

## **Closure of Clatt School Statutory Consultation Online Survey Results**

The statutory consultation period regarding the closure of Clatt School ran between 4 September 2024 until 8 November 2024, which covered a period of over 30 school days. During the consultation period all Clatt residents, parents/carers community members and other identified stakeholders were invited to participate in an online survey regarding the proposal.

The survey provided a summary of the proposal with accompanying maps. The proposal is to discontinue education at Clatt School which is currently mothballed and to reassign its catchment area to either Kennethmont School or Rhynie School.

Stakeholders could also send in their comments on the proposal via email or post and paper copies of the survey were available upon request should anyone prefer, rather than complete the online survey.

A total of 23 people took part in the online survey with 10 comments left regarding why participants thought either of the options should be discontinued. 16 people chose to leave further comments regarding the proposal to close Clatt School.

All comments have been analysed below. This report shows a summary of the results received.

As shown in Chart 1 below, of those who participated in the survey, 14 reside in the areas directly impacted by the proposal. Of those, 10 reside directly in the Clatt catchment area, three in the Rhynie School catchment area and one in the Kennethmont School catchment area. Nine participants reside in other areas such as Alford, Ythanwells, Drumblade, Inch, Largue, Alford or had recently moved out of the Clatt area.

**Chart 1**

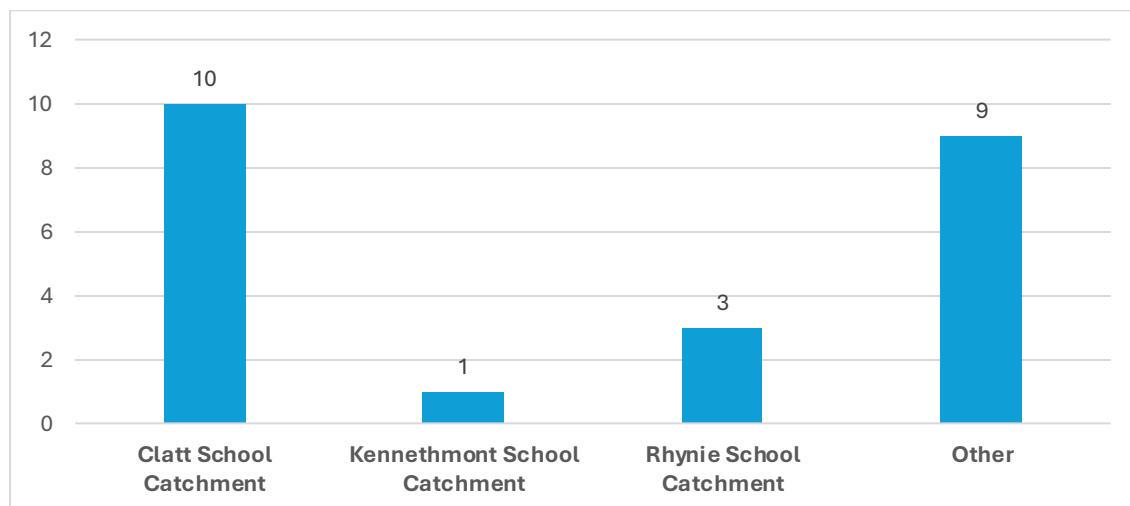


Chart 2 below shows that the highest number of participants were parents/carers. The survey was completed by nine parents/carers (39.1%), eight (34.8%) were community members, five (21.7%) selected other and indicated they were a mix of former pupils and a local house owner. No pupils or staff members completed the online survey.

