



**Office of Corri Wilson MP**

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Eileen Howat  
Chief Executive  
South Ayrshire Council  
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**Re: Community Hall Utility Bills (Ref: ZA1755/LC)**

Dear Eileen

Hot on the heels of concerns around the future of rural galas, I am now receiving a number of complaints from rural community groups who have been presented with huge bills for lighting and heating community halls.

It is my understanding that these bills far outweigh the incomes these groups have and will result in the groups having to hand control of these buildings over to South Ayrshire Council. I am curious to find out exactly how much South Ayrshire Council expects to save by passing these costs on to community groups, given that the community groups are unable to pay. Surely, if the net result is the Council running the halls rather than the community groups, the Council will have to pay the bills anyway and will incur more expense in taking on the management of the buildings. I am also concerned that groups had no idea these bills were coming, which seems to suggest a distinct lack of consultation prior to the decision being made.

I am also seeking clarity on the position of community-run halls which continue to be used by the Council. I believe the primary school in Ballantrae uses the village hall for gym classes, while the community centre in Girvan has space specifically for the use of your Social Work Department. Will the Council be paying rent and part of the utility bills for these facilities, and will you be paying the community groups who currently manage buildings you will be using next week as polling stations?

It seems to me to be extremely regrettable that these latest budgetary decisions are having such an impact on our rural communities for very little financial gain. It is disappointing that the Council seem so keen to abandon any existing goodwill held by our rural groups, particularly considering the fantastic work many of them are doing to make South Ayrshire such a great place to live.

I look forward to your response.

Regards

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Ayr, Carrick and Cumnock

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