**Reasonable Alternative to Closure for Dalry Secondary School**

**Preliminary Requirements**

**Balmaclellan Village Hall**

**Monday 26th January**

**Attendance – 2 Stakeholders**

**Option 1 - Status Quo**

*1. Education Benefits*

- None

*1. Effect on the local community*

- Small number mean S3 and S4 combined and S1 and S2 – small numbers this is beneficial.
- Acknowledge from D&G Council that their decisions have caused this.
- Frustration in how we got here
  - Actually encouraging pupils to leave because of the decisions made.
  - Not encouraging pupils to stay or new ones come.
  - Poor management.

*1. Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- None.

**Option 2 – Closure**

*2. Education Benefits*

- None to local children, too much travel at a young ae S1 – S2.
- Currently primary use secondary (kitchens, gym hall, HE etc), how would this work, would the building be open and maintained or rebuilt?

*2. Effect on the local community*

- Detrimental to local employment, business, housing prices and could cause further rural decline in population.

*2. Effect of any different travel arrangements*

**Option 3 - Temporary Closure (formally 'Mothballing')**

*3. Education Benefits*

- Not good, no secondary education would be detrimental to the Glenkens.
- Children would spend too much time travelling.

*3. Effect on the local community*

- Not in favour of this, S1-S2 should continue as a minimum.
- If mothballed unlikely school would re-open, detrimental to local business, employment and even house prices.

*3. Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- None.

**Option 4 - Nursery to S4 provision**

*4. Education Benefits*

- This is my preferred choice. However, authorities would need to address why parents are moving children elsewhere and reverse this trend.

- This model previously worked. Joint manage with CDHS has been detrimental to Dalry School.

*4. Effect on the local community*

- Stability in the community.
- This previous model worked well.

*4. Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- Remains the same.

**Option 5 - Nursery to S2 provision**

*5. Education Benefits*

- Less travel time for smaller children keeping them at Dalry secondary as long as possible.
- Small class size – personal attention (more of it).
- Great facilities at Dalry Secondary School, labs, home economics, workshops.

*5. Effect on the local community*

- Important to have secondary education available, without it a rural population (will) decline.

*5. Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- Some parents now using school buses to outlying areas, will have to transport students to Dalry for S3 and S4 transport (by bus).
- Education (department) needs to encourage pupils go to Dalry.

**Option 6 (stakeholder generated) – Home Schooling HUB supported by D&G Council**

*6. Education Benefits*

- Hybrid between physical and virtual school.

*6. Effect on the local community*

- Secondary education would remain in community.

*6. Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- Reduced travel.

**10. Any other comments**

- Should be an investigation whys student number have fallen in secondary in the secondary from 50-60 in 2018 to 13 in 2026. Independent study.
- What have the authorities done to encourage students to stay at Dalry Secondary?
- Policies of previous and current headmasters have contributed to the decline of pupil numbers, major reason for decline.
- Why did John Thin not look into the reasons for decline proposed to him by a parent.
- Why did Mr Foster close a year group against the wishes of the parents and parent council resulting in the loss of 5 students (2025-26) and potentially 4 more students (2026-27).
- Why have parent/student been actively encouraged to leave Dalry school.
- Why were students directly consulted upon about which school they prefer (Dalry or CDHS) without parental discussion first.
- Why haven't the authorities looked at combining Kells and Dalry primaries to increase the intake for Dalry Secondary School.

**Reasonable Alternative to Closure for Dalry Secondary School**

**Preliminary Requirements**

**Kells Primary School**

**Monday 26th January**

**Attendance – 5 Stakeholders**

**Option 1 - Status Quo**

*Education Benefits*

- Very small at the moment, so not great.
- Kids can really flourish in small classes, but it seems the education department hasn't been prioritising the children's education.

*Effect on the local community*

- Insecurity in current model lacks community confidence.
- Lots of gossip and inaccurate information going around.
- Why is only 24% attending?

*Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- None.

**Option 2 – Closure**

*2. Education Benefits*

- Get to go to a bigger school.
- Study more subjects.
- Having more space to learn.

*2. Effect on the local community*

- People might be annoyed.
- People and families will move out of the area reducing population further.
- The school closing will not attract new families to the area.
- This will ultimately have a negative effect on the local economy, community and wellbeing of children and their families.

