

**ANGUS COUNCIL**

**COMMUNITIES COMMITTEE – 27 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**THE DEN PUBLIC TOILETS – VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT**

**REPORT BY STRATEGIC DIRECTOR – COMMUNITIES**

**ABSTRACT**

This report seeks homologation of the decision to give the keys to the Kirriemuir Regeneration Group to operate the toilets at The Den, Kirriemuir on a volunteer basis for a period of two years from 1 October 2016, with support and assistance from Angus Council, and seeks approval to transfer the resources outlined in this report.

**1. RECOMMENDATIONS**

It is recommended that the Committee:

- (i) homologates the decision of the Strategic Director – Communities, in consultation with the Convener and Vice Convener of the Communities Committee, to agree to the Volunteer Management of the toilets at The Den, Kirriemuir with support and assistance from Angus Council from 1 October 2016;
- (ii) agrees provision of financial resources on a pro rata basis as outlined in the report; and
- (iii) commends the Kirriemuir Regeneration Group for their continued efforts in volunteering and enhancement of their community.

**2. ALIGNMENT TO THE ANGUS COMMUNITY PLAN/SINGLE OUTCOME AGREEMENT/COPORATE PLAN**

This report contributes to the following local outcomes contained within the Angus Community Plan and Single Outcome Agreement 2013-2016:

- Communities that are prosperous and fair
- Communities that are learning and supportive
- Communities that are safe and strong
- Communities that are caring and healthy

**3. BACKGROUND**

Reference is made to Report 144/16 to Communities Committee on 12 April 2016. It was agreed to close the following five unattended public toilets. All have now been closed with the exception of The Den, Kirriemuir.

1. The Den, Kirriemuir
2. Dall's Lane, Brechin
3. Norries Road, Westhaven
4. Arbroath Road, Forfar
5. Tay Street, Monifieth

As detailed in Section 5 of Report 144/16, prior to closing the above facilities, consultation with any relevant local groups was to take place and the opportunity for any alternative form of service provision investigated. This was actioned and led to the Kirriemuir Regeneration Group indicating their interest in operating the public toilets at The Den, Kirriemuir.

The Kirriemuir Regeneration Group already has experience of effectively operating a public toilet in partnership with the Council. It was agreed by Communities Committee on 26 May 2015 (Report 215/15) that the Group would have responsibility for the volunteer management of the Barrie Pavilion and operation of Camera Obscura, with support and assistance from Angus Council. This included the management of the toilets attached to the Barrie Pavilion.

#### **4. CURRENT POSITION**

Consultation and a meeting with the Kirriemuir Regeneration Group have taken place and the Group have confirmed their offer to take on the management of the public toilets in order to retain the facility for the benefit of the local community.

Angus Council operated the public toilets at The Den through Tayside Contacts with the toilets opening between April and October. Annual costs are made up of water charges, maintenance charges and the cost of opening, closing and cleaning along with necessary supplies. In 2014/15 the total cost of operation was £5,148. Breaking the costs down the charges were Water - £739, Maintenance - £2,115, Cleaning £2,294. There is no electricity charge for this facility.

The toilets have been closed for several months following significant vandalism of the facility, however repairs have now been completed and the facility is now in a suitable condition for reopening.

#### **5. PROPOSALS**

It is proposed that the Kirriemuir Regeneration Group take on the management of the public toilets at the Den, Kirriemuir and keep the facility open all year round (reduced opening hours during winter months).

The Group will be responsible for opening, closing, cleaning and stocking the toilets and dealing with minor maintenance and repair issues such as any painting. In return it is proposed that Angus Council will provide a sum £1,700 to the community which is roughly one third of the previous total operating cost for the facility. This will enable the community to properly run the facility and also ensure there is a genuine sense of this being a partnership. Angus Council will continue to be responsible for planned maintenance and major repairs to make the project more deliverable for the volunteers.

A formal written agreement would be put in place detailing the responsibilities of the Kirriemuir Regeneration Group and the council, including the grant contribution to be paid.

There has been a history of vandalism and associated major repair costs at this facility. It is hoped that a community operated and more closely monitored facility will mean less vandalism, however there will be a condition included in the agreement reserving the right to end the agreement with immediate effect in the event of damage to the facilities which necessitate closure.

#### **6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The cost of this arrangement will be contained within existing budgets.

## **7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

The development of this partnership represents an enhancement of partnership working and further demonstration of the Council's commitment to working with local communities.

**NOTE:** No background papers, as detailed by Section 50D of the Local Government (Scotland) Act 1973 (other than any containing confidential or exempt information) were relied on to a material extent in preparing the above report.

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