

Council keeps community centres closed – in the face of real need

The community centres in Edinburgh remain closed. The decision to close them was initially made in March.

The council's Chief Executive has confirmed that for the moment the decision is unchanged and they remain closed.

This matter is in the papers prepared for today's meeting of the [Policy and Sustainability Committee](#) which is the only substantial operative part of the council at present.

"All non-essential CEC buildings are to remain closed to allow the Council to follow Scottish Government advice to stay at home, protect the NHS and save lives."

At Magdalene Community Centre which is at the heart of some of Edinburgh's most deprived areas, they are distributing food to those most in need – from the garden outside the community centre.



Magdalene Community Centre. Photo: Martin P. McAdam
www.martinmcadam.com

The perfectly good building behind them remains closed and unavailable. The school next door is open to teachers, and the janitor is we are told back at work. But this building is off limits too. So at the moment the volunteers are working in the open air – without any tents to protect them or the food they are distributing.



Rab Hogg at the Magdalene Community Centre. Photo: Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com

In one night last weekend, vandals destroyed the tented village used by Magdalene to distribute hundreds of meals and food packs to locals.

A fundraiser on [JustGiving](#) has been very successful but the staff and volunteers need some practical help. They have no time to go and buy replacement tents. They could do with some help to tidy up outside the centre – or they could do with alternative premises if the council persist in keeping the community centre closed.

Each day they distribute 156 packed lunches, 304 prepared meals and 195 people in 78 households get Fareshare parcels a couple of times a week. They have also delivered 187 care packages for young people.



Rab Hogg working in the garden at the Magdalene Community Centre. Photo: Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com

Rab Hogg a Youth Worker from the Community Centre who is leading their food delivery scheme said: “Bingham is one of the highest areas of deprivation and Magdalene is the most densely populated area of multiple deprivation. All of this work has been done while we are not allowed to enter our building. Now our tented village has gone.

“People came along, opened up the storage tents and the shed. They helped themselves to food, supplies and some of the garden toys and bikes. The tents were completely destroyed. As you can imagine this has made it very difficult to take in donations and sort deliveries.

“Every member of our management committee emailed all the councillors involved asking them to support the amendment to be discussed today.”

So watch this space today – the council meeting can be [viewed live online](#) and perhaps they will take the decision to open council buildings such as Magdalene where a great deal of good work is going on.



Hannah Johnston a Youth Development Worker at Magdalene Community Centre working in the garden outside the centre. Photo: Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com

MAIN PHOTO CAPTION : Rab Hogg, Hannah Johnston and Stephanie Macgregor all Youth Workers with Hugh Main volunteer ready to distribute food from outside the closed Magdalene Community Centre Photo Martin P McAdam



Magdalene Community Centre. Photo: Martin P. McAdam www.martinmcadam.com