**Chart 2**

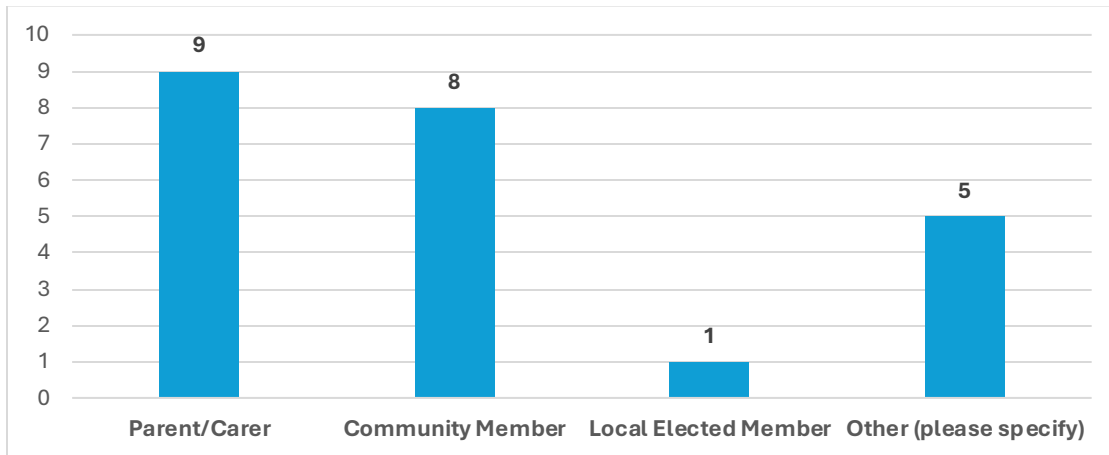
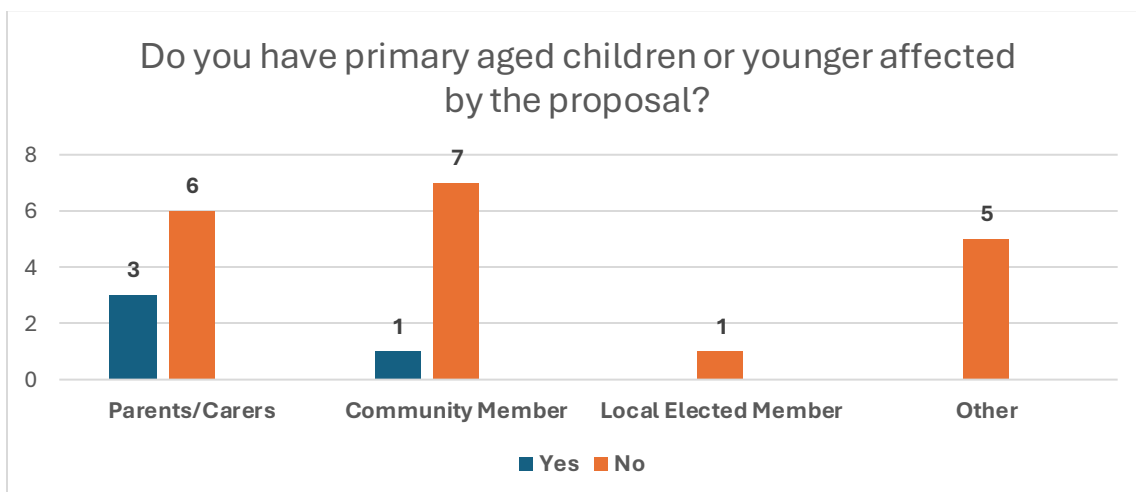


Chart 3 shows that of the 23 participants, 19 did not have primary aged children or younger who have been or will be affected by the closure of Clatt School. The majority of those who have children affected by the proposal are parents/carers and one community member who has a child who attends a neighbouring school. It is important to note that none of the 'other' participants indicated that they have school age children affected by the changes.

