

**Blairingone Primary School**

**Community Drop-In Session**

**21 September 2017**

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

## Online Questionnaire Feedback

- 51 questionnaires submitted online – 39 completed, 12 partially completed
- 7% (3) of responses from parents, 23% (10) were from the other family members, 9% (4) of responses were from 'other', 23% (10) were from the wider community and 39% (17) responses from neighbours.
- 7 people gave no indication of their relationship to the school
- 18 questionnaires were submitted without any comments
- 14% (5) of responses preferred option 1, 8% (3) of responses preferred option 2, 6% (2) of responses preferred option 3 and 72% (26) preferred option 4
- 15 questionnaires submitted gave no indication to their preferred option
- Questionnaire closed on 6 October 2017

## Online Questionnaire Feedback

### Option 1 - Do nothing

#### Comments

- Doing nothing is an option to edit and see the future development in the area. I'm not familiar enough with Fossoway Primary to comment on its capacity to absorb Blairingone Primary.
- I know a pupil at the school and I know the parents are happy with their children's educational attainments. The pupil enjoys that the school is small and has a supportive nurturing atmosphere. There is a proposed new housing development within a site at Blairingone which would support the school.
- The children who are there thrive in the school and would suffer having to travel further to school, especially the younger ones.
- Keep the school open.
- To lose the school would be heart-breaking, my daughter would be devastated and she struggles as she has asd. This would really affect her welfare.
- I am a resident within Blairingone; I am a foster carer and can have up to three children at one time. The school and its reputation is exactly what foster kids need to settle in.
- The status quo is not acceptable because such low numbers do not provide the necessary educational and social interaction in peer groups which are crucial for the successful development of the child.
- I feel that the school remaining open would not be an issue to me but I do feel penalised by wanting a full education for our children but having no access to transport to and from the nearest primary school that can provide that, if the school was closed or mothballed we would have access to a school bus.
- Option 1 - will increase the possibility of closure - not acceptable.

## Online Questionnaire Feedback

### Option 2 - Consider mothballing the school – move pupils to Fossoway Primary School

#### Comments

- Blairingone is our catchment school; our children are .... and .... we live very close to the school. I have enrolled our .... year old in P1 at Fossoway primary and will request the same for his sibling; I couldn't consider a school with such low numbers. I fully believe the educational experience requires peer learning as well as teacher student learning to be a positive and successful process. Attending a school with little or no children of the same age will not help develop vital social skills and I fear the transition to high school would be made much more difficult without these skills. As a parent, I also worry greatly about the A977 and volume of HGVs that travel past the gates of the school at high speed with little regard and very little traffic calming measures in place.
- The closure of the school seems inevitable, there are only four pupils this year and I suspect that the standards at Fossoway will naturally have to be higher because of the needs of the larger community.
- At the moment with only 4pupils. I feel children need to be in larger classes with children of their own age. It is important they make friends which will carry on to Secondary School.
- Closing/mothballing the school would be bad for the overall area, but doing nothing will not address the problem as the overall population of the area is aging.
- Mothballing the school would result in a deterioration of the building with little prospect of it being re-opened.
- Mothballing implies a possible influx of primary age children in the future which is an unlikely eventuality.

## Online Questionnaire Feedback

### Option 3 - Consider closing the school – move pupils to Fossoway Primary School

#### Comments

- The current situation is detrimental to both the educational and social development of the children involved.
- Although Blairingone provides a very nurturing and happy environment for the children, because of its size, there are many opportunities for interaction and learning that aren't available. My main reasons for closure are to allow the children:
  - To have contact and interaction with other children of their own age
  - To better develop social skills essential for future happiness and success at school
  - To get exposure to different teaching styles
  - To receive more teaching time
  - To access better resources
  - To make more friends
- Closure of Blairingone is a very short sighted plan. Costs of transporting children would be a poor option. These are rural children requiring their own rural school.
- There will surely be a cost to the Council if they have to provide transport to and from schools out with Blairingone for local children and it takes them away from the village community
- Would result in any primary school children within the Blairingone area having to travel over four miles to school. Not a great prospect particularly in inclement weather.
- Closing the school I believe is the worst option, the local community has already lost local shops, post office, police stations and I believe this will impact greatly on the local wellbeing as yet another amenity disappears
- Very short sighted to close school when so much potential is offered. With the Development of village, where would children get schooled?
- I believe it would be detrimental to life in the village if the school was closed and thus I do not consider the other options to be justifiable.
- The other options are to close the school it's a very good school why should it close the education of the children should be more important than the closure of the school
- Should not be considered at all
- It would be a real shame to see the school go; this brings a sense of community to the area. Seeing the children go off in the morning and come home at night. The school is required for the redevelopment of Blairingone as this will be a major attraction to the area for families.

