

Demolition postponed! Community to decide fate of Leisure Centre



Green MSP Alison Johnstone gives her backing to supporters demonstrating to keep the Bonnyrigg Leisure Centre

Pressure from community campaigners to keep the Bonnyrigg Leisure Centre from demolition has paid off and Midlothian Council has agreed a stay of execution for five months to give the local community the opportunity to decide if it can make use of the building.

The campaign, backed only by the Green Party, faced a deadline of July when the bulldozers were due to arrive. Bonnyrigg Green Councillor Ian Baxter was delighted with the decision and praised local people for rallying round and challenging the council's position.

Alison Johnstone MSP said, "There can be little doubt that many local people are very interested in ensuring a positive future for Bonnyrigg's much loved Leisure Centre. I welcome the fact that local people will now have an opportunity to ensure their views are heard in the consultation process."

Cllr Baxter said, "This is a fine building with at least twenty years' life. It could fulfil the dreams of so many people in the community for the next generation and beyond. Towns and villages up and down the country are crying out for buildings like this to make into village halls and community centres, yet we have had to fight very hard just to keep the council from knocking it down!"

Greens say community consultation is key

SNP and Labour councillors have consistently argued in favour of demolition on the basis that consultation took place several years ago and no interest was shown at the time in keeping the building.

However, recent polling locally shows that very few people knew about plans to demolish the building until the last few months.

Also, demolition was never explicitly agreed by the council at any time, only 'disposal'.

Bonnyrigg Green councillor Ian Baxter said, "Basically, the council felt it had already ticked all the boxes and didn't need to ask people again. I disagree. Amongst councillors I was alone in calling for further public consultation. We were about to start work on the Bonnyrigg & Poltonhall Neighbourhood Plans and this seemed an ideal opportunity to get detailed feedback on whether people want the building and if so, what they want it used for".

See over to find out how you can help decide how the building should be used...

Leisure Centre - over to you!

Do you have any ideas for re-using the Bonnyrigg Leisure Centre?

Are you in a group or organisation which could use part of the building?

Or maybe you can help in drawing up a Business Plan, or have skills which could be used in bringing the building into community use?

It's a big building, there's plenty of space for everyone, so all ideas big and small are welcome!

If you can answer YES to any of these questions, please get in touch (contact details below) and we'll make sure your views are fed into the consultation process.

Councillor Expenses

As promised prior to his election, Councillor Ian Baxter claimed no councillor expenses last year, and was the only Midlothian councillor to do so. Full information is on the Midlothian Council web site (under 'Councillors').

20 mph zones



The Green Party fully supports the plea from Lasswade residents for a 20 mph zone across the village.

A petition signed by 254 residents of the village was presented to the Council's Petitions Committee in June where local Green councillor Ian Baxter argued that if anywhere in Midlothian merits a 20 mph zone, Lasswade does, due to its unusual topography, busy main road and record of accidents around the busy Lasswade Bridge.

Despite the Petitions Committee supporting the bid, the Council's SNP Administration decided instead to wait for a report on introducing a policy for 20 mph zones across Midlothian first.

We believe that a pilot zone in Lasswade should be run at the same time as working on a county wide policy so we can learn from the pilot and use this to produce a better policy.

We also support the introduction of 20 mph zones in all areas where local residents want them.

Councillor Ian Baxter's contact details

Telephone: 0131 663 4294 (Home)
07792 720421 (Mobile)
0131 271 3094 (Council)
Email: Ian.Baxter@midlothian.gov.uk (Council)

Surgeries:

2nd Monday of month (7-8pm), Bonnyrigg Primary School

3rd Wednesday of month (6-7pm), Poltonhall Recreation Ground meeting room

Please note: There are no surgeries during school holidays

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