

Lack of public toilets near Haymarket station has led to “significant levels of public urination”

A lack of public toilets around Edinburgh’s Haymarket station has led to “significant levels of public urination” and the abuse of local staff, it has been claimed.

New public toilets in Haymarket are being proposed to tackle a shortage in the city’s West End.

And a local café owner has welcomed the move, saying he has faced huge costs and the abuse of his staff by people looking to use his facilities.

Joanna Mowat, a Conservative councillor for the City Centre ward, is proposing that public toilets that were meant to be constructed years ago finally get built.



The old public toilets off Morrison Street were knocked down when a large new development opposite Haymarket Station got underway.

The council included a requirement that public toilets be built on the site when it sold the land to the developer, but this has not been done so far.

Murat Oztas, owner of the Troy café on Dalry Road, says he and his staff face regular harassment from locals trying to find a restroom.

And, it costs him money – he says abuse of the restroom led to him having to spend over £5,000 in refurbishments last year.

Oztas told the Local Democracy Reporting Service: “We have too many people taking advantage of the toilet. Some people get aggressive.

“It costs a couple grand to maintain this. I’m a local small business.

“A couple months ago, I didn’t let someone in [to use the restroom], and he just started running in.

“He threw something out [in the toilet], they blocked it. Nobody cares.”



He said he had previously been part of a council scheme which saw the city give business owners £500 in order to make their toilets publicly available.

But Oztas found offering the toilets to the public to be much more costly than that due to the expense in providing loo roll and provisioning cleaning supplies, as well as the extra time pressure managing locals wanting to use the toilet added for staff.

He says he is happy to help if somebody with a medical condition needs his restroom, but that he is exasperated with the wider public trying to use it for free.

Cllr Mowat has put forward a motion to the next full Edinburgh Council meeting asking new toilets to be built – and asking why it has taken so long.

It reads: “No public toilets are present in the current scheme being developed despite the burden still existing on the site.

“The nearest public toilets are at the West End of Princes Street Gardens – a considerable distance away from a busy station and tram stop used by people making their way back from events with large crowds at Tynecastle and Murrayfield.

“Unfortunately, this leads to significant levels of public urination which is unpleasant and unhygienic.”

She points to new build public toilets being introduced in the Meadows and Inverleith, and says all possible steps should be taken to introduce something similar in Haymarket.

And she asks for the next meeting of the Culture and Communities Committee to include a report to explore building new toilets, including a consideration of a pay-to-use model, and for more information on why toilets have not yet been built.

Oztas says that new public toilets would be helpful – but he would want them to be hygienic, as he worries unpleasant smells could drive customers away from the area.

By Joseph Sullivan Local Democracy Reporter