## 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

- There are currently plans for housing development around Blairingone which if approved could increase the roll considerably. In addition, there are a number of houses in the area for rent or sale which are family sized properties. The new owners or tenants could have Primary school aged children that could attend Blairingone Primary. Although not a parent, I live in the area and every child I know who has attended the school is articulate, well-mannered and a well-rounded individual. Closing the school without due regard to the potential increase in the roll would be a mistake. Schools once closed do not often reopen.
- There have been plans to build more houses in Blairingone and it would be a shame to close the school. A very short sighted plan. Also, the children we have met in the area have loved the school, thrived there and reached excellent academic standards. All have gone on to secondary school as confident, rounded pupils. To close the school would be very detrimental to Blairingone as a village.
- My sister is happy with her daughter's educational attainments' and although small it has a supportive nurturing atmosphere. There is currently a proposed new housing development within a site at Blairingone which would support local services most notably Blairingone PS and would bring other much needed amenities to a struggling community. Another option would be to increase the catchment area for the primary to Powmill which would potentially also increase the school roll sufficiently.
- There are already plans for housing expansion in Blairingone and this should be expedited.
- Blairingone School has served the community well for many years. It would be a great shame if it were to close now and would certainly have a detrimental effect on anyone considering buying a home in the village, particularly in the light of the proposed development plans for housing.
- Small schools are the heart of rural communities and the children generally do well in a smaller, nurtured class than when they are placed in large groups where any special needs are not picked up.
- Parents/locals enjoy that the school is small and has a supportive nurturing atmosphere support local services most notably Blairingone PS and would bring other much needed amenities to a struggling community.
- To ensure the future of Blairingone community as the school is the only amenity that remains.
- The benefit of the village and the children that attend the school.
- For the benignity of the village and the children that attend the school.
- Good school to stay open and Fossoy is bursting at the seams with pupils.

- A school located in the village was one of the reasons my partner and I bought a house in the village and as the only community amenity left I believe it should be protected.
- The school needs to be kept open for the future of the education for the children.
- The school is the hub of the community. If the new houses are being considered this school is needed.
- The community needs to keep local amenities for local kids.
- This is the only local amenity the village has left, we need to keep it for the community.
- Without a school the village will virtually die as it will be of no interest to potential new village residents. We need more amenities not less!
- The school is an important part of the local community. I sent my own children to Blairingone School; they had a great education, small classes, were able to come home for lunch and could walk to and from school. The school is an extension of the small community we live in and has also been an important part of the village.
- Country schools are a fantastic resource and do a wonderful community job. It is already there so use it! Give local education a chance.
- Redevelopment is in the pipeline for Blairingone, this school would serve the increase in numbers. This is the only local amenity left in the community.
- Members of my family benefited greatly from small local primary schools.
- Increasing the catchment area for the primary to Powmill which would potentially also increase the school roll sufficiently.
- Widen catchment area so children from Dollar and Powmill have a chance to go to the school and provide a bus/ taxi for the children.
- Catchment needs to be widened.
- If extending the catchment area increased the school intake to a maximum level. Then I see that as a feasible option.
- I am happy with the educational attainment provided by Blairingone Primary School as it provides a very supportive atmosphere for learning. This is particularly important at a time when school classes are generally getting bigger. A catchment area review would potentially increase the school roll to ensure that new building plans should they materialize would secure the future of the school within the community.
- Open up schools' valuable education to a wider area. Excellent education at this school.
- We are happy with the children's education and enjoy that the school is small and has a nurturing atmosphere.
- Makes school potentially viable.
- Expanding the catchment area in what is a very rural environment is unlikely to change the situation.

