

## Loirston Annexe/Business as Usual?



Residents in Cove are probably aware that Loirston Annexe is currently being managed by a Steering Group, made up of locals who have a vested interest in the annexe itself and the community as a whole. The Steering Group have been meeting monthly over the last few months since the initial discussion with Aberdeen City Council in June this year. We have moved from being rather dismayed to being more positive about having a vibrant centre in the future.

We have worked hard on your behalf to seek assistance from Aberdeen City Council, seeking changes in practices and methods of work. The Steering Group has concentrated its efforts on keeping the annexe open for business as usual with as little disruption as possible during this period of change. We are determined that the annexe will carry on serving the community of Cove and the surrounding area for years to come.

Currently, difficulties are arising as the Council are still responsible for running the operation until the future Management Committee create, complete and agree the appropriate paperwork. In the interim, the Steering Group are responsible for ensuring the right information is made available, assessed and prepared for a public meeting at which point a Management Committee must be formed to ensure the annexe continues to run.

A Steering Group was actually formed two years ago to stave off a threat of closure at that time. That Group disbanded when the Council did an about turn and the annexe was to remain open until the threat arose again due to the more recent cuts. Although the Loirston Annexe Steering Group name has been kept, the group still maintains a view on keeping access to the community assets that are attached to Loirston Nursery & Primary School.

A Council meeting on September 15 confirmed that these assets will be run by Loirston School until the Management Group proper is constituted. At that time they will explore if they want to maintain control of these assets.

Preparations are currently being made to look over the documents which will form the basis for the work that Community Centres will undertake in the future. The last Steering Group meet was attended by Councillor Callum McCaig and we are grateful for his support.

**If you're interested in taking part in future meetings, please contact us at [allanbri@supanet.com](mailto:allanbri@supanet.com) for the date and time of our next meet.**

Once the correct information and documentation are available the next step is to formally decide the viability of the annexe being run by a local Management Committee. After that, a public meeting will be arranged, advertised and held for the setting up of the Loirston Community Centre Management Committee. Free training will be available for volunteers, committee members and office bearers if you feel a need for upskilling or want a better understanding of responsibilities. Training is at an early stage and will become more effective / robust over the next few months.

At the discussion with Aberdeen City Council representatives in June, over 80 local residents attended with over 30 signing up to offer support. Around half of these volunteers are currently involved in the Loirston Annexe

Steering Group. However, once the Steering Group needs to morph into a Management Committee proper we will need more representatives from the local community to support this objective. Just a couple of hours each month; different people with different skills but all with the same objective of keeping Loirston Annexe working for the benefit of the community

Councillors have stated that they were in favour of keeping as many centres open as possible and that enhanced insurance to cover liabilities for Management Committees and volunteers is being researched at this time.

Cove is a relatively small town with few amenities for those who live here. A variety of clubs and groups use Loirston Annexe – from childcare in mornings and after school for working parents, Rising 2s, a long established Tai Chi group, the gardening club, Rainbows and Brownies, various artists and many others. Many local residents use the facilities for birthday parties and celebrations at the weekend.

Loirston Annexe is an integral part of Cove and if we lost the facility where would all these groups go for activities and how many working parents would need to source alternative childcare? All need to keep in mind that it's about serving the public good to achieve a better future for all.

So make no mistake, if the residents in Cove don't step up to the challenge, the annexe will close. For more information

Email: [allanbri@supanet.com](mailto:allanbri@supanet.com) or phone **01224 248745**

Thank you.

The Loirston Annexe Steering Group