

Appendix E

Closure of Clatt School Statutory Consultation

Online Survey Written Responses

The online survey had two questions which gave opportunity to comment.

Please state your reasons why you think the option(s) you have chosen should be discontinued.

11 respondents chose not to answer this question and one indicated no preference. The comments from the people who chose to respond are below:

- With Gartly closing those kids are mostly going to Kennethmont so the Clatt one's going to Rhynie spreads out the numbers better.
- Option 2 should be discounted, too far, Kennethmont is the better choice.
- Both options should be discontinued. Clatt School is a wonderful school which serves a rural area. Pupil numbers always go up and down year on year. It's so important to keep these schools going, they bring the whole community together.
- Both options should be discontinued. Both schools have quite a significant roll of children and merging schools will only put pressure onto the current provisions. Getting it Right for Every Child should mean exactly that. By putting more pressure on nearly full schools means that children slip through the net and do not get the required support they may need to thrive.
- No options should be discontinued. You have to live in Clatt to be aware of the winter and road conditions. A former teachers memory of the winters in the 70s were that the council sent a letter to head teacher asking why such a small school was using such a ridiculous amount of coal on the fires. The head teacher replied with photos of snow drifts half up the door and paths like tunnels. Pupils went to school on tractors in those days. Winters can still be incredibly bad, getting to Clatt school is one thing but risking a longer journey is mad. I visited the school a few years back to see the teacher and was met at the door by very polite older child inviting me in, the children were baking, older ones helping young ones, everything was quiet and calm, one big happy family. I commented on how a small school can offer so much more care to each child needs, a shy child will flourish in a small school but just get lost on the crowd of a larger one. I know, I was that child as was my sister. Please have a heart this is a community you are destroying , and now trying the same over the Suie at Tullynessle. How many have you planned?
- Option 1 should be discontinued. I believe Clatt School should be merged with Rhynie School, as Kennethmont is already stretched in terms of both

space and staff. Rhynie has the capacity to accommodate more students, and merging the schools would help boost their enrolment. Given that most Clatt pupils have already chosen Rhynie as their preferred option, this clearly reflects the community's preference. Additionally, Rhynie has a nursery, which Kennethmont lacks, further supporting the case for the merger.

- Option 1 should be discontinued. Rhynie has plenty capacity for additional pupils.
- Both options should be discontinued. I think that Clatt School should remain open for the benefit of the community. It was a lovely school where the children flourished and developed well.
- Option 2 should be discontinued. I understand the reason for the decision to close Clatt School but, it must be noted that this is a traumatic and emotional decision for the citizens of the village of Clatt. Clatt school has been at the heart of this village for nearly 170 years. With the falling school enrolment numbers and indeed, the world-wide falling birthrates it is necessary for our council to justify small rural schools. With this in mind, I feel the union of Clatt School with Kennethmont School may more strongly unite both of these small villages in a positive way. This potentially could help both villages economically and culturally.
- Option 2 should be discontinued. Rhynie already has a thriving community with many active community members. If any more parents from the Clatt area were to be involved with Rhynie School activities there would be no chance of Clatt Community, as a whole ever reviving. When Clatt Village Hall has events more people come from Kennethmont than Rhynie.

Respondents were asked to give their comments regarding the proposal for the closure of Clatt School. Seven respondents left this question unanswered. The comments received are below:

- I feel a dual zone would be the fairest option but as the council seem to have rejected the proposal I guess that's off the table. Other than that it seems it's down to money and nothing else. I feel it should be re zoned to Rhynie not just as my children are there because both schools are great but in the future most of the children would be attending Rhynie nursery so parents would probably prefer to keep their children at Rhynie. The bus numbers are higher from Clatt to Rhynie than you have stated it's at 8 at the moment and will increase to 9 in 24/25 and then 11 the year 25/26. (On C02 we have an electric bus!) Your school roll numbers are also wrong I have checked with both schools. I would think the logical way to do it would be to look at the capacity of both schools, which are about the same. Now I would look at that and the present and past rolls and pick the school with the lower roll at the moment to lessen the impact on the pupils and staff at each school.