*2. Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- All my friends can travel with me on the school bust
- Much longer commute to schools:

- Children more tired.
- Bad behaviour and vaping on bus.
- After school/extra-curricular activities further which disrupt family life.
- Children develop friendships further away from where they live.

- Some families will not choose to send their children to Castle Douglas so could have to travel significant distances, eating into family time, work life and expenses.

**Option 3 - Temporary Closure (formally 'Mothballing')**

*Education Benefits*

- Allows kids like me to try Castle Douglas High School (CDHS).

*Effect on the local community*

- No mothballed school has ever opened.

*Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- None.

**Option 4 - Nursery to S4 provision**

*4. Education Benefits*

- Would prefer to go to bigger school in S1.
- Wouldn't have to move schools abruptly.
- Small, focussed education tailored to pupils, lots of benefits to smaller class sizes.

*4. Effect on the local community*

- Keep the school as a hub for the community.
- Positive for the community:
- Keep families in the area.
- Attracts new families to the area.
- Local option for local families.

*4. Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- Travel time would be shorter.
- To have a regular bus service 7 days a week.

**Option 5 - Nursery to S2 provision**

*Education Benefits*

- Could use facilities e.g., home economics, sciences, library etc.

*Effect on the local community*

- Keep local facilities open as school still open to S2.
- One head(teacher) who could transform provision.
- Keep secondary school open in Dalry.
- Keep all Schools open.

*Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- Keep travel times to a minimum.

**Option 6 (stakeholder generated) – Nursery to S4 All-Through Glenkens School**

- Nursery to S4 all-through school.
- Merge Kells into Dalry Primary:
  - Would increase enrolment from catchment to secondary.
- Dedicated head teacher(s) not shared with CDHS.
- Upgraded campus facilities:
  - Modern and equipped.
  - Swimming pool and gym for children and local community to use and extra revenue stream.
- Adult education post 3PM and 'college' classes for S5-6 aged pupils in local economic trades:
  - Wind farms/renewables, forestry and farming, building trades.
- Draw on community volunteers to support lessons, specific learning and specialist areas/topics.
- After school provision.
- How it could work:
  - Dalry primary moves to Kells whilst (Dalry) school development takes place.
  - ELC moves back to community centre (or Kells if space).
  - Secondary pupils go to other schools.
  - Launch Year:
    - Lots of PR.
    - New headteacher and teachers.

- Attractive campus.
- All secondaries coming up in catchment to enrol from X year.
  - After launch, Kells is closed:
- Cost savings.

*Education Benefits*

- Children get a detailed and closely supported education with space to thrive.
- Connections built at nursery aren't lost at primary.
- Children get a varied education
  - 'Traditional.'
  - 'Rural Skills.'
- Business sponsors/supporters.
- Local community involved:
  - Fitter and healthier.
  - Supporting lifelong learning.
- Amazing campus attracts pupils from out with catchment:
  - Makes it more attractive for the best teachers.

*Effect on the local community*

- Extremely positive effect:
  - Supports lifelong learning and health and wellbeing.
  - Attracts families and businesses to the area.
    - Improving the local economy
    - No derelict/rotting building.
- School finances can be focussed into one super school:
  - An exemplar model for rural lifelong education
- Children will grow up more likely to stay/return to area after having a positive experience at the Dalry Campus.

*Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- Would keep kids from travelling larger distances to school:
  - Reduced CO2 emissions.
  - Reduced cost and time for families travelling.

**10. Any other comments**

- To keep local schools open = great for the community
- I think we should be looking at the children who go to these schools, they sometimes do better in smaller classrooms and not looking at sending them to bigger schools.

**Reasonable Alternative to Closure for Dalry Secondary School**

**Preliminary Requirements**

**Carsphairn Village Hall**

**Thursday 5th February**

**Attendance – 7 Stakeholders**

**Option 1 - Status Quo**

*1. Education Benefits*

- As was the clear case the Carsphairn Primary, educational benefits are by no means reduced by small numbers of pupils. In fact, in many cases quite the opposite is true. This was one of the arguments for 'mothballing' Carsphairn Primary.
- I would say, as a retired primary school teachers that small classes are far beneficial in educational terms through not necessarily on a social basis though most children have friends outside of school where the social side is present.
- It is well accepted that small classes lead to better outcomes. Numbers need to be maintained to make it viable. The council should make adequate provision.
- Fine, but D&G Council must work to improve attendance and roll numbers.

