

North Norfolk District Council and Potter Heigham Parish Council meeting 25th November 2024, regarding the closure of the public toilets

In attendance

Steve Blatch – Chief Executive North Norfolk District Council (NNDC)
Tim Adams – Councillor – Leader of NNDC
Harry Blathwayt – District Councillor - NNDC
Donald Pickering – Vice-Chairman Potter Heigham Parish Council
Stan Chapman – Potter Heigham Parish Councillor
Laura Bateman – Clerk, Potter Heigham Parish Council

Notes

Steve Blatch opened the meeting with an overview of the difficult financial situation that currently faces NNDC, with a saving of £1.8million required in the 2025/26 budget. There are additional financial increases they have to meet including increased wage cost and energy costs.

The biggest financial strain they face is housing which is a statutory function that legally has to take priority over the optional services the council provides. There are currently 62 families in the district in temporary accommodation including over 70 children.

Other statutory functions NNDC legally have to provide are public protection, planning and environmental health. Other services are not mandatory and have faced cuts.

There are six toilet blocks that face closure due to being deemed low use and that do not generate any income from car parks, this includes Potter Heigham. It is strongly felt that Latham's should be providing toilets for their customers. Planning regulations will be checked to see if they are legally required to provide customer toilets. NNDC will write to Latham's with the offer of gifting the toilet block. Another option that NNDC will explore is a sponsorship model between the parish council and the local businesses in the area, this would be managed by NNDC.

NNDC strongly advised against the use of any compost and self-cleaning toilets, particularly in rural areas such as Potter Heigham. The toilets would have to have an emergency response in case someone got trapped inside, and in rural areas a quick response may not be possible. In their experience customer paying toilets take a long time to have any return on investment, and with relatively low use, this could be years for Potter Heigham.

NNDCs budget will be presented to cabinet on 20th January 2025 and voted on 19th February 2025.