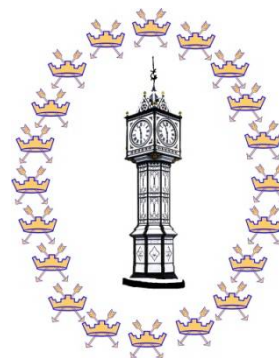


Downham Market Town Council



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Town Clerk: Mrs J M Markwell

Dear Cllr Sampson,

**Re: Environment and Community Panel meeting on Wednesday, 31st August 2016
Agenda item 9 - Public Toilets Review**

With reference item 9 on the agenda of your forthcoming meeting on 31st August, Downham Market Town Council would like to make the following comments about the toilets situated in Downham Market.

Wales Court - Town Hall Car Park Toilets

Although the operatives keep the toilets to a reasonable standard there are serious concerns about the overall condition of them.

Firstly there is intermittent water supply to the sinks and therefore we would say it was very unhygienic for users to the facility to be unable to wash their hands. This is felt to be a matter of great urgency and has been discussed many times with both responsible Borough Cllrs and Officers to no avail. It shows within the figures in the Public Toilets Review report that only £1128 has been spent on repairs against staff/vehicle costs of £14000.

This is an extremely well-used facility being in the centre of the town and it needs to be brought up to a high standard. The Town Council would object strongly to these toilets being closed.

Howdale Toilets

These are adjacent to a recreation area, owned by the Borough Council, and there are many families and young children using the play equipment and the leisure space to enjoy outside activities together as a family. Therefore the Town Council would not want this facility closed.

War Memorial Playing Field Toilets

Again these are on Borough Council property and are heavily used by residents and visitors who watch the football and cricket throughout the year. Therefore the Town Council would not want this facility to be closed.

Generally

It should be noted that in the Public Toilet Review report all three facilities in Downham Market are on the 'Transfer or Closure' list. Therefore it could be possible that this town is left with NO public toilets.

Furthermore I would foresee that the Town Council would not want to take ownership, nor would it expect to pay on special expenses unless every other area is charged in the same way.

Within the report it states that senior citizens have a higher need for public conveniences and as you are aware Downham Market does have a higher than average elderly population.

It is understood that there are significant costs to provide public facilities and for the Borough Council to want to pass this cost to the Parish; this would result in an increase in the Parish precept which of course would be passed onto residents.

So although the Borough Council can make a saving the residents do not, remembering this cost is already within the Council Tax bill. Could this not be seen as double charging?

Please note that appendix 1 of the report states that there is one disabled toilet and one baby changing unit in the Wales Court facility and none anywhere else, but appendix 2 says that there is one disabled toilet in Wales Courts and one disable toilet in Memorial Fields and no baby changing units anywhere.

Yours sincerely

Jean Markwell
Town Clerk
25th August 2016