

MIDLOTHIAN COUNCIL – FORM TO BE USED TO LODGE A PETITION

Before completing this form you should read Midlothian Council's "Procedures for Dealing with Petitions" which can be found on the Council's website at www.midlothian.gov.uk/petitions Copies can also be obtained by telephoning the Council Secretariat on 0131 271 3156.

The completed form should be delivered:-

- by email to petitions@midlothian.gov.uk; or
- by mail or by hand to Petitions Staff, Council Secretariat, Corporate Resources Division, Midlothian Council, Midlothian House, Buccleuch Street, Dalkeith, EH22 1DN.

If you require any further information or advice, please contact the Petitions Staff, Council Secretariat by telephoning 0131 271 3156.

Details of Principal Petitioner	
Please enter the name of person raising the petition. Please include a contact address to which correspondence may be sent and a contact telephone number. Only the principal petitioner's name and no other details will be made public.	
Name:	Paddy Carstairs
Address:	18 Lothian Terrace
	Newtongrange
	Midlothian
	EH22 4QL
Tel No:	
e-mail:	
Petition Statement	
Please state clearly the purpose of your petition and what action you wish Midlothian Council to take.	
<p>This petition demands Midlothian Council shows its commitment to the community facilities in Newtongrange that have been considered for closure in the second stage consultation on the new Newbattle High School, namely Newbattle Swimming Pool, Newtongrange Leisure Centre, Newbattle Community Learning Centre and Newtongrange Library. In particular the Council is called on to:</p> <p>a) keep these facilities under Council ownership and management;</p> <p>b) plan and implement a regular repair and maintenance programme that includes resolving any backlog of repairs to prolong the life of each facility.</p> <p>When the second stage consultation on the new Newbattle High School commenced, many people were alarmed and angry that the closure of eight local facilities in Gorebridge, Mayfield and Newtongrange was being proposed. The Council published information and ratings about the running costs, condition and fitness for purpose of each facility, with consideration being limited to financial cost. When this information was challenged by members of the public, it was quickly revised by Council officials, with the ratings for condition and fitness for purpose showing sudden improvement, and maintenance costs reduced.</p> <p>Social and environmental costs did not feature in the consultation document, nor was there any qualitative impact assessment.</p>	

At public meetings in each village community, vociferous opposition has been expressed against the proposed closures, and thousands of signatures were gathered in petitions against the closure of each of the local facilities in Newtongrange. People want their services to stay in the village and expressed horror at the social and environmental consequences of their closure and relocation in the new school. Since then, both the SNP and Labour parties have issued official public statements confirming that neither party will vote to close any local facility when the matter is considered at the Council meeting on 25 June. However, no assurance has been given that the local facilities will continue to receive from the Council the investment required to prolong their lives, and there is a growing fear that the Council intends to proceed with a strategy that results in the closure of our local facilities.

Scenario Four is not a legitimate option. No community group has expressed any readiness or willingness to manage our facilities. Our services must remain under Council control with proper investment and maintenance for the future.

Action taken to resolve issues of concern before submitting the Petition

Before a petition is submitted, you may have already raised the issue in question with the relevant Council Division or other agency and it would be helpful if you could briefly outline what measures if any you have taken. This could include, for example, details of any individuals or organisations approached. Please limit any information to no more than 4 sides of A4 paper.

1. Public meetings held to discuss proposals - overwhelming opposition to possibility of closure of local facilities.
2. Meetings by Council officials with stakeholder groups - opposition to closure directly expressed.
3. Petitions against closure of Newtongrange facilities gather thousands of signatures.
4. Widespread lobbying and correspondence with Council members expressing concern and opposition to closures.
5. Information, finances and ratings in Council publication "Making Choices" challenged and disputed - information quickly revised with ratings for condition and fitness for purpose improved.
6. Petitions against the closure of Newtongrange Library and Newbattle Pool considered by the Petitions Committee.
7. March and rally against closures and demand that Council retains control of facilities held on 31 May and attended by approx 300 people.
8. Further petition demanding the Council retains control of facilities is currently in circulation and attracting high level of support.

Presenting your Petition

As the principal petitioner you will be invited to appear before the Council's Petitions Committee to speak in support of the petition and also to answer any questions which members of the Committee may wish to put to you and assist them in reaching their decision.

You may be accompanied by one supporter who may speak on your behalf.

Signature of Principal Petitioner

When satisfied that the petition meets all the criteria outlined in the Procedures for Dealing with Petitions, the Principal Petitioner should sign and date the form in the box below.

All other signatures gathered should be appended to the form.

Signature

PADDY CARSTAIRS

Date

09.06.13

(Please type your name if sending by e-mail)

Name in block capitals

PADDY CARSTAIRS

(Please type your name if sending by e-mail)

Appended Information

Please ensure that the following items are appended to this form:-

- Other signatories to the petition (if any)
- Copies of relevant correspondence
- Any additional information for consideration

Submission

Please submit this form and attachments, by mail or in person, to:-

Petitions Staff
Council Secretariat
Midlothian Council
Midlothian House
Buccleuch Street
Dalkeith
EH22 1DN

or by email to petitions@midlothian.gov.uk