

South Ayrshire Council
Wellington Square
Ayr



Dear Sirs,

Community Asset Transfer Proposal for Muirhead Activity Centre, Troon

As a member of OIR, Troon I oppose the proposal for a Community Asset Transfer to Dundonald Gymnastics Club. As indicated below such a transfer would not meet the needs of the majority of the residents/users. However, should it be decided to transfer then it should not be sold for any less than full market value as to do otherwise would be an act of financial mismanagement on the part of the Council.

The objections are as follows:

Troon Opportunities in Retirement currently use this facility each Friday morning for seniors' badminton. As Dundonald Gymnastics Club's intention is to install a sprung floor and have equipment permanently in situ this will prevent our group utilising the facility. At a recent Troon Community Council Meeting a representative from the council indicated that discussions would take place with any group likely to be displaced by the Asset Transfer. It was also stated that the council would facilitate an alternative suitable venue for each group. To date our group have not received any form of communication regarding this matter.

Dundonald Gymnastics Club's primary focus is on providing a dedicated training centre for its membership. Reducing its waiting list is a priority thereby increasing usage which in turn reduces availability for any other group/individual. Indeed Dundonald Gymnastics Club has clearly stated in their Asset Transfer submission that use of the centre by individuals, local groups and organisations will be limited to non-sporting activities. This aspect of the Asset Transfer Plan is in the medium to long term future of the club therefore not immediately available to other groups upon transfer. Access will also be limited due to the permanent placement of specialist equipment. This has the effect of displacing the current community of groups and individuals who use the centre.

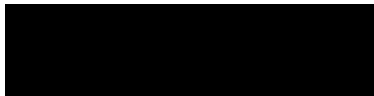
One of the main purposes of an Asset Transfer is that the community benefits should include social well-being and consideration of inequalities. If local residents, particularly those on fixed or low incomes, need to source alternative sporting facilities at a distance from their homes it would put them at an economic disadvantage. Muirhead Tenants and Residents Association run many community activities from The Activity Centre which already supports community cohesion. The loss of use of the centre will have a direct negative impact on the residents of Muirhead.

Muirhead Activity Centre has a user base from a local population of around 15,000 people, which is growing rapidly. It is the most utilised of all the Council Activity Centres. At a time when house building is increasing and therefore the population is rising, this proposal is in effect reducing access to indoor sporting and social facilities. We object to a tax payer facility being transferred to a business focusing primarily on gymnastics (or any single usage). It is understood that transfer value of £1 has been proposed, which is totally unacceptable – the Council have indicated that they have a very large deficit and in these circumstances any Asset Transfer should be at market value for the premises and land to ensure value for money for council taxpayers

The asset Transfer panel should refuse the request from Dundonald Gymnastics Club and instigate an investigation into why Council Activity Centres are not financially sustainable for communities. Perhaps a revised pricing structure is required.

I look forward to receiving your response to this communication.

Yours faithfully

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