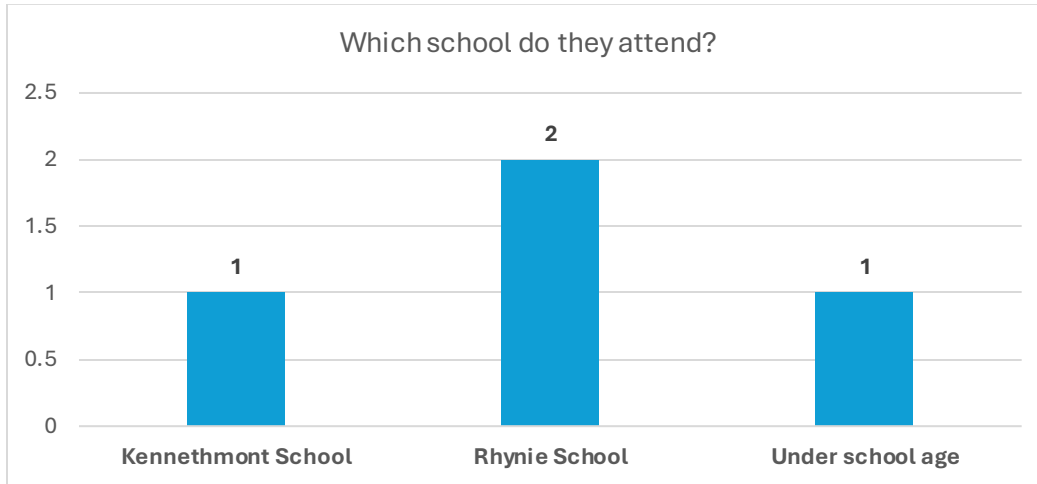
**Chart 3**



**Chart 4**

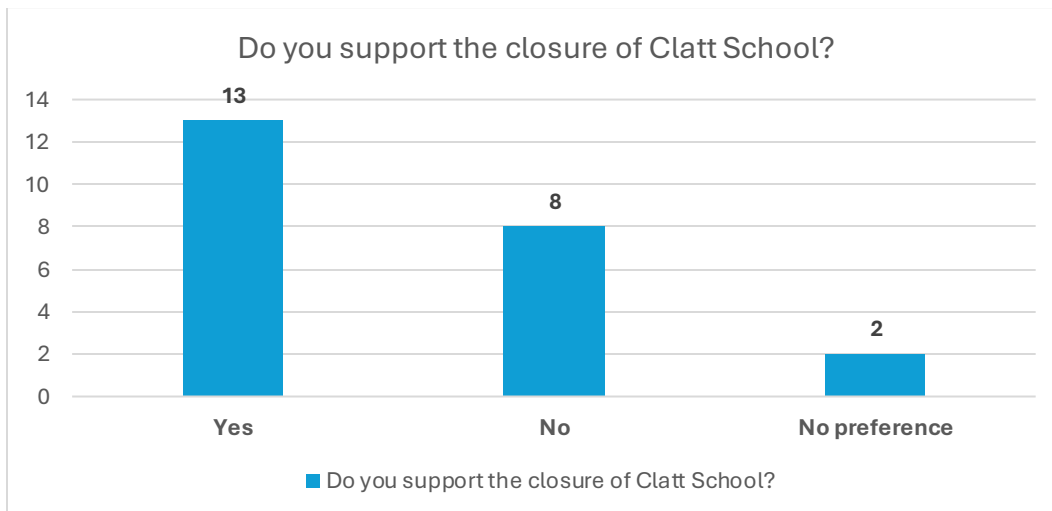
Of those parents/carers indicating they have a child affected by the proposal, 2 children are currently attending Rhynie School and 1 is under school age. The

respondent who indicated they had a child younger than school age, indicated that they lived in the Clatt catchment area but stated they will probably move away from the area before the child starts school.



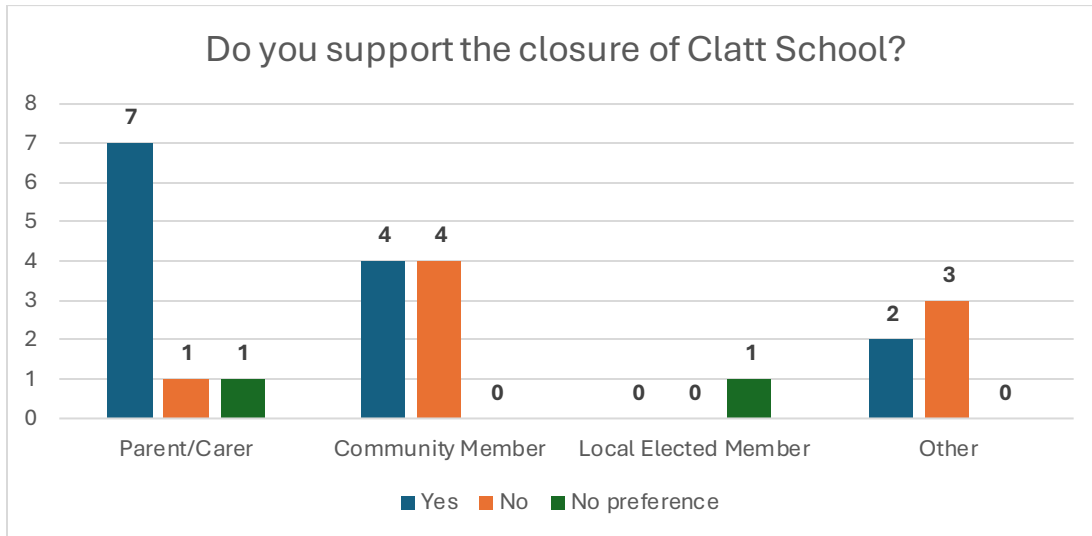
The main focus of the survey was to determine whether the respondents supported the closure of Clatt School or not. Chart 5 below indicates that 13 (56.5%) people support the closure with 8 (34.8%) against and 2 (8.7%) who had no preference.