*1. Effect on the local community*

- The school will presumably continue to hold events such as fairs, Christmas shows etc which brings the community together. The community will be more cohesive with a school in their midst where their young people can be educated together.
- Trouble is + decreasing rolls lead to ever decreasing numbers. The school needs (but is unlikely to get) a forward thinking, enthusiastic head as the right person could turn it around.
- Very largely is down to the personality of the headteacher i.e. a go ahead head results in a go ahead school which attracts the children in the catchment plus others out with the catchment.

*1. Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- *No need for different travel arrangements.*

**Option 2 – Closure**

*2. Education Benefits*

- None.
- None.

- There is little educational benefit in closing the school so that pupils need to travel out with their community for education.

*2. Effect on the local community*

- Need to retain what there is in the way of community and closure of any school in a highly rural village decimates the community. The school represents the beating heart of any community and brings people and families together.
- How can closure be reconciled with Scottish Government and D&G Councils states desire to foster rural regeneration.
- The school has had subject provision decimated that children have been forced to abandon Dalry HS and go to Castle Douglas if they wish to go to University. The council has consistently refused to consider other models e.g. children attending Dalry but participating in classes using video technology.
- Closure would have a huge effect on the future of the Glenkens. This is a huge rural area and needs to have local provision for children's education.

*2. Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- People with children will not move to the local area (Carsphairn) because the impact on travel times will be a deterrent. Travel times of more than an hour will have a terrible impact on the desirability of living here.
- It is not reasonable to expect children to leave home and travel 2 hours each way.
- We live 15 miles away from Dalry School and over 30 miles away from Castle Douglas. Dalry is already far enough, Castle Douglas is too far to travel.

**Option 3 - Temporary Closure (formally 'Mothballing')**

*3. Education Benefits*

- None
- Rural pupils are being discriminated against by not being able to be educated locally.

*3. Effect on the local community*

- Negative, abandoned building, no local school, losing potential pupils.
- Disastrous for the local community. We have already had 'mothballing' in Carsphairn. No School that has been 'mothballed' has ever been re-opened so mothballing really means closure.
- Although it clearly stated in statutory guidance for mothballing rural schools that mothballing is not the first stage of closure, I believe it is! How many mothballed schools actually re-open?
- The effect of mothballing is identical to full closure on the community.

*3. Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- Other schools are too far from us. Castle Douglas an hours drive away over 30 miles.
- Any changes would be negative and disadvantages local pupils in Carsphairn.

**Option 4 - Nursery to S4 provision**

*4. Education Benefits*

- All round education for full age range. Good option for all.
- If the school was properly resourced, people would want to attend a small school – as was the case in the past before council ran the school down.
- The small classes that would inevitably result in this arrangement would be beneficial educationally speaking.

*4. Effect on the local community*

- Positive for all, encourages new families to move here.
- It would be good for everyone – parents, pupils and the community.
- Would be supportive of the community – having such an age range being educated together in same building.

*4. Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- Perfectly manageable for all in the community.
- The status quo would be maintained.

**Option 5 - Nursery to S2 provision**

*5. Education Benefits*

- The small classes inevitably resulting in this arrangement would be beneficial educationally.
- Better than closure or mothballing.

*5. Effect on the local community*

- This would be preferable to closure – but would like the school to be built back up.
- Would support the local community as would provide a focus for them.
- Minimal, not overly negative.
- This would seem to be a pragmatic solution.

*5. Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- Not much, although too far for S3 and S4.

**Option 6 (stakeholder generated) - Nursery to S4 All-Through Glenkens School**

- Offer more from Dalry to attract parents/children back.
- Stop providing buses to Castle Douglas High School.
- Bring all Glenkens education into one place, nursery to S4, close Kells and (put) everything in Dalry.

6. *Education Benefits*

6. *Effect on the local community*

6. *Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- Long days – early starts, late returns.
- Road conditions not always favourable.
- Children (do) not have much time to spend with friends after long school days.

**Option 7 (stakeholder generated)**

- Use Dalry Secondary to provide education with additional subjects and teaching styles.
- Build the numbers back up.

