

For various reasons some Dundonnell residents are upset about the proposed closure of Badcaul Primary School. Not least of these reasons is the journey distance to and from the alternative primary school in Ullapool. For young children travelling that distance on a daily term time basis is a considerable undertaking.

However, residents have had to acknowledge - however reluctantly - that the current reality of so few youngsters now living in Dundonnell makes it financially untenable for the Highland Council to keep the school open.

Residents having recognised that fact, I wonder if there may be an outside chance that, if in the interim an alternative community use of the school side of the building (not including the residential side) can be made and run by the community (having negotiated tenure on a rental basis) there might be a possibility that one day the school section could be returned into the possession of the Highland Council to be reactivated as a school, should the Dundonnell population once again include young families

Probably a forlorn hope but a suggestion anyway!

The Highland Small Communities Housing Trust could be approached to ascertain if they would be interested in not only building two houses in the spacious playground area but also making the school house available as a viable residential property. Hopefully a realistic option for them because their expenditure would be greatly lessened by the fact that access, electricity, water, sewerage, a large parking area and even fibre optic high speed broadband are already in place.

The school – inclusive of hall, toilets, classrooms, small office and kitchen - would be a valuable resource for a community trust to operate. They could offer the facilities for a variety of uses: meetings; classes; activities; craft sessions; craft markets; exhibitions; talks etc. All of which happenings would have to raise money towards rental from the HC, insurance and maintenance. Plus for the services of someone willing to be a caretaker. A tall order but, with enough commitment, perhaps a possibility!

Obviously, the child sized toilets would have to be altered for adult usage (although there is already one standard toilet in place) and wheelchair access would have to be installed. There is already a substantial pot of money lying dormant - collected many years ago by community members for the intention of creating a building for the above mentioned usage. That money could, hopefully, be utilised if the school is acquired for local use and if there is community agreement.

That erstwhile community group – known as DACE (Dundonnell Area Community Enterprise) disbanded and the funds that were raised have not been used.

I am an elderly resident who has lived in Dundonnell since the nineties. The area was thriving back then. It would be so uplifting to see it even partially regenerated because now it is dying.

Maureen Stewart. The Bothy, Durnamuck, Dundonnell, IV23 2QZ