- I feel that the schools have managed to accommodate the small amount of children that require education very well. I feel that the cost of Clatt School would be far more to keep it open than what it would get in return. As a parent from Rhynie school I see the children who have transferred from Clatt primary school when it first closed come in very well and be content with their new surroundings. Merging schools to me would not be ideal as we have buildings (albeit need some repairs or modernisation) that could facilitate the needs of the young community around us. I fully understand Clatt Primary School has been part of the village for many a year but now there is no requirement for a school as there is less and less people moving to a remote area.
- I will probably move away from the area before my child starts school.
- As above. It's utterly disgraceful Aberdeenshire Council keep trying to close our rural schools. How about you sell off some of the many school buildings you already closed years ago! Ythanwells School building is just left to rot away, it's ridiculous.
- Aberdeenshire Council needs to save money, keeping this small school open is expensive. There is no educational disadvantage for the young people, only change which although hard for the community will be better for the children in the long run.
- Small schools with numbers below 20 are so expensive per child. It is far fairer to merge schools and staff and give children a better staff pupil ratio. This just not be an excuse to merge and cut staff.
- As above. Rural schools offer a wealth of skills and knowledge on a smaller scale. By having smaller school rolls means that all children are seen as individuals and their needs met in a timely manner. Putting children into a bigger class or school environment can mean that their needs and learning may be missed due to the pressures put onto the staff. Smaller settings have the time and capacity to support these children and the rural environment offers outdoor learning that has been scientifically shown to support those with additional needs. To close rural schools to save money is silly and perhaps looking more internally, the council could save money in other ways. Ways that are not detrimental to our children's learning.
- I have stated reason above Roads are horrendous in winter, town people have no clue the amount of snow Clatt gets. Individual support and each child given a good education, teachers are stretched to the limit in larger schools to the point of stress and illness trying to do a job they trained for. I have teacher friends and family all saying same thing, too many children and many with complex needs. Please reconsider the history that would be destroyed and the children whose brilliant start in life you could take from them. There has been many successful people, scientists, medical professionals, teachers,

accountants writers, businesses people as well as farmers providing our daily bread started life at wee Clatt school.

- I think it makes complete sense. The children will not be affected and will have the opportunity for a better primary school experience with peers of their own age.
- The closure of Clatt School is understandable given the current climate, the declining number of pupils in the area, and the proximity of two nearby schools. However, I find it appalling that valuable equipment has been left to deteriorate due to the "mothballing" approach taken in the process. These resources could have greatly benefited surrounding schools and former pupils of Clatt School. I know for a fact that a significant amount of new equipment was purchased prior to the closure, thanks to the hard work of the Parent Teacher Council. It is outrageous, especially considering how tight budgets are for small primary schools.
- It makes sense to close it.
- Been on the cards for decades - our sons went out of zone because the tiny school roll meant lack of large peer group for team sports/activities and all important social skills. Not cost effective to keep these tiny schools open.
- The mothballing of the school was handled in a disgraceful manner by the local authority. The school was the hub of the community where the children flourished. Everyone that ever entered the school loved the setting and the atmosphere which they certainly do not say about Rhynie or Kennethmont.
- Small schools provide an important educational experience for pupils within their local community. Cost is not everything when considering education. Closures like this can be devastating to children and also make the local area less interesting and rich. Schools also bring community and support to elderly folk. I think the council should work with the challenges of the building to allow the local area to continue to welcome families.
- I strongly feel that the school should be used for education and encourage the council to investigate its use as a nursery. The Tullynessle School and nursery, which was well attended, has just been closed in a similar fashion to the closure of Clatt. This leaves a need in this rural area for a nursery/ pre-school/after-school facility of some sort.
- As has been said many times before, the majority of people associated with Clatt School whether former parents or pupils were and still are absolutely devastated by the closure of the school but more particularly by the way this was allowed to happen. Why did the school roll fall, discounting the demographic reason? 9.4.2 - Parental choice for what reason? Has anyone found out yet whether the GP space that was added in 1985 is still being paid for? No satisfactory answer could be given in 2010. The heart has been ripped out of the heart of the community and I doubt that the Place and Wellbeing Assessment will do anything to fix this. It feels like a placebo and tick box exercise.