*7. Education Benefits*

- Reduces time available for study.
- Personally, I have never been able to read 'on the road' as a passenger. Children will likely have adverse impact on their homework time.
- I assume by managed change the subjects available have been eroded at Dalry – which is not an acceptable (illegible).
- I think this would reduce the opportunities for children in the area to do extra-curricular activities.

*7. Effect on the local community*

- Disastrous rural economic impact. We are trying to encourage families to the area as government policy dictates they try to do. This flies in the face of building the community.
- Loss of jobs in the area. School staff. Ancillary as well as teachers. Teachers often bring families to an area.

*7. Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- For those based in the north of the county – travelling to Castle Douglas every day is unreasonable.
- Time taken – impact on carbon footprint.

**10. Any other comments**

- When are you going to come and talk to the community about holistic plans for a secure solution to education in the Glenkens that is fully supported by the L.A (Local Authority)?
- We should be discussing, in partnership, what is required to mitigate depopulations by mutually agreeing to a solution that won't scare families off by the rolling uncertainty. The solution should include nursery, primary and secondary education in the round, plus breakfast clubs and afterschool clubs and should be done in partnership with community provision. Then when we're all agreed and the commitments have been made, we can get on with promoting the Glenkens as a great place to live.

**Reasonable Alternative to Closure for Dalry Secondary School**

**Preliminary Requirements**

**Dalry Secondary School**

**Thursday 5th February**

**Attendance – 29 Stakeholders**

**Option 1 - Status Quo**

*1. Education Benefits*

- Continuity, local education, small year groups = more one-to-one teaching, teachers know pupils (one stakeholder agreed).
- A much calmer learning environment (one stakeholder agreed).
- Pupils relaxed with reduced travel stress (one stakeholder agreed).
- Calmer classes, less stress and more direct learning (one stakeholder agreed).
- Better relationships within the school community.
- Need confidence in long term provision for roll numbers to recover. Better quality learning experience and minimised disruption (one stakeholder agreed).
- Our children enjoy a small school, it's the benefit of a rural school (one stakeholder agreed).
- Curriculum can be adapted better to individual pupils' needs in a smaller school as long as there is continuity in teaching provision.
- Not sure there is any – school isn't working now.

*1. Effect on the local community*

- School attended by parents/grandparents. Community know their headteacher/teachers. Community supports school as family members attend it. Integration. Community buses could also benefit school. Is a core part of any community (one stakeholder agreed).
- Detrimental effect on the community. Better relationships with teachers in a rural school.
- Closure of Dalry Secondary will deter families from moving to the area. The school was a reason for myself starting my family here. Local businesses will be affected by a decline in new residents also.
- Close school and you close a beating heart of a local community – also you close the potential of an area to be vibrant, people to move here, businesses thrive etc.
- Loss of school will have a negative impact.
- If it's the only way to keep the school open it would do.

- Not sure much difference – community would see no change.

*1. Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- Trael times short – better for pupils, especially young ones. No drive/car families not left in difficult situations – pupil can attend after school events. Travel with pupils they know (one stakeholder agreed).
- To long to travel for pupils with learning difficulties (and for more distant pupils). Many pupils do not live on the bus route, so it takes longer to get to school (one stakeholder agreed).
- Travel time lengthens school day for our children. Dalry secondary is within walking distance, this is very beneficial for those children with additional support needs (three stakeholders agreed).
- Local schooling should be available in rural areas.
- Local schools are needed. We do not want to travel to other areas.
- Minimise travel time + environmental impact.
- If nothing else, walking to school has long term effects on health.
- From experience – bus journeys always take far longer then they appear on paper – multiple stops, kids not being ready – traffic-weather etc etc.
- No change.

**Option 2 – Closure**

*2. Education Benefits*

- No educational benefits in closing schools – longer time for children to travel (one stakeholder agreed).
- No much choice I experienced with my daughter because of that we have to moved her to Castle Douglas (one stakeholder agreed).
- I agree that there is more choice, but I believe my children would benefit more from a rural school (one stakeholder agreed).
- Larger class sizes don't always = a better school experience. Options for more social mixing/activities in larger school (but only if they can attend e.g. after school activities). More options/subject choices (another two stakeholder s agreed).
- I am an S1 pupil here and want to stay here as it benefits my education and is very accessible area for people living in areas like mine (one stakeholder agreed).
- No benefits for the children, my daughter will refuse to attend a big high school (one stakeholder agreed).

