teachers are friendly and care about children. School does need a lot of repairs but will stand longer than new buildings.
- Draw of a new build school – which isn't always better!
- Smaller numbers means teachers better focused – more personable, everyone knows everyone.
- I think this school is cool, so keep it open!!

## **Comments received at the drop-in session**

**What are your reasons for choosing Balhousie Primary School for your preferred school?**

### **Comments**

- Smaller class sizes
- Teacher/parent relationships
- Location
- Choice
- Teachers knowing all children and their needs
- Links with the community to benefit their social skills
- Traditional building
- Generations of families
- Iconic building
- Lots of space in playground and classes
- New builds inferior quality
- Change for 'change sake' is not the answer

### **Ideas given at the drop-in session for a refurbished Balhousie Primary School:**

- More computers. Currently 1 between 2.
- Grass for football and little ones.
- Shelter for outside.
- Soft surfacing in the playground

### **Letter & Comments Received: North Inch/North Grove Care Home**

- This is a letter written on behalf of our residents at North Inch/North Grove Care Home. We have had the children from Balhousie Primary School coming into our home for many years to take part in our Christmas Concert and our residents love to see and hear them. Also for the last two years class 5/6 have been taking part as an intergenerational with our residents which has made a great difference to their lives, they look forward to them coming every week and some have actually formed bonds with their individual 'Buddy', closing the school would be a great loss to our residents and the children. We also have visits from Balhousie Nursery the children all take part in the different activities we have going on; this really lifts our residents moods. When the residents were told about the meeting regarding a possible closure of the school one lady's comments was "they won't think about us when they close the school it's all about them and money". We at North Inch Grove would hope that you do consider our community and our bonds with this school before making a decision.
- We very much enjoy the integrational days with Balhousie Primary School.
- I look forward the children from Balhousie School visits.
- This has made a big difference to our time in North Inch House having the children visits us.
- Having the children in each week give us something to look forward to.