## Online Questionnaire Feedback

### Are there any other options/proposals that have not been considered?

#### Comments

- Make school more community based and perhaps make it like a community centre as well as a school.
- There was options put forward a few years ago none of which were taken any further, are we wasting our time.
- Could children from Powmill (which doesn't have a Primary School) be brought to Blairingone instead of attending Fossoway School?
- Make it more of a community hub, like the secondary school in Kinross. Local library/drop in centre/information point/office services/local meeting point/car park/cafe.
- At present children in Blairingone have an option for which primary school they can attend. Maybe review whether this option is necessary? Blairingone primary clearly has benefits due to the smaller numbers it can cater which surely adds value to a child's education.
- I feel that all of the other options just postpone the inevitable decision to close. The sooner a resolution is reached, the quicker the children can adapt to their new surroundings and benefit from a more normal learning environment, which will give them the best preparation for secondary school.
- I'm surprised at the executorial approach to the problem. Closing a school is simply symptomatic of wider problems in the way the country is run. A more strategic approach might be to look at what communities need to thrive - post offices, schools, local shops, pubs, playparks etc and consider how they can be funded. Closing small public amenities kills off communities and forces people to move to more populous areas, in turn putting unnecessary strain on them.
- Revitalise small villages with amenities.



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

**Option 1 - Do nothing**

**Comments**

- Numbers have gone up and down over the year. With the projected/proposed developments we should have the need for all places available in Blairingone. Children need to be educated within their own community.
- No decision on the school's future should be made until outcome of LDP2 consultation is known.

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

**Option 2 - Consider mothballing the school – move pupils to Fossoway Primary School**

**Comments**

- Busing children is not a good option. Traffic, weather will effect arrival at school as well as potentially put children at risk. If a child is taken ill and parents have no transport what will happen?
- The school numbers have fluctuated in the past and the numbers projected for the future look better so it would seem to be the wrong time given our possible expansion of housing in the area.
- The other options mean major change for my son and children like him with additional needs, who have not thrived in larger schools and who struggle with change. This would lead to increased anxiety and a possible drop in development.
- If school was mothballed, if school were to reopen it would mean moving children back after setting then in another school.

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

**Option 3 - Consider closing the school – move pupils to Fossoway Primary School**

**Comments**

No comments were noted for this option on the questionnaires completed at the drop-in session.

**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**

- Option 4 should have been explored before and will enhance the consideration of option 1.
- Catchment area should be both Fossoway and Cleish – if school can be expanded through option 4, improved transport will be needed. More integration with neighbouring PKC schools.
- The school is not just our children's school; it is the heart of our community, the only part of Blairingone that provides a sense of community.
- If more children were at school it would not be in danger of closing.

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

**Are there any other options/proposals that have not been considered?**

**Comments**

- To also add/build through to school house add an after school club that would attract parents who worked to send their children here. I believe this would attract higher numbers to the school.

## **Community Drop-In Session**

Drop-in session ran from 3pm – 7pm on 21 September 2017

- 32 attendees at the session
- 19% (6) of attendees were neighbours
- 28% (9) of attendees were parents
- 6% (2) of attendees were other family members
- 38% (12) of attendees were part of the community
- 9% (3) attendees were Councillors

## Comments received at the drop-in session

### Option 1 - Do nothing

#### Comments

- We need to do something to ensure a sustainable future for all here just now and in the future – increase catchment and make it appealing to working parents.
- The village needs a school if it's to survive as a village and encourage house building and families to move to the area.
- What is a community when does it become one and when does it not become one? Community is people – schools – post office – village hall – shop – when they are gone what is left for a community of people.
- Children are very happy here at the school. Doing nothing would keep school in danger of closing and children won't be happy about moving.
- I would support this option at the moment because the LDP2 consultation on further growth for the village should be concluded before final decisions are made.

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

### **Option 2 - Consider mothballing the school – move pupils to Fossoway Primary School**

#### **Comments**

- Mothballing best option – to wait until houses are ready. Won't happen in next 3 years.
- This would mean there would be no community at Blairingone and surrounding areas.
- The community would disappear overnight – saying the school would possibly re-open if needed is not viable. People would leave the area and homes would appeal.
- Most of the kids who go to school live in the village and this is a way better school than Fossoway.
- 7 houses getting built at Pitfield at moment.
- I am opposed to this; the school should remain open at present until we know the outcome of the LDP2 consultation.
- Mothballing the school would not be a good option as it would be the first step to a complete closure.
- Moving children would be detrimental to their education, children need routine.
- Mothballing the school is the end of the school as it will never re-open as the building would deteriorate.