**Chart 5**



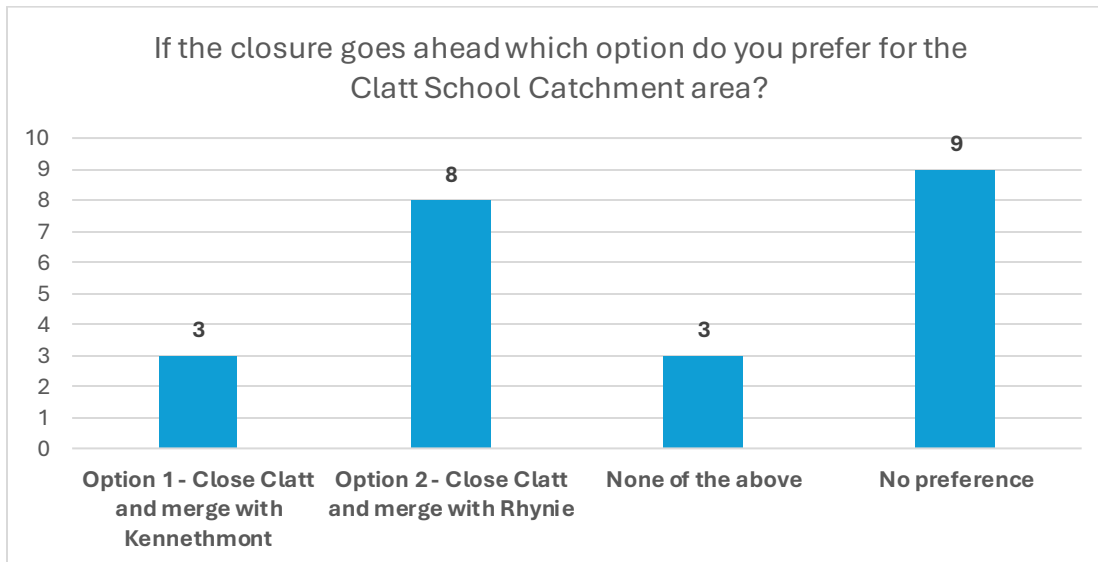
**Chart 6**

Chart 6 illustrates the voting patterns of the individual groups interested in the proposal to close Clatt school.



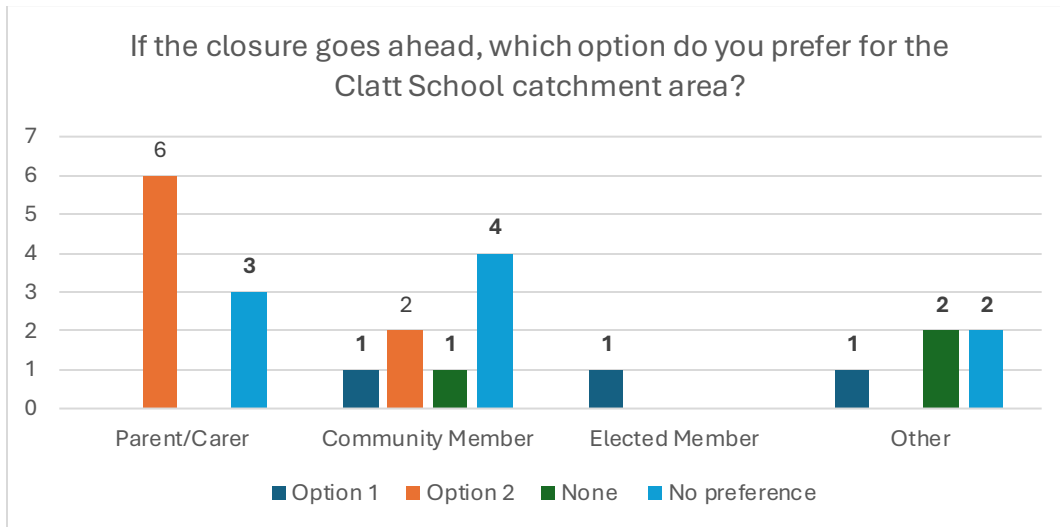
The participants were asked if the closure goes ahead which do you prefer for the Clatt School catchment area. This is shown in chart 7 below. Option 1 – Close Clatt School and merge with Kennethmont School, Option 2 – Close Clatt School and merge with Rhynie School, none of the above or no preference. The majority, nine (39.1%) of the respondents had no preference. Eight (34.8%) are in favour of option 2, three (13%) respondents did not prefer any of the options and three (13%) preferred option 1.

