

Sent: 25 June 2016 15:25

To: cal adminmid

Subject: Black Isle education centre

This centre is being closed to save money. The venue has not been maintained in order to save money. Few children have been referred to the facility in recent years in order to avoid costs, and in order to defend the arguments for the closure of the facility. Any plant will die if it is not watered.

It remains the case that a few special children in each cohort fail to thrive in a traditional school setting. They may be diagnosed with a range conditions from behavioural disorders, attachment disorders, anxiety, autistic spectrum disorders, oppositional defiant disorders or sensory processing disorders. Or, they may not be diagnosed with any disorder at all but instead remain a mystery to the professionals they encounter, but one thing is certain: They are NOT thriving in a traditional school. For these few, a centre like this could be a wonderful resource and an opportunity to learn. For the families of these children, it could represent hope. It could be a place that cares. It is a lie to say that all children can succeed in a traditional school environment with the right support. Some cannot.

The location of this venue is very special. It is peaceful, it has many natural resources such as beaches and woodland that offer opportunities for forest school and beach school approaches. These sensory experiences can form the basis of healthy functioning. It is also commutable. The Black Isle has many gardening and community allotment projects and a tradition of growing that the community could share with these precious children with special needs. Some children from local schools are benefitting from this type of experience. The Black Isle has a rich diversity of the arts. This richness in the expressive arts can be a powerful medium for beginning the process of positive and meaningful communication and connection. The Black Isle has a horse riding centre for the disabled facility which could be accessed from the education centre. There are many businesses that could provide community-based training and work experience.

The education centre could have new life breathed into it and it could become an example of excellence and of community centred education for a broader group of children who fail to thrive in a school setting. It is a lie to say the area would be unaffected by loss of this provision. The Black Isle would lose the opportunity to share its rich resources with those most in need of them.