- I am a P6 and I want to stay in the same school when I go to secondary (one stakeholder agreed).
- None (one stakeholder agreed).
- None (one stakeholder agreed).
- How can there be an educational benefit to closing a school?
- None (one stakeholder agreed).

*2. Effect on the local community*

- Would permanently damage the local community (one stakeholder agreed).
- Families already dealing with stress will feel a lot more pressure (one stakeholder agreed).
- Families with young children's will not move in (one stakeholder agreed).
- Loss of school = loss of community = further rural depopulation/deprivation. Empty building = loss of major asset. Possibility of crime. Village eyesore. Loss of community pride. Families will not be attracted to the area. Cost of maintaining an empty building (one stakeholder agreed).
- Loss of a hub.
- None, loss of families who leave to be closer to a high school – shops suffer, kids feel less safe.
- Nothing good (one stakeholder agreed).
- Very negative, exacerbating de-population, harder to attract inward migration of businesses and people (one stakeholder agreed).
- Terrible impact: loss of community identity, pride and focal points, potential for development blight, loss of employer confidence in recruiting staff (one stakeholder agreed).
- Potential downward pressure on area as a potential home for families.

*2. Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- Children travelling further to attend school. Longer days for parents planning.
- Extremely stressful for parents and pupils who are already struggling with little travel to the school.
- Harder for parents who still have primary children in school and need to travel.
- Too far for pupils to travel from rural outlying areas – especially when very young. Pupils will miss out on after-school activities if parents cant/don't have transport. Parents and pupils forced to choose CDHA (i.e. no choice) if they require transport – inequality for poorer families.

- Travel arrangements already not great.
- Children tired from travel no time for homework.
- Too long a school day – my neurodivergent child tired out at the end of the school day in Dalry with limited travel (one stakeholder agreed).
- Disaster. What a thing for a community to bear (one stakeholder agreed).
- Very stressful for kids and parents – especially in winter (one stakeholder agreed).
- All students would have to choose between CDHS, or parents have to facilitate transport.

**Option 3 - Temporary Closure (formally 'Mothballing')**

*3. Education Benefits*

- Effectively the same as closure.
- None whatsoever.
- None to this community – take pupils out of the community.
- None.
- None at all, the children benefit immensely from this school.
- There are no educational benefits to 'mothballing' the school!
- None, my daughter wants Dalry secondary as it's small, she would prefer home schooling if it closes.
- None.
- None.
- None – same as closure.
- Building would deteriorate and become unfit.
- None – may as well close.

*3. Effect on the local community*

- Would be just as bad as closure. Would spend more to re-open – if ever it happened.
- Once 'mothballed' I do not believe it will ever re-open. Empty building – looks bad. Does not benefit community. Invites crime. Makes area 'look' deprived. Loss of school = loss of incentive for families to move into area/stay in area. Loss of community pride.
- Roll will never increase if area not attractive to families to move in.
- The same as closure with added stress of waiting on the numbers to rise.
- Will be not much family with children move in because no school.

- There would be the same effect as a closure. Local businesses affected as families move away and more families don't move to the area.
- Families will leave the area, this will impact housing, local shops and the community. I moved here for the rural location and the smaller school appealing for my children.
- Same as Closure.
- Same as closure, with added uncertainty.
- Development blight – visual reminder of what is no longer operating.
- No certainty – may as well close it.

*3. Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- Pupils may feel forced to choose CDHS over other schools due to transport affordability/availability. Long travel times for young children on rural roads. If after school activities offered at CDHS pupils from this area can't attend if they don't have transport – not equal opportunities. 'Free travel' offered as a way of encouraging pupils to choose CDHS over other school. Limits pupil and parent choice.
- Long travel times for children not living on the bus route.
- Bus travel times is lengthy adding more time to the school day is unnecessary.
- Longer school day due to traveling to Castle Douglas or Kirkcudbright.
- Longer school day.
- Uncertainty.
- Very negative and difficult for kids. Lack of continuity. Will exacerbate depopulation and make attracting inward migration and investment difficult.
- Same as closure, but with a visual reminder of what is lost. Worse than closure, if travel cost not covered.