## Comments received at the drop-in session

### Option 3 - Consider closing the school – move pupils to Fossoway Primary School

#### Comments

- Tragic but logical that it has to close unless there is house building.
- The potential for new housing in the area and Fossoway Primary is some distance away for children who don't live in Blairingone but live in the catchment area. Surely this would mean larger class numbers.
- Moving the children to Fossoway would mean extra travel on the roads.
- Very sad to see school closure. It's often huge potential for practical learning in an exceptional location. Traffic is a real concern.
- I am opposed to closing the school and have been throughout my council terms (now on fifth since 1999). There should be more interaction between the other rural primary schools in the area, offering mutual support.
- Community gone! Blairingone would become a place/road with houses and nothing else!
- Closing the school and moving pupils, does not put the child's welfare at the centre. If not felt appropriate to move children if boundaries moved why is it ok to move because LA decide financial cuts means school closes. GIRFEC indicators apply in both cases equally and should not be manipulated for financial reasons.
- Blairingone has already lost pub, shop, bus service. Hard to encourage new families into village. If school were to close the last community hub would be gone.
- Again taking away the school would leave Blairingone with no community. Fossoway Primary is running at full capacity. Cleish is also under review in phase 2.

## 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

- Increase the catchment to Powmill would increase the school roll, along with the potential of a new housing development, would increase the roll.
- I strongly agree that the catchment area should be reviewed in order that more children from Fossoway and/or Cleish areas could consider this school.
- I am opting for option 4 to keep Blairingone on the map – Powmill pupils could come to Blairingone.
- If catchment area expanded, more children in school to keep it open. Powmill doesn't have a primary school. Children moving to Blairingone School would benefit from wonderful education.
- Great idea! Encourage more families into Blairingone Primary School. Speaking to other mothers they would have their child at Blairingone if they were in catchment (Powmill).
- Option 4, move catchment to Gartwinzan to get more kids into the school.
- Move the boundary to add more pupils. An excellent school spoiled with no expansion to the village.
- Move boundary to include Gartwinzan and/or Powmill.
- Increase the catchment area to increase the feasibility of the school and give time for the possible developments proposed for the village.
- This could be a good option as it would increase the roll and make the school better.
- Wider catchment areas would increase opportunity to higher pupil numbers. Also increase opportunity for greater community involvement. Whilst appreciate difference would not be seen quickly due to not moving children's school it would widen catchment for younger children.
- Make sense! Attract larger numbers! Create an even bigger and stronger community.
- Assuming the school is viable to accommodate 25 pupils – this would be a positive move to enhance the community and develop the village potential. Care would be needed to manage the road traffic locally.
- The sustainability of the school is down to money. An increase in numbers would identify the good quality of teaching within this school and the importance of the school to the village and surrounding area.
- It would be sad to see the school close as it is the only active life in the village. I would suggest the school needs some good PR to get more pupils – maybe move the boundaries.

## Comments received at the drop-in session

### Are there any other options/proposals that have not been considered?

#### Comments

- If the school cannot survive as it is I would add a breakfast and after school club. Also a possible kindergarten – something different – an outdoors school – seems very popular. Lots of lovely countryside you need a unique selling point to encourage people to use the school – not the same old thing - build it and they will come.
- Consider inclusion of a nursery provision to the school which would encourage children into the school. If children put to nursery unlikely to be preference of parents to move into primary classes.
- Increase catchment and build through to school house and create after school facility or nursery. Promote school lets; no one knew they could use this facility.
- Make more use of the buildings, nursery is a good idea.
- The few children in the village's parents choose Strathdevon as there is no nursery facilities but bring them back into the catchment for Kinross High School.
- Next door made into a nursery day time, with after school club would encourage parents to use the school, offering more facilities.
- Another option would be to have some kind of after school care for the children to bring in new families to the area at the moment families have to take their kids to Strathdevon (Dollar) for afterschool care.
- More interaction with other primary schools in the area for mutual support. Review transport links.
- Increase catchment area.
- A village hall would be a good thing this however was turned down a couple of years ago.
- Making it easier for the community to use the school after hours – school lets.

