

On the closure of Station Street Public Conveniences

Questions:

- **From Keith Barnett:**

As part of the recent decision to close the Station Street public toilets in Atherstone, the availability of the toilets in the leisure centre and memorial hall were cited as suitable alternatives. In response to the council's plans to form a Leisure Facilities Local Authority Trading Company, can the council please commit that access to public toilets in these facilities will not be reduced as a result of these changes?

- **From Mike Pitts:**

- a) In view of the planned closure of the facility at the Atherstone Bus Station from 1st April 2022 what will be the alternative proposals to provide toilet facilities to the public on the following dates when the alternative and free public venues like the Leisure Centre and Council offices will be closed.

Year 2022/23:

- Good Friday
 - Easter Monday
 - May Day
 - Spring Bank Holiday
 - Queen's Jubilee Bank Holiday
 - Late Summer Bank Holiday
 - Christmas Day
 - Boxing Day
 - New Year's Day
- b) What additional street signposting will be provided directing people to alternative toilet facilities in the town
- c) What changes will be made to the various maps of the town as well as signage in the pay and display car parks which currently show the only public toilets available in the bus station?
- d) Will the disabled toilet in the Memorial Hall which also includes the baby changing facility and which can only be accessed currently by a Radar Key now be made available to all users

Response from Cllr Symonds, Chairman of the Resources Board:

The Council has taken the difficult decision to close the public conveniences in Station Street, Atherstone due to the costs of continuing to operate and maintain them when the pressures on the Council's budgets remain very high.

One of the reasons why this decision was taken was because alternative public facilities exist a short distance from the Station Street site (at the main Council Offices and Atherstone Leisure Centre). Both these provide safe accessible facilities within fully staffed public buildings free from the antisocial behaviour which affects stand-alone public conveniences. The toilets are designed for disabled users, and as such

mean that suitable facilities remain accessible within the town centre, even following the closure of the Station Street site. Those facilities will continue to remain open to the public on the same basis as they are now once the LATCo has been established. New signage has already been commissioned to point residents and visitors to alternative public facilities in the town. In addition to the toilet facilities provided by the Council at its own buildings, there are several private sector providers within Atherstone.

Furthermore, although the public conveniences in Station Street will close at the end of March, the Council is confident that through working with the private sector, an enhanced facility on the current site which will include the provision of publicly accessible toilets, will be developed over the coming months. This, taken with the alternative facilities provided elsewhere within the town, will mean that the disruption over bank holidays will be kept to a minimum.

Finally, there were further points raised ahead of tonight's meeting which, although due to their timing and content were not able to be dealt with through the formal process, I am happy to address now:

One questioner asked about the possibility of establishing a Disabled People's Forum and I have already asked officers to investigate this further and report back with recommendations. A second question was raised about grant applications for Changing Places Facilities. This is something the Council has previously looked into and, indeed, a Changing Places facility has already been provided in North Warwickshire. The Council believes that user-friendly facilities housed within existing public buildings are safer, cleaner and more accessible and the Council will explore the use of future grant funding to deliver such facilities on that basis. Finally, a petition on the decision to close the public conveniences in Station Street has recently been received by the Council and will be dealt with in line with the Council's established process.