

Proposed Replacement Facilities following the loss of Kinross Town Hall, Library and Museum

**By Dave Cuthbert – Kinross Community Council
1 August 2005**

Perth and Kinross Council (P&KC) has determined that a new “Community High School” will provide facilities for the community that will replace those lost with the disposal of the Kinross Town Hall, Library and Museum. This new “Community High School” will be built on land at Lethangie situated on the Northern border of Kinross.

This paper reviews how the new school is currently planned and looks at its suitability as a replacement to the facilities being lost should the Town Hall/Library/Museum be allowed to be sold.

1 Accommodation

The building known as Kinross Town Hall, Library and Museum had the following accommodation:

Library	71 m ²
Billiard Room	77 m ²
Museum, including staff room	79 m ²
Main Hall including stage	165 m ²
Lesser Hall	60 m ²
Various offices	91 m ²
Kitchen	18 m ²
	561 m²

Several WCs
Several store cupboards
Circulation space

The new “Community High School” is planned to have 14,553 m² of space which P&KC has stated will be available to the general public and will replace the facilities lost with the disposal of the Library and Town Hall.

1.01 Replacement to Main Hall (including stage) and Lesser Hall

The existing Kinross High School has an Assembly Hall of 272m² and a small Assembly Hall of 82m². (ref JK1)

The new “Community High School” will have an Assembly Hall of 400m², a meeting suite of 100m² and a Dance Studio of 160m². (ref JK2)

These spaces are expected to replace both the existing High school halls and the Town Hall Main Hall (160m²) and Lesser Hall (60m²).

The current use of the Kinross High school halls by the community is extremely low, as the halls are only available when a janitor can be organised, they are expensive to hire and the booking system does not work.

We have been told that this situation will change with the new High School as the school site will be open daily from 8am to 10pm, 360 days of the year and the booking process is expected to move to Perth and Kinross Leisure.

The future costs of hire are unknown as they will be down to the letting procedures of Perth and Kinross Council, which have not yet been determined.

The current procedures prohibit use of school premises because they are extremely costly and inefficient.

School staff and pupils have priority over all spaces within the existing school and it is anticipated that this will be the case in the new "Community High School".

This means that regular use of halls is currently extremely difficult as staff and pupils of the school regularly book the halls for their own events and during exam time they are used as examination rooms with desks set up for the duration. It is envisioned that this will continue to be the case with the new High School.

Summary

The new High school should provide additional spaces and should be open for longer hours; however there remains doubt that there will be a material increase in the use of these facilities by the community due to the council's booking procedures, pricing policies and prioritisation to staff and pupil events.

1.02 Replacement to Library and Museum

1.02.01 Library – History

Built in 1905, the library part of the Kinross Carnegie building consisted of 71m² of space, but was closed in 2001 as dry rot was found in the structure of the building.

It was replaced in 2002 by a Portakabin situated at the side of the historic B-listed County Building in the conservation area of Kinross.

There are plans to provide a public library facility from the proposed New Community High school.

1.02.02 Museum - History

Kinross Museum used to occupy 79m² of the Carnegie Library building.

It was closed in 1996 due to the withdrawal of funding by Perth and Kinross Council.

There is no museum currently and the collection of exhibits is now stored in Perth Art gallery and Museum; these exhibits include the Kinross Provost's chain of office and the Marshall bequest amongst other items. There are plans to house the Museum within the library of the new Community High School.

1.02.03 Library and Museum – the proposal

The new Community High School will have a library of 680m² and a support space of 34m². (ref JK2)

This new library is to be a shared resource between the community and the school and is to incorporate the Museum within it.

There are indications that the facility will not be big enough.

The Schools Library Association recommends that “a formula of 10 per cent of the minimum teaching area be applied” (ref JK3) when calculating the correct size for a school library. The new Community High school will have a teaching area of 7,593m², therefore the school library should be 759m² in size.

It appears, therefore, that the community is being asked to share a space which is smaller than that recommended for a school on its own.

The trustees of the Kinross museum collections have stated that the museum needs to be some 150m² and the following areas are required:

- Permanent Display Area
- Temporary Display Area
- Presentation Space with Projection Facilities
- Archival Area
- Store rooms
- Reception/Sales Area

This is in order that the trustees may fulfil the aim set out in their Deed of Trust (ref HI), i.e. “to achieve and maintain a standard of museum management, collection care and public service commensurate with that required for registration under the Registration Scheme for Museums and Galleries in the United Kingdom administered by the Museums and Galleries Commission since 1988” (p1-2).

The current plans for the new community school show none of these areas.

Summary

The new community high school will have a library of 680m² which will be a shared resource with the community. This library appears to be smaller than the recommended size for a school library. The museum is scheduled to share the library however the latest plans do not show any of the facilities requested by the trustees of the museum collection.

1.03 Replacement to Billiard Room

The Billiard Room was incorporated in the original Town Hall/Library/Museum complex for two reasons, the first was to provide an income stream in order to help fund the Library, the second was to provide a much needed facility for the youth of Kinross-shire.

There are no indoor facilities for the youth of Kinross and there are currently no plans to replace the Billiard room.

1.04 Replacement to Offices

The Town Hall offered 91m² of office accommodation, most of which was occupied by the Post Office until the 1960s, and then by the Social Work Department until P&KC moved the Social Work staff to another building in Kinross in 1996.

Under the Town Hall Association plans, some of this office space would have provided a much-needed home for the “Kinross Community Council Newsletter”, a long-established monthly publication which is regarded as essential reading in most households in the area. It is produced largely on a voluntary basis from volunteers’ homes.

There are no plans for community owned offices in Kinross.

1.05 Replacement to Community Kitchen

The Town Hall had a community kitchen of 18m².

The new Community High School is to have a community kitchen of 6m² in an activity/meeting place. Unfortunately this is to be sited adjacent to the dining area in the school and is to have sliding doors to allow the area to be used by pupils during break and at lunch times.

2.0 Access

Perth and Kinross Council claim that they will be opening up the new High School to the general public 14 hours a day 7 days a week. Their policies on exclusions, safeguards and access restrictions are not yet known. This has cast serious doubt on the ability of the new community High School to allow access to the community during the school day. The Cullen report identified the need for security in our schools and most education authorities have clear policies on excluding the adult population from school children. In the event of another Dunblane, will Kinross see all its facilities closed to the general public?

3.0 Day time use of school buildings

Many community activities happen during the day time, with parents and carers taking advantage of the children being in school to pursue healthy options and interests. In Kinross, these activities have been either forced out of town or have ceased to exist with the closure of the Town Hall facilities. Whilst P&KC have said that the school will be available to the community during the academic day, there remains serious doubt that the community will be able or will want to use it.

4.0 Location

The Town Hall / Museum / Library is situated just below the centre of the Town on the main thoroughfare (High Street – see plan C1), it is within easy walking distance of the majority of the population of the town and is well sited for people to visit whilst visiting the shops and services offered by the Town Centre.

The new community high school is to be sited 1 mile north of the current Town Hall/Museum/Library on a new site on the outskirts of Kinross, and will not be convenient for many of the townspeople.

5.0 Conclusion

The facilities contained in the existing Town Hall will not be adequately replaced by those being offered in the new community high school.

There are indications that they will too small, will not provide adequate access, will be badly located for most of the community and will not replace some of the key elements of the Town Hall accommodation.