**Chart 7**

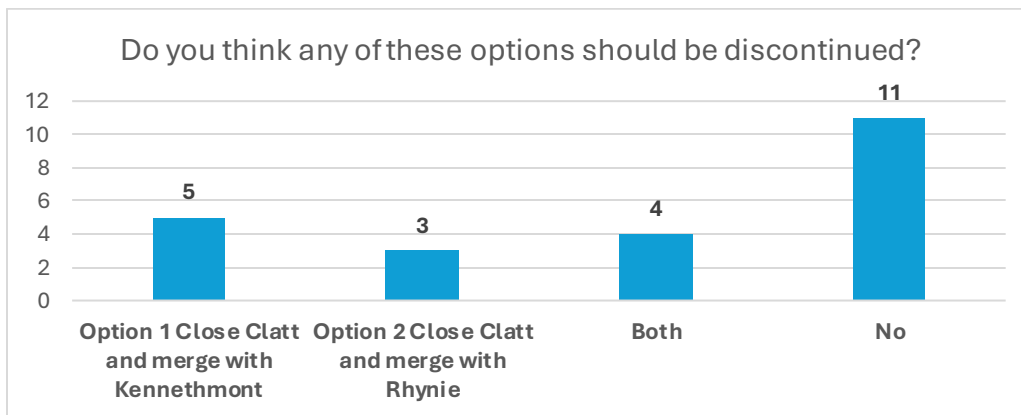


The results regarding preferred option for the catchment area of Clatt are broken down further by interest groups in chart 8 below.

**Chart 8**



**Chart 9**



The respondents were asked if any of the options should be discontinued and to provide a reason why. Their reasons are summarised below:

**Option 1 - Close Clatt School and merge with Kennethmont School**

- To spread out the numbers between Kennethmont and Rhynie as Kennethmont is stretched in terms of space and staff. Rhynie has capacity for more children and would help boost their numbers.
- Rhynie has a nursery

**Option 2 - Close Clatt School and merge with Rhynie School**

- Kennethmont is the better choice as Rhynie School is too far from Clatt

- To merge with Kennethmont School would while being a traumatic and emotional decision for village of Clatt is understandable due to the falling enrolment numbers and falling birthrates. To merge with Kennethmont School would unite both small villages in a positive way and could help both, economically and culturally
- Rhynie already has a thriving community, if anymore parents from the Clatt area were to become involved with Rhynie School activities there would be no chance of the Clatt community reviving. More people from Kennethmont than Rhynie attend events at Clatt Village Hall

#### Both

- Clatt is a wonderful school which serves a rural area. Pupil numbers always fluctuate. It was a lovely school where the children flourished
- Important to keep the community together and Clatt School should remain open for the benefit of the community.
- Both Kennethmont and Rhynie have a significant number of children and merging would put pressure on resources. GIRFEC – more children at each school means some may not get the support they need to thrive.

#### No

- Be aware of Clatt in the winter and the road conditions. The winter can be incredibly bad, getting to Clatt School is one thing but shouldn't be risking a longer journey. A small school can offer so much more for each child's needs

Consultees were also given the opportunity to provide further comments regarding the proposal and presented various viewpoints.

Some respondents are of the opinion that the school should never have been mothballed, that it provides a vital link for the community and it is important to keep rural schools open. Others agreed that the low pupil numbers meant it was unsustainable to remain open and the children should have the chance to attend a school with peers of their own age. Some parents stated that they moved their children in the years prior to mothballing due to the low school roll.

There are also comments regarding the road conditions during bad weather if the children are to be transported out with the community.

Overall the comments reflected a desire from the community that the children are able to attend a rural school setting whether that be in the immediate Clatt community or the nearby villages, but also that the children have access to peers for social and educational wellbeing purposes.



## **Conclusion**

Clatt School was well regarded as a vital part of the community and the permanent closure of the school, if approved, will be felt by many in the community.

Opinions on the closure of Clatt School vary, with some welcoming it due to the low pupil numbers generated in the area, while others oppose the closure and express their disappointment at the loss of a rural school.

The majority of the respondents and the majority of parents/carers of children of school age or younger, are generally in agreement to close Clatt School permanently and reassign its catchment to Rhynie School.