**Option 4 - Nursery to S4 provision**

*4. Education Benefits*

- Continuity – confidence – stability. Pupils will feel less uprooted and will have time to prepare for S5-S6 transition. More one-one-one quality teaching. Rolls more likely to rise so low pupil numbers may rise. Long term education goals/plans can be set from nursery – secondary. Good school stability. Families not forced to make difficult education choices at too young an age. Pupils not becoming stressed about moving onto other schools when too young.
- Perfect for my 2 children 1 in secondary 1 in primary.
- Ideal arrangement for pupils and rural families, secure and safe.

- Familiarity for our children, safe known environment resulting in low stress levels and better learning.
- Familiar surrounding for children, smaller classes give more time for questions to teachers to enhance the learning experience.
- Better leadership on site. Shared headship does not work. Has the Council looked at how few actual hours of leadership are spent in Dalry and some deputes do not come to Dalry at all = inequality.
- Ideal arrangement – need to embrace hybrid learning as soon as possible.
- A better option, for all the cost of dedicated leadership, it would be better to not shared leadership.
- Would be good for those children who prefer small classes – BUT only if range of subjects are offered.

*4. Effect on the local community*

- Wonderful return to a 'through school' – continuity for parents/pupils/community. Each child feels confident about their school journey. Children will stay within their community – good community support.
- Community pride and involvement in their local school. More likely to support a school that they know a generations before have attended. Families will stay in the area due to stability/families will be deencouraged to come and stay when they see a thriving school.
- This is what the parents and children all want, to continue the work of this brilliant school it would keep the feeling of security and safety it brings. We are proud of the way things are.
- Children would be happy and as a parent I will be happy. The secondary is part of the nursery and primary anyway so makes sense to keep it open and in use.
- Sense of belonging, hub of the community.
- Very positive.
- Positive.
- Likely to encourage people to move to the area.

4. Effect of any different travel arrangements

- Low travel/distances for younger pupils. Bad weather will not mean long journeys for pupil pick-up. Pupils more likely to be able to attend after school events. Community can travel to school events more easily. Free travel to CDHS for S5-S6 – does not = pupil/parent choice if they don't have transport.
- Less stress on parents and children traveling to school from rural areas.

- Dalry school allows for quick response in an emergency. My child has voiced there opinion on travel by bus and is not in favour.
- Easier for parents who work full time. Kids don't need a long journey if unwell.
- Good local option.
- This is the best option transport wise.

**Option 5 - Nursery to S2 provision**

*5. Education Benefits*

- I do not feel this is a viable alternative, for a child in S2, in a rural school this would be a daunting prospect.
- This would be my 2nd choice after the S4 options. At least there is still continuity and stability for pupils and families. Families would be attracted to move into/stay in area. As children reach S3 they would feel more prepared for moving up. They may be offered better option choices/social events/activities at [above] S3 level. Single structure team = long term school and pupil planning. Smaller classes = more one to one teaching options. Not all children thrive in larger classes.
- Not viable if primary staff is to be used.
- Need to be show evidence that this works well with children.
- Hard to see this working. Preference would be to be a one place for all secondary.
- Could work for some students but may create transition issues moving schools after social groups have been created in the destination school.

*5. Effect on the local community*

- Community pride. Community involvement in their local school. Sense of generational continuity. Families more likely to move or stay in area.
- Important to retain this provision, even if such minimum provision.
- Doubt any effect – secondary would still be open.

*5. Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- Younger children (S3-S4) would still find travel from outlying areas a very long day. Free school transport only offered to CDHS – loss of choice for school for no car families. Local travel = better wellbeing for children. Many children don't live on the school bus route.
- Older children may adapt to travel needs better, but at what cost to families?

**Option 6 (stakeholder generated)**

- My 'big picture' proposal, supporting the evidence from last year's Glenkens and District Trust funded Glenkens Education Report, and i imagine the soon-to-be-released Council report on rural depopulation, would be a way to continue offering education in the Glenkens whilst also averting rural depopulation/reversing the trend (it would, i think, have a massive impact).
- A new Glenkens education hub campus/building on the Dalry school grounds, working in partnership with the local communities to find innovative funding solutions through wind farm and other potential community funds (see the community of Strontian in the Highlands – not the same but an example of an innovative solution).
- This campus would offer education from nursery through to college with the potential to encourage attendance of all catchment pupils age 0-18, as well as being exciting and innovative, so drawing in non-catchment pupils. So potentially 200+ pupils. This would be the partnership working between the Council and local communities, truly providing what our rural communities need to rebuild and regenerate and avert rural depopulation.

