

Dear Mr Jackson and/or whom it concerns,

Whilst I realise this letter probably comes too late to be considered as formal representation on the proposal to discontinue with provision of education at Roy Bridge Primary School, I hope nevertheless that you might allow me to express some personal thoughts on the matter.

As a parent of 3 former pupils of Roy Bridge Primary School and as a teacher myself at the school for 30 years, I have a particular interest in and knowledge of the school. Roy Bridge was a thriving, well attended and much loved school that overcame attempts to close it by Highland Council in the late 1990's and early 2000's, its reputation as a high achieving provider of Primary Education well known and respected. It was only when Nursery Education became available at the new Spean Bridge Primary School that the school roll began to fall. Without similar nursery provision at Roy Bridge, it was inevitable that in time Roy Bridge numbers would dwindle, pupils carrying on into P1 at the bigger school as younger family members also went to the nursery there.

The long lapse of time, however, since the mothballing of the school at Easter 2017, followed eventually by a well attended public meeting at Roy Bridge Hall in September 2019 supporting the continuing of the school, has been a great disappointment and served only to see a much loved school become neglected, apparently forgotten by Highland Council. The main schoolroom is housed in the original stone building, a proud place of education since its origin in 1874 when the Education (Scotland) Act 1872 came into force making elementary education for all children between the ages of 5 and 13 mandatory. Generations of local families have attended the little school which has been at the heart of the village community for almost 150 years, and there are more families today (including those of past pupils) who would do likewise and attend their own village school if there were provision for it.

The school's future looks bleak and it is true that the Roy Bridge community and parents of prospective pupils at the school (not already attending Spean Bridge PS), have not been fully informed of developments throughout the consultation process. If closure is the result, then I would earnestly ask the Highland Council to make the school and its environs available for community use. The old school building would make a wonderful heritage centre and there are other imaginative possibilities for its future use. Please do not destroy this longstanding bastion of education so beloved and historically important to this close-knit though wide-spread community in the Braes of Lochaber.

I would just add that throughout the years the school has been mothballed, the lights in the demountable classroom have been on day and night, it would seem on a daily basis. I have reported this a number of times when I have been past and seen it for myself. I shudder at the thought of the cost of the electric bill resulting from this terrible waste of power and of money!!

I apologise for this late response and thank you for considering it.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret Sargent