

Save Our Larkhall Public Toilets Statement to Cabinet July 5th, 2013

First, the claim that Bath people do not need public toilets because they are a throwback to a distant era when people had outside loos is an argument of desperation which is illogical, historically inaccurate, but also wildly out of touch with the majority of people now. At the time the toilets were built people always had access to loos at home. They were never designed to substitute for a home toilet. People then and now use the public toilets at a distance from their homes. We would not have produced 534 signatures on a petition if people didn't need our clean and bright toilets.

PUBLIC HEALTH, EQUALITY AND ENVIRONMENT

The Cabinet should lift the threat to Public Toilets for public health, equality, environmental and economic reasons:

- A statistic: 14 million people in the UK suffer with a variety of urinary problems; about 7 million may have bowel problems. ¹ So, this means that approx 1 in 5 people will have these problems and need convenient, accessible loos.
- Physically, being unable to use a toilet when needed leads to many further health problems - which can include strokes and heart attacks as cited in the Telegraph this week. ²
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- Knowing that they can access a toilet gives confidence to people planning their trips. If they close these people will be severely deprived; only those with strong, healthy bladders will be able to come to Larkhall, or diseased people will soil the area, spreading disease, an environmental hazard.
- Physical and mental well-being are interlinked, so: discomfort leads to anxiety, and not wanting to risk venturing out of one's home, this can lead to deteriorating health, but also social isolation, and mental distress.
- Those adversely affected are disproportionately: elderly, our area having the highest number of any area, the ill, disabled, women and children, with 3 schools nearby.
- The toilets include a disabled cubicle, accessed using a RADAR key. If they close, disabled people will be disadvantaged.
- There are no other accessible public toilets within half a mile. None of the nearby shops or buildings is suitable as an alternative.

ECONOMY

Our local economy will be hurt. People have said they will not shop in Larkhall without toilet access. It comes down to a simple, basic, human need.

The reversion to the originally scheduled closure date, from this August to next April, is not a reprieve. We cannot assume a company will agree to subsidise the £11,963 needed. Therefore, this growing campaign must continue until the toilets are saved, hopefully with your help in seeing how precisely they fall under your responsibility for public health, equality, economy and environment.

From the Telegraph 8-07-13

LOSS of public loos a threat to life, warn experts

THE widespread closure of public conveniences could be putting lives at risk, it has been claimed.

Health experts warn that a full bladder can increase the risk of heart attacks.

Four out of 10 public lavatories have closed in the past decade. Campaigners say the situation is so bad that it is leaving people prisoners in their own homes.

Dr Clare Walton, of the Stroke Association, said: "Not being able to empty your bladder may cause a temporary increase in blood pressure which could put some at risk of stroke."

Carlisle city council has halved the number of public lavatories it owns from 14 to seven in just five years. Newcastle city council currently maintains 11 public

lavatories after closing five in 2008, while in Lancaster 16 public conveniences have been closed in the past five years.

Raymond Martin, of the British Toilet Association (BTA), said: "This is a health problem, not just a financial one."

"These cuts affect the health of the nation, with the elderly and disabled really hit hard."

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¹ British Toilet Association website accessed July 2013

² Ibid