6. *Education Benefits*

- Our rural communities are unique and can't be compared to their rural counterparts and have different needs. Our rural schools are also different, and the people who live in our rural communities' value that. We have either moved here, or stayed here, with out children because we value our small schools and the education they provide. A small school setting offers an environment for individual children to think. Teachers, often also members of local, get to know pupils much more in depth than in a larger school setting with larger class sizes. This enables them to tailor their teaching to the pupil's strengths and weaknesses, offering an almost tutored approach. The ability in a small school environment of pupils to engage and find their voice, to feel valued and heard, to have their strengths amplified and an extra needs support is invaluable. In a small school, a learn the skill of learning to get along with people who you don't necessarily see eye to eye with, as you can't just fin another peer group, or choose another teacher. You learn people skills, resilience. We are now in a world where online teaching resources are available, including shared teaching across the region through the recently aligned timetabling across all D&G schools. If social skills are a concern, extra-curricular offerings should be prioritised and provided. Over the last few years, the extra-curricular offering at Dalry Secondary has been reduced to basically nothing. Children thrive in small schools, ask any adult who had a small school education.

6. *Effect on the local community*

- For rural communities, schools are a vital part of the community, much more so than an urban setting. There is clear evidence of the impact of school closures on community

health and wellbeing and rural depopulation. The report commissioned by Glenkens & District Trust, at the end of 2024/start of 2025 on education in the Glenkens highlights clear links to schools and rural depopulation. Have you read the report? I can give a link if you like – or go to www.glenkens.scot and it is under the resources section. Also, the Council report due to me make public on 11th Feb which you probably already have access to, I imagine highlight the link between rural school closures and depopulation. Could you make sure to read this too? Please also reach out to other rural schools across Scotland who are successfully running their schools – there are quite a few, the one no Orkney being an example. Also, another small school on the mainland in the Highlands I think. Strontian is also an example of where the community and council worked together – the community built the school with wind farm funds and leases it to the Council. Please follow these leads and think outside the box – our communities depend on it.

*6. Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- *None.*

**Option 7 (stakeholder generated)**

- As well as up to S2 or S4 options (through school), how about using the Secondary building as an off-shoot/spoke of the D&G College for post S6 education/vocational education/adult education? This could encourage investment by local and big employers (Natural Power/forestry etc) to 1) invest in building/facilities, 2) offer structured training to benefit the region and local young people. I've seen this work very well in Orkney (Kirkwall & Stromness). D&G College could offer classes for people who can't travel to Dumfries Campus (as could the agricultural college) – this saves having an empty building that is full of excellent facilities (wood & metalwork, cookery facilities, fitness facilities, IT/training facilities). Revenue brought in by:
  - Locals using the facilities
  - National companies
  - Education budget for higher & further education split partly in this possible 'spoke' campus
- One stakeholder agreed with the above proposal.

*7. Education Benefits*

- Off-shoot/spoke of college (D&G)/Barony – rural people who can't travel to Dumfries school and business joint ventures. Invest in young people, training opportunities = young people staying in the area = young families = [increased] school roll.

*7. Effect on the local community*

- *None.*

*7. Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- *None.*

**Option 8 (stakeholder generated)**

- Small school with travel provided to those across the region who benefit from attending a small inclusive setting. Option to deliver land-based courses, vocational subjects. D&G could have a real opportunity to link rural education and the protection of rural communities to the provision of education to a growing group of young people for whom the current education system does not work.
- Dalry is not the only rural community facing uncertainty overs its educational future as a society we need to do better and think of creative-solutions other than closure of reduction of the offer.
- Explore and interrogate all aspects of costs of provision (teacher salary/overheads/[illegible]/transport) and review what statutory requirements of DGC are whilst building capacity of community organisation to play an increasing role on supporting education provision through community wealth building (ownership of building, management of assets, provision of transport) etc. Plan for the future to give long term stability that families and businesses require to make rural living viable for the long-term. What are DGC willing to let go of, what can communities take on – NOW and in 10 years.

*8. Education Benefits*

- A small high school means teachers have more time for pupils, especially those who have learning difficulties and prefer smaller class sizes.
- One stakeholder agreed with the above proposal.

