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## **WRITTEN QUESTION FOR SUBMISSION TO MORAY COUNCIL ON 29 JUNE 2022**

### **QUESTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLORS ROSS AND HARRIS**

Given the fact that Fiddich Park:

- Is an integral part of the Speyside Way – a major tourist attraction in Moray and not part of Craigellachie Village and, therefore should not have been included in the ‘one toilet per community policy’.
- That the route between Fiddich Park and Aberlour has been upgraded to make it more inclusive and accessible for all. The corollary of this being that under The Equalities Act, Moray Council is expected to make reasonable adjustments for those with protected characteristics.
- The area is to be ‘made over’ to repair the car park and build campervan facilities.
- The Park, and its immediate surroundings, is subject to increased use by walkers, those pursuing river activities, wild campers and e-bike storage in situ.

In light of the above facts can monies be found, on environmental health and equalities grounds, to provide 2 portable toilets, one of which should be disability friendly, for Fiddich Park?

### **RESPONSE**

The Council set a policy of one toilet per community on 15 May 2018. For the Craigellachie area it was decided that the facility on Victoria Street, Craigellachie would remain open and that the toilets at Fiddich Park would close. The toilet facilities at Victoria Street are central to a variety of facilities and easily accessed from the Speyside Way. This decision was made with consideration of the impacts on all members of the public through an Equalities Impact Assessment. There is signage at Fiddich Park directing those in need of toilet facilities to the Victoria Street toilets.

The decision to install chemical toilet waste disposal facilities in the summer of 2021 at Fiddich Park was made as part of improvements funded by the Regional Tourism Infrastructure Fund designed to alleviate pressures experienced through an increased number of visitors to Moray. Of particular concern to many communities has been the ability to appropriately dispose of waste from campervan toilets. Fiddich Park was chosen as a site because of its proximity to parking facilities, and because the toilet facilities at Victoria Street were not suitable for the addition of the waste disposal facilities. The ongoing costs of operation for the waste disposal will be recovered through the fee for use which was agreed by Council on 12 May 2021. The same fund is being used for some modest improvements to the car park, but this is not designed to encourage additional use or camping.

The Speyside Way is a long distance path of which approximately 35 miles (not including the Tomintoul spur) are in Moray, and complements a number of other similar routes around Moray, including parts of the Dava Way and the coastal path. In common with other long distance paths there can be significant lengths without toilet facilities along this route. In the Craigellachie and Aberlour area there are public toilets in both villages, easily accessible from the path. The recent upgrades to the Speyside Way between Craigellachie and Cragganmore have been designed to encourage more everyday shorter cycling and walking journeys between the settlements and employment sites on the route, rather than being specifically to encourage leisure use, although this is welcomed. Any camping in the Fiddich Park area is informal, on the same basis that short stay 'wild' camping is permitted across Scotland.

In summary, the Council has set a clear policy on the provision of council funded toilet facilities, and there are no specific environmental or equalities issues that would require the provision of additional toilet facilities in Craigellachie. Should the local community wish to work with the council on the funding and provision of additional facilities, as in other areas, officers would be happy to progress discussions.