

Edinburgh East MP calls for portaloos in Porty

An Edinburgh MP is putting pressure on the city council to pay for portable toilets at Portobello Promenade this summer to avoid beachgoers using ‘alleyways and private gardens’ as open toilets.

Tommy Sheppard called for an end to the “awful scenes witnessed by residents and seafront businesses” as a result of a lack of public toilets at the beauty spot.

The Edinburgh East MP said installing portaloos during the two busiest months of the year would cost just under £4,000, warning the council it was a “public health and sanitation issue that cannot be ignored”.

In a letter to the council’s CEO he said recent warm spells had resulted in public urination and defecation around the beach ‘in alleyways and even in people’s private gardens’ and warned things would only get worse as it got into summertime.

Calls have previously been made for toilets at Portobello Baths to be made available to the public – however Edinburgh Leisure said last year this would cost around £2,000 a week and funds were not available.

Now Mr Sheppard is urging the local authority to explore other options to ensure facilities are put in place in time for the peak season – and has obtained a quote from a portable toilet provider for a block of six over eight weeks for £3,928.

“My reason for obtaining a quotation is quite simple: to stress to the council that additional toilet capacity could be provided for a comparatively small price when you consider the impact this is having on the community,” he said.

“The awful scenes witnessed by residents and seafront businesses in Portobello have become increasingly unacceptable in recent summers. The distress caused cannot be overstated; no one should have to clean up after another human being in this way. This is a public health and sanitation issue that cannot be ignored.

“By allocating funds for the installation of free to use loos, the council will not only address the distressing scenes we’ve seen in recent summers but also prioritise public health and preserve the reputation of Portobello as one of Scotland favourite family seaside destinations.

“Residents, small businesses, and visitors to Porty deserve better.”

Writing to Edinburgh City Council’s chief executive Andrew Kerr, the MP argued that his solution “could go a long way to reducing the distress of my constituents and the strain exerted on council officers’ time and resources by the large number of complaints about visitors to the beach relieving themselves in public”.

by Donald Turvill, Local Democracy Reporter.

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Tommy Sheppard MP for Edinburgh East