

# **Councillors agree to mothball a village school for a second year**

**Councillors have agreed to mothball a village school for a second year as the community awaits the delivery of a new school.**

Dechmont's Infant School- the last infant school in Scotland- shut its doors at the end of the school year in June last year with children transferring to Kirkhill Primary in Broxburn at the start of the school year last August.

Children attending the Dechmont Infant School will be accommodated within Kirkhill Primary School for the duration of school year 2025/26. This will now extend to the summer holiday in June 2026.

Dechmont school only took classes up to P3, with older primary children being bussed to Kirkhill.

Plans are in place for a new full primary- classes P1 to p7- and associated nursery school for Dechmont within the development of 1,000 new homes on the Bangour hospital site.

Though a specific date for the new school has yet to be confirmed it will likely be when a specific number of homes are completed at Bangour and applications for school places start to rise.

In a report to the Education Executive this month officers said:" The closing date for applications for Dechmont Infant

School was 31 December 2024. To date, four applications have been received for the P1 stage at Dechmont infant school, with two received before the closing date, and two after.

“All applications contain second and third choices, and in each case, it is anticipated that the second-choice school can be granted. The closing date for applications for Dechmont Infant School Nursery Class is 15 March 2025. To date, no first-choice applications have been received for Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) at Dechmont Infant School Nursery Class.”

The report added: “Mothballing” a school is a temporary closure which does not lead to a requirement for consultation under the Schools (Consultation) (Scotland) Act 2010.

“This decision was taken as a result of a falling roll, falling applications for the school and nursery, and planning forecasts showing that this position was anticipated to continue until the opening of the new Primary School.”

The Education Executive agreed, at its meeting of 26 June 2024, to approve the proposal to mothball Dechmont Infant School and Dechmont Infant School Nursery Class for the duration of school year 2024/25, and that these arrangements would be reviewed annually.

Villagers are keen to see the school building retained for community use.

By Stuart Sommerville Local Democracy Reporter