*8. Effect on the local community*

- Will be not peoples with family wants to move in.
- Families will leave rural area we lose as we will have lost the benefit for a rural high school.
- An opportunity for Dalry to be at the forefront of a changing educational landscape with D&G Council seen as a leader in their field.

*8. Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- None.

**Option 9 (stakeholder generated)**

- Can other school models be considered. Likely Dalry will need a unique, bespoke approach but finding out what works elsewhere can feed vital interpretation to create a new working model. Speak to head teachers at the five other smallest secondary/all-through schools in Scotland, including Irelands but also I think there's a mainland one. Speak to the people who organised the Strontian school (community build[ing] leased to Council). Consider creative integration of online offerings – not sure who is doing this week but in the Highlands e-sogil is used a lot. Considering the benefits of a small school setting to pupils across the region and consider bringing them to Dalry where they would thrive, [illegible] the local also on the larger schools and maximising use of Dalry.

*9. Education Benefits*

- None.

9. *Effect on the local community*

- None.

9. *Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- Peoples who live in rural area travel long way.
- My daughter has difficulties and will not use public transport, as a parent if there is no high school in Dalry it will be difficult to travel to Castle Douglas while working full time.
- Goof travel options should be made available across the Stewarty and Newton Stewart.

**Option 10 (stakeholder generated)**

- Merge all the small schools locally to utilise the building. Reduce all Council members wages to pay into the education of our future children. Look for third sector organisations who can do drop-in event in the school to teach life skills and home management skills to take weight off teachers. Continue to educate pupils but a new diverse hub of agencies to help pupils and parents and they can pay rent for rooms etc to generate an income. See an opportunity. Education (in rural areas) will need to change. We could become a pilot to explore an alternative approach to rural education that meets future needs of our young people, community, commerce, culture. All parties working together to deliver new solutions that can be shared across D&G, Scotland, further afield. (Seek Scot Gov funding to test pilot over e.g., 5 years).
  One example, local business working grom school throughout age groups to help pupils (mentor) on career paths that could keep them in the area and offering apprenticeships (with college where relevant) so they can "see a future" in our region. Example, a "school" teacher with virtual subject specialist delivering classes. Keep the school open, explore hybrid-learning and maybe even extending provision to further education and vocational skills. Do a horizon-scanning study to see how advances in AI could benefit rural schooling provision.

*10. Education Benefits*

- None.

10. *Effect on the local community*

- None.

10. *Effect of any different travel arrangements*

- None.

**11. Any other comments**

- I think it's been handled very poorly and the focus should be on improving school role numbers.
- [H]as a parent of 2 children attending school, one in S1 and one in primary. They both have additional needs and we live rural. It would be very daunting for our children to catch a bus to Castle Douglas when they often miss the bus and have to be driven already.
- I believe our children would not like or benefit from being in the mainstream, too much pressure for me and our boys in the morning. It would be a serious detriment to all our families mental health.
- Has anyone in the council considered the needs of neurodivergent children who thrive better in a small school environment. If the primary and nursery remain open – we need the canteen for them so still using the high school building. Reduce high council paid staff's wages to invest in our children who are our future.
- Consideration should be given to one all through school in the Glenkens, which can then link in with community education initiatives. This would mean closing either Kells or Dalry primary or merging into one Glenkens school.
- Has an impact assessment been done on the implications of a secondary school closure in the Glenkens? Looking at for example possible impact on rural depopulation, local businesses, house prices.
- Keep the school open lease we have so many younger children who want to attend here.
- Combine Kells and Dalry primary schools, this will allow bigger classes (more teachers) (separate the year groups) – then we have more children feeding into Dalry Secondary.
- In D&G there are numerous children who do not well in mainstream/larger schools, for various reasons. Could those children be given places at Dalry Secondary where we have smaller class sizes.
- We should expect an independent review int what decisions led to the current situation. It would be easy to ignore what actions should be challenged but the community deserves no less.
- Recognising that the issues facing Dalry are common across D&G wider. You should engage with the community to scope out, develop, pilot new models to keep small schools open (e.g., clever use of tech, structure of teaching/timetables – lots more)… This is a really creative and entrepreneurial community. This would create energy, excitement and momentum. Piloting something novel cold also attract external funding. Everybody wins!