## Comments received at the drop-in session

### Why do you think are the reasons the school roll is low?

#### Comments

- Lack of amenities in the village – apart from the school, we have nothing. Some incentive must be offered if we want new families moving to the village.
- Small village with static population.
- In my opinion the reason for lack of new families in the village is that we have very little to offer new residents. We need more amenities if we are to grow as a village.
- School roll is low; possibly due to the fact Blairingone has no other amenities. No bus service, no pub, no church.
- No services – no pub, no shop, no public transport.
- School roll is low, poor transport links, poor amenities. If closed then to me it's a dying village.
- Lack of public transport in village stops families moving to area.
- School roll is low, poor transport links, poor amenities.
- Fossoway Community Council, object to small communities moving forward.
- It's a wonder people want to live in Blairingone the roads/pavements aren't looked after, the village looks like a tip, the road is like a race track, why would anyone want to bring up children here.
- At one time 2 local estates used to send workers children to Blairingone. These both no longer have workers.
- School numbers have decreased over time. Farm estates being sold off ie. Solgirth, Arndean. Children of farm workers used to come to Blairingone Primary. Parents in the local area perhaps send their children to private school in Dollar.
- No nursery provision, no public transport, other good primary school in the area that offer nursery so kids make friends and parents reluctant to move their children.
- No nursery provision, children form friendships at nursery and continue to primary school.
- A single teacher school concerns some parents, ways should be found to combat this reason.
- No social interaction for children so parents send children to other schools.
- No one knows about the school! The catchment is so small. There is no after school so working parents struggle to send their children and work.
- Dollar Academy! The school is so small. Don't offer free transport to Powmill children.

## Comments received at the drop-in session

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

#### Comments

- The council meeting takes place in Blairingone School and could be further used in the evenings for community use.
- LA strategic plan state each community should have a hall or a school? Blairingone lost its hall with unfulfilled plan for a replacement – that leaves the school – let's use it and expand it!!
- The community with Blairingone is very important. Very close knit community good community environment terrible transport links.
- Blairingone School is the only thing left what makes it a community.
- School provides current focal point in village for events; meetings etc. so it is a valuable resource in the community and tis should be retained.
- School gives village identity.
- Blairingone has a great community spirit, when shows are put on by pupils the response is amazing – standing room only. Charity events are held at school eg McMillan Coffee Morning again huge turnout.
- The school is the heart and soul of our community, they attend events, support fundraising. It is all we have. Without it we would just be houses. The community want to see more families building the community for the future. Our school = our community!
- Very close knit community and the school has always been a large part of this year by year. – We have lost all of our amenities, and this is the last remaining thing left for the community. \*it must be saved\*.
- Having lived in the village for 5 yrs I feel the school could play a much larger part in the community – only ever been in for council meetings.
- Blairingone Primary host events for the community. They hold their annual Christmas show which locals attend. They had fundraising events including MacMillian coffee mornings. The pupils also litter pick up within the community along with eco work and regular monitoring of travel and traffic around Blairingone.
- The school is the only focus for the community in Blairingone. Without it there is very little opportunity for locals to come together.
- Sadly the school is the last remaining community hub for Blairingone. Blairingone needs community empowerment not for the community to be shut down.
- What will happen to the value of our homes if the last of our amenities go? And also if the new development goes ahead who will buy. NO BUS. NO SCHOOL. NO COMMUNITY.

- I think the school should stay, over the years I have loved here the amenities have dwindled to almost zero if the school closes we will become a hamlet, and I feel there will be no reason to come and live in the village.
- Blairingone is a friendly and active community but the school is the only hub left for the village. Which will become a commuter hamlet with no attractions for people to move here.
- Small community – no facilities except for school. Where else would the F.C.C and other community activities meet? Need a venue. The school is the hub of the village – xmas fayre – MacMillan Coffee Mornings etc.
- The school should not close pending the outcome of LDP2 consultation. There are plans for a housing development on a site near the school and if this went ahead Blairingone would need a school.
- My first school banded me from art next banded from spelling and now perfect.
- Confident pupils in all aspects of life.
- Ask Kinross High pupils from Blairingone are always confident, independent and well rounded.
- Small school allows for in depth curricular activity.

**Email Received:**

Sirs, We are aware that the future of Blairingone school is shortly being considered. There is a movement underway to invigorate the village through the building of more houses. A local school would of course be an integral part of this and we ask you to spare the school. Although the number of pupils is very low at the moment the level of satisfaction with parents is excellent and academic achievement is high.