

Saddleworth and Lees District Executive

Community Toilets Scheme Report

Report of Saddleworth Parish Council

24 July 2014

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Purpose of Report

The District Executive is asked to consider contributing £4,100 towards the cost of the scheme in the current financial year.

The first Community Toilet scheme was set up by Richmond Council in 2006, a number of councils have developed similar schemes.

One of the questions in the Saddleworth Parish Plan Questionnaire was:
The Parish Council should fund the provision of good public toilet facilities in key locations in Saddleworth by an increase in the precept (Parish Council tax) of perhaps £5 per household per year.

The responses were Strongly agree 25.62%, Agree 37.56%, No opinion 9.45%, Disagree 18.33% and Strongly disagree 9.04%.

In February 2010 the Parish Council and Saddleworth and Lees District Partnership agreed to run a pilot scheme from 29th March for six months. The aim of the scheme was to provide clean, safe and accessible public toilets in more convenient locations for residents and visitors. Businesses allow members of the public to use their toilet facilities free of charge during normal opening hours and without the need to make a purchase. Participating premises display a sticker indicating that they are participating in the scheme. The businesses receive a small annual fee based on the opening times and the facilities offered. The aim of the scheme is to provide accessible toilets across the area.

Six premises joined the pilot with other premises joining later, they are currently eleven businesses on the scheme:

- Saddleworth Craft Co-operative, Delph
- The Old Bell Inn, Delph
- The Three Crowns, Austerlands
- The Rams Head, Denshaw
- The Swan, Dobcross

The Diggle Hotel, Diggle
The Royal George, Greenfield
The Little Shop, Uppermill
Granby Arms, Uppermill
The White Hart Inn, Lydgate
The Roebuck, Strinesdale

The toilets at the Oldham Council Brownhill Visitor Centre and the Civic Hall, (on Monday to Friday only) are included on the scheme but no payments are made in respect of either of these premises.

The scheme was funded jointly by the Parish Council and Saddleworth and Lees District Partnership in 2010 -11. Funding for signage was provided from the Oldham Council Tourism budget.

In 2011-12 Oldham Council undertook a review of public toilets in the Borough and agreed to provide £5,000 to each District Partnership area to support Community Toilets schemes, in addition to the Parish Council and District Partnership funding. As a result of the budget cuts this funding is not available in 2014 – 15.

By the nature of the scheme it is extremely difficult to identify the usage of the facilities, by the public, and whether it represents good value for money. In April the Parish Council agreed to fund the scheme until end of September and undertake a review of the scheme. The Environment Committee has now recommended to the Parish Council that the existing scheme should be funded until March 2015. During this time a plan will be drawn up for a Saddleworth Public Toilet scheme which includes a review of the existing community toilet scheme and incorporates a plan for the Wade Row public toilets in Uppermill. A survey of residents will be carried out to determine whether the Saddleworth community is prepared to fund the scheme as part of the precept.

The current annual cost of the scheme is £8,200. The District Executive is asked to consider contributing £4,100 towards the cost